"From raw experimental to the classics" Since 1994!

The Raw Times

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THE BLUE WESTERN SKY TOUR OF ONE-ACTS

In June 2013 Theatre In the Raw was delighted to tour three original one-act plays around the Province. On the first leg we traveled to the BC interior to several towns: Princeton, Cawston, Merritt, and Spences Bridge. We were very satisfied by the results of these performances and were received very warmly in the communities. We had many great houses and even heard some comments from people that it was the first live theatre event they had ever seen! We took two winning plays from the 2011 One-Act Contest: the 1st place play *The Suspect*, as well as finalists *Maybe Miles* and *Talk Medicine*. Theatre In the Raw is happy to have had the opportunity to tour through such remarkable places. The second leg of the tour consisted of four nights in Vancouver and the company was equally happy to perform for hometown audiences.

One-act plays take centre stage on troupe's tour:

By Emily Wessell - Merritt Herald - Merritt, BC

A Vancouver theatre performance group is bringing three one-act plays to Merritt on Saturday night.

The six-actor company Theatre in the Raw will deliver the three plays on a two-hour bill, with music by Blues for the Road, a guitar-and-vocals duo. The troupe's artistic director, Jay Hamburger, said the three plays have some challenging themes, and he is curious to see how they'll be received on their four-stop tour.

"We held a run through today of one of the shows and I was almost in tears," Hamburger said. "Some of this stuff really hits. That's what we're looking for; we're not looking for huge commercial success, we're looking for more of the content. I think that's in the DNA of this particular troupe."

One of those plays is *Maybe Miles*, which tells the story of an encounter between a university professor and a former student in an unusual context.

"This young girl, who's working in a lap dance place, has a customer and after a few minutes of doing a dance for him, she recognizes that it's her former professor," Hamburger said. "She's lost her stipend for college and she's going for her master's degree, so she wants to continue with her education and this is a way of earning."

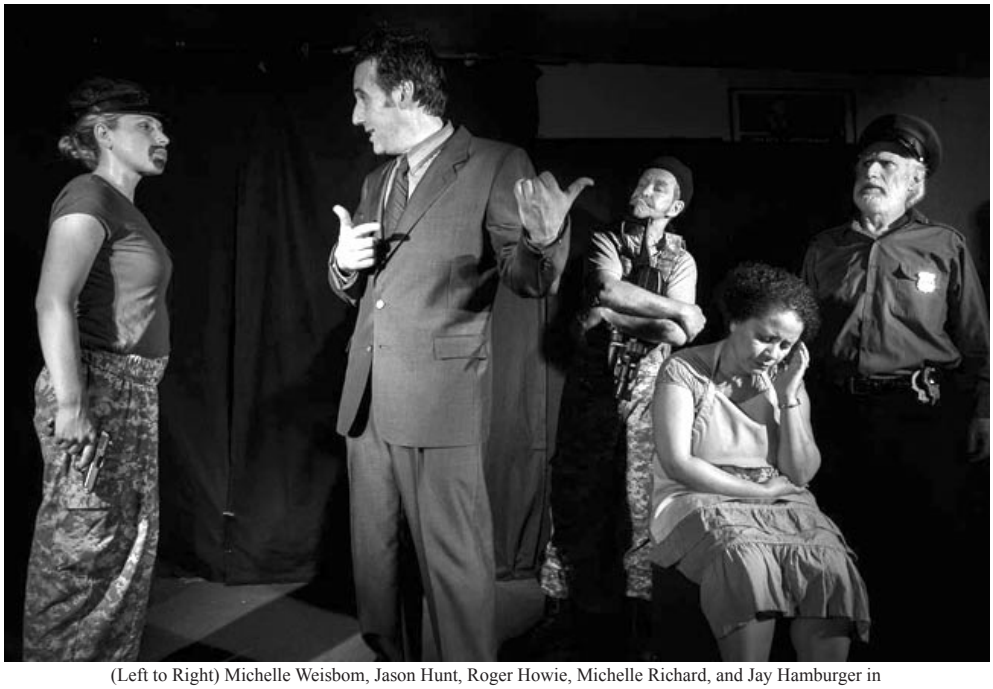
While there are elements of humour in all of the pieces, Hamburger said, the show *The Suspect* is reminiscent of George Orwell's 1984 and touches on themes of the [recent global] Occupy movement.

"There's a little bit of a chill there. This is a story in which somebody says an off-the-cuff remark, and all of a sudden, the agent's in the room and there's an interrogation and so on and so forth, without giving it away," he said. "Rather than doing some bouncy, sexy musical, we're bringing a show in that's timely and it's about something that's going on now."

The other play, *Talk Medicine*, is a monologue of life experiences told by a taxidermist. The play was written by Calgarian Sheryl Melnyk and has a tough theme, Hamburger said.

"She [the playwright] is talking about men trying to come to grips with their fathers and the relationships between fathers and sons — living up to standards and how that plays out in their relationships with women," he said. "It's about how we can fall into patterns and how damaging that can be."

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(Left to Right) Michelle Weisbom, Jason Hunt, Roger Howie, Michelle Richard, and Jay Hamburger in *The Suspect* written by Andrzej Jar (Photo: Colin Beiers © 2013)

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Hamburger said the company gets some of its performance material from its one-act play-writing contest, and that all three of the plays are original. The company started up in a cafe in 1994, and since then, has evolved from experimental shows to its current mandate, which is focused on thought-provoking content over commercial success. The Merritt Live Theatre Society worked with the troupe to set up the Merritt stop on the four-town tour, which also hits Cawston, Princeton and Spences Bridge, and ends with four back-to-back performances in Vancouver. It's the tenth live theatre tour the troupe has done.

"I'm just fascinated to see the response of bringing these shows into Merritt. It's been a labour of love, but we're willing to take the chance. If we get people thinking, we've done most of our job," Hamburger said with a laugh."

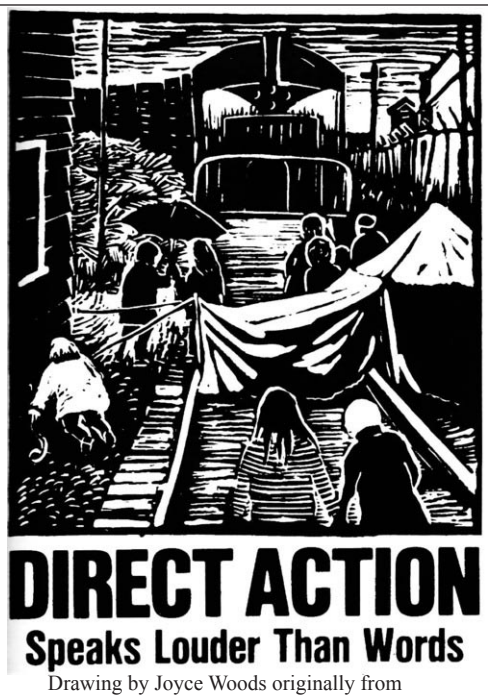
(Originally published in the Merritt Herald, June 17, 2013 Merritt, BC)



Roger Howie in *Talk Medicine* written by Sherryl Melnyk (Photo: Colin Beiers © 2013)

A Tribute to Dr. Isaac Stoffman

A long time audience member and donor to Theatre In the Raw recently passed away. Isaac Stoffman will be dearly missed for his continuous support of so many of our productions. Always wanting a front seat to each show he often would arrive with a member of his wonderful family accompanying: Ruth, Larry, or Phyllis. He will be truly missed as a true trouper with a grand sense of humour and very sharp eye.



Drawing by Joyce Woods originally from *Open Roads* magazine c. 1983

The Raymur Mothers Workshop

During 2013 Theatre In the Raw was happy to conduct a dramaturgical workshop and free public performances of the original work in process Bob Sarti and Bill Sample musical *The Raymur Mothers*.

The Raymur Mothers is an iconic story, full of colourful characters (real and imagined) drama, action, romance, passions, ideals, humor and rousing songs. While the exploits of the Raymur mothers have already become part of the folklore of the Downtown Eastside, they have yet to be given the serious wider attention they deserve.

Nine years ago, Theatre In the Raw produced a version of *The Raymur Mothers* as a radio play and broadcast it in its entirety over Vancouver Co-Op Radio CFRO-FM. Theatre In the Raw also performed a live reading for a new generation of students at the Admiral Seymour Elementary School in the Downtown Eastside, near where the historical events took place.

Our new expanded version, to be produced in the fall of 2014, will be a full-scale, two-act play, with original music and songs. It will be the third entry in our cycle of *Untold Stories of Vancouver* - plays that recall significant historical moments in the Downtown Eastside that have not always been publicly recognized. We select these subjects of our plays because they were both community building and educational moments for Vancouver.

As a snapshot of an era, the play explores the experiences of people trying to cope with the discouraging realities of poverty and the rising expectations of dignity at all levels of society. The mothers in the Raymur Place social housing project are active participants and non-violent demonstrators in the public spectacles of the day. Their efforts to have an overpass built over major railroad tracks in order for their children to get safely to school is the main plot point to set the story off. The characters are also trying to navigate their way within relationships that are affected by contemporary social currents, especially a newly cresting wave of feminism and an awakening voice of people in poverty.

Look out for the full production of this exciting TITR project down the line.

TITR Regular Radio Heads...

excerpts from Radio Heads By Stanley Tromp, Vancouver Courier June 19, 2012.

"Last March, Canadian fans of audio drama were shocked. In the federal budget, the Harper government trimmed the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's funding by 10 per cent, and CBC management responded by cutting its radio drama completely.

It spelled the end of an 85-year tradition. The most famous casualty was the long-running CBC radio show Afghanada, which followed the stories of our soldiers abroad and attracted almost half a million listeners. Dozens of prominent writers, actors and politicians protested the cut, to no avail. It was a major setback indeed-but it's not the end of the story, for audio drama still survives in many other forums in Vancouver and around the world.

"We are in a revolutionary time for radio drama now," says local audio playwright Jason Logan, author of the radio play Jack Benny Live at the Vancouver Pantages

"Without wonder and insight, acting is just a trade. With it, it becomes creation."

- Bette Davis, *The Lonely Life*

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[produced and directed by Theatre In the Raw], which played on Co-Op Radio. "I am really stoked. When I grew up in Detroit in the late 1940s, radio was my religion. That's why I wanted to bring political comedy to the Internet, by way of radio webisodes. Today, you can become your own broadcaster."

On live radio, many Vancouverites keenly listen to classic radio shows every midnight on CKNW, and on Lights Out on Sunday nights at 10 p.m. on Classic Rock 101. Younger artists are creating whole new styles of drama for podcasts, and far from killing off analogue-age radio dramas, digital media helps to preserve them by providing thousands of free downloadable samples on the Internet. This, in turn, is inspiring new generations of listeners to create more shows like it.

A studio drama or radio play is a dramatized, purely acoustic performance, broadcast on radio, posted on the Internet, or published on audio media such as CDs. With no visual component, it depends on dialogue, music and sound effects to help the listener imagine the characters and story. Because the listener works to co-recreate the story, it has been called the most personal and intimate dramatic medium. (It's not to be confused with audio books, read by a single narrator, which is now a $400-million business.)

In his grad student years, Logan heard Canadian communications guru Marshall McLuhan speak in Toronto. In an eye-dominant world, said McLuhan, the ear is taken for granted and too often neglected, and that in this age of visual stimulations, listening (in media as in life) has become almost a lost art, one that needs to be rediscovered and developed.

Audio drama, whether played through headphones or loudspeakers, is also ideal for times when it's impracticable to watch TV or hold up a book. It works well for truckers on an overnight drive, a hotel desk clerk on night shift, people cleaning or cooking, eating dinner, soaking in a bath, tanning in a beach chair, waiting at a bus station at night. It can be heard by campers, hikers, cross-country cyclists, or for anyone travelling by car, ferry, train or plane. Local radio playwright Dean Hoover [who also had radio work produced by TITR] listens to old radio plays on CKNW when he works the graveyard shift at a Vancouver airport warehouse.

"We grew too dependant on CBC," says Logan. While CBC radio theatre was unique, one can find other outlets for audio drama in Vancouver.

Jay Hamburger, artistic director of Theatre in the Raw (theatreintheraw.ca), has presented

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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS!

Theatre In the Raw's 2013 Board of Directors: Paul Manson, Don Todd, Jan Blanchet, Edith Iglauer Daly, Faune Johnson, Roger Howie, Paul Beckett, and Jan Janovick.

Thanks to our fine individual supporters, especially to: Andrzej Jar, Sherryl Melnyk , Joe Lauinger, Tomasz Przystupa, Nadine McEwan, Rhianfa Riel, The Sunflower Gallery and the Princeton Arts Council, Marjorie Holland, Mil Juricic, Anya McVean, The Merritt Live Theatre Society, Bob McAtamney, The Cawston Players, Country Bug Books, Sylvia Louis, BC Gaming, Sandi Nolan, Brid Fitzgerald, Steve Prokopenko, Judith Lawrence, Anne & Patrick Aubourg, Wally Shore, Dora Sanders, Carol O'Dell, Ramona Orr and the Van. Tech Drama Department, Robert Sarti & Muggs Sigurgeirson, Diane Sarti, Joe & Solveigh Harrison, June & John Field-Malaka, Audrey McClellan, Ann Hepper, Jan Blanchet, John Pappenheimer, Edith Daly, Jay Hamburger, Sylvan Hamburger, Atty Gell, Peter Gell, John Broom, Sandi McGinnis, Robert Kinnard, Sylvia Woodsworth, Teresa Vandertuin, Edith Frankel, Faune Johnson, Maria Zarimba, carol weaver, Concord Pacific Harmony Trust; in memory of Dr. Isaac Stoffman. ***– thank you all for your amazing support for live theatre!***

We acknowledge the support of the province of British Columbia.

We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, which last year invested $157 million to bring the arts to Canadians throughout the country.

Nous remercions le Conseil des arts du Canada de son soutien. L'an dernier, le Conseil a investi 157 millions de dollars pour mettre de l'art dans la vie des Canadiennes et des Canadiens de tout le pays.

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The Raw Times is written by Jay Hamburger, and Scott Broom
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Join our Facebook Group (search FB groups, "Theatre In the Raw) and follow us on Twitter @ www.twitter.com/intherawtheatre. Website: www.theatreintheraw.ca, Email: theatreintheraw@telus.net

Announcing Theatre In the Raw's 8th Biennial One-Act Play Writing Contest

For 16 years TITR has held this contest to give up-and-coming and established writers alike an opportunity to have their work staged by a professional theatre company. Following in the tradition of our mandate: we are dedicated to artistic grassroots theatre in the Lower Mainland/Vancouver, as well as to presentations beyond B.C. borders. We are risk takers, creating and responding to the cultural needs of those in Canada and the International community. We want to provide an open, creative, and supportive atmostphere for struggling artists and give exposure to tried and untried playwrights.

We're looking for the best, new and fresh One-Act plays never before performed for payment or published. (Plays can be previously workshopped.) The contest is open to all. Entries will be accepted until **December 31, 2013** at midnight. We particularly look forward to plays submitted on themes of cultural/social diversity!

Winners will be announced June 30, 2014.
For more specific guidelines please visit:
www.theatreintheraw.ca



The Winners of Our 7th Biennial 2011 One-Act Play Writing Contest Winners!

First Choice $200:
The Suspect by Andrzej Jar

Second Choice $100:
A Home of Bricks by Stephen David Joffe and
In this Economy by Sam Yahyawi

Third Choice $75:
The Existential Crisis Hotline by Warren Holleman and
Maybe Miles by Joe Lauinger

Honourable Mentions:
Out by Ron Fromstein,
Talk Medicine by Sherryl Melnyk, and ***The English Student*** by John Wolfson

Social Issues Script Recognition:
The Turtle's Shell by Stephen David Joffe and
The Admission by Norm McLeod

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22 radio plays on the Thursday nights 9 p.m. Arts Rational program of Co-Op Radio (CFRO 102.7 FM), and hopes to continue.

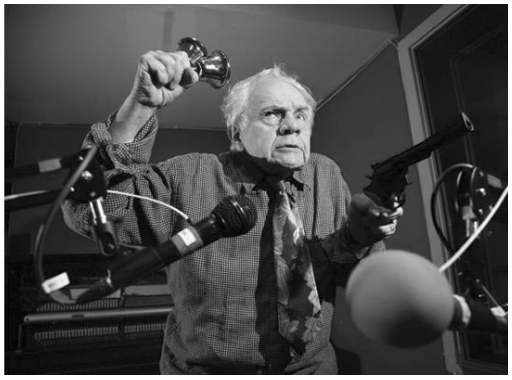
(Full disclosure: I took a VSB acting class with Hamburger years ago.)

Hamburger, who studied radio drama at UBC's theatre department in the early 1990s, has been trying to set up a low-cost radio play writing and acting course at the Vancouver School Board's continuing education program.

"Radio plays are a great start and a training ground for shy actors, and novice writers and directors, musicians and technicians," he says, adding that he works for hours with foley (sound effects) technicians for each audio play.

Other activities abound. Over the years, Co-Op radio has hosted live [Theatre In the Raw] broadcasts of plays [on the Arts Rational program] from the Fringe Festival, the Carnegie Radio Play Project, and Radio Station Café (a project of the Portland Hotel Society). Recently, the Performing Arts Lodge on Cardero Street was transformed into a radio studio by Michael Fera, co-artistic director of Hoarse Raven Theatre, for a performance of A Christmas Carol.

"Radio drama like Lux Theatre pulled people together, and the Internet splits the audience," says Hoover. As most new media is produced and consumed today, the audio drama has become more fragmented and individualistic: after recorded and mixed with the most sophisticated audio technology, it can be effortlessly downloaded to be heard anytime. Yet some listeners might prefer the simplicity of old-time radio, when people from coast to coast would gather around the radio, awaiting the same theatrical event at a set broadcast time."



Jason Logan as a foley artist
(Photo: Jason Lang © 2012 originally from the article Radio Heads by Stanley Tromp, printed in the Vancouver Courier, June 19, 2012)

The Arts Are the First...

...to get cut, stamped on and rubbed out and as we all know the artist or company criticized up and down for being outspoken or often too innovative for the status quo to handle at the time of presentation. The funding of the Arts in BC is none short of disgraceful for a Province as rich, vibrant and stunning as British Columbia. Yet where are all those BC tax dollars going and why is there so little to really spare for the many diverse art groups trying year after year to bring new and original works to people?

We are under the impression that our performance group does not really exist in the minds of the very Council that is meant to be there as a supportive group for us as artists. We have met with officers of the Council in Vancouver and even made a special trip to Victoria to plead for our projects - to little or no avail. Yet we plug on and stubbornly stay within our original Theatre Society's mandate: *We are risk takers, willing to give exposure to voices seldom heard, striving for artistic excellence, in the presentation of unusual, awakening, and exchanging theatre. Our productions represent a diversified balance, ranging from raw experimental to the theatre classics. Relevant productions, exploring social issues distinct to our local community are our specialty*.

Would I do another tour similar to the Blue Western Sky along some small BC Towns via the Crowsnest Highway and a bit of the TransCanada Highway again? Sure. Does it take financial support from granting bodies and interested parties? You betcha! Do we need live theatre and the progressive educational arts in our backyard, trying to get us to think outside the box? For some it is like needing water in order to survive. Often we are stopped and told by gracious audience members: "that's the first time I've ever seen a play done on stage."

And yes, there is a need to let the public know that theatre can be brought to the back doorstep of small communities of hard working folk that normally may not see performing companies from "the big city" come and bring their creative wares to those interested in some lively entertainment. Suggestion: a little generosity can go a long way.

-excerpt from "Playing Off Our Theatre Boards" by Jay Hamburger

FUNDRAISING 2013/2014: ***We need your support! Don't pass up a good theatre company when it comes your way...*** ***For Theatre In the Raw, the funding cuts are still sharply felt. Help our performing arts group deliver unusual, awakening and exchanging local grassroots live theatre!***



THEATRE IN THE RAW SOCIETY invites you to assist us in continuing our dream of producing live theatre. Please be a part of an unusual, awakening and exchanging grassroots travelling theatre - *"Giving Exposure to Voices Seldom Heard".*

Annual Memberships are ONLY $10 entitling members to the Theatre In the Raw newsletters, voting rights at the Annual General Meeting (held each Fall) and 2 collector postcards from our theatre productions. You can now make a donation and become a member of Theatre In the Raw on our website at **www.theatreintheraw.ca.** Just click on our "Join & Donate" page – *Thank You!*

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THANK YOU! AND GO SEE SOME LIVE THEATRE TODAY!