

# maladjusted

## BC/Alberta Tour (plus Vancouver)

### Final Report

David Diamond, Artistic/Managing Director



Micheala Hiltergerke and Pierre Leichner in *maladjusted*. Photo: David Cooper

"I just got home from seeing *maladjusted*. Thank you for making real theatre – theatre about and by people personally involved in large-impact, under-discussed, systematic experiences within our culture. Thank you for doing the impossible – for catalyzing deep and important conversation between strangers." Kathryn Binnersley

"*maladjusted* was a life changing performance!!"

Jenny Chen

"*maladjusted* was so touching and well performed. 10 thumbs up!"

Micha Souaid

"I attended *maladjusted* and am forever changed."

Kay Robinson

"Thanks to Theatre for Living's innovative and radical approach to the subject, *maladjusted* yields cheers along with tears." Stuart Dreyden, Province Newspaper

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## The short version

### Introduction

The original impulse behind the 2013 production of *maladjusted* came from *Theatre for Living's* (formerly Headlines Theatre) many years of relationship with people and organizations in the health sector. We started hearing more and more about how, in the name of efficiency, the mental health system itself was becoming more mechanical and how all of the players (patients, care-givers, family members) were really struggling to receive and give care.

This is not to say that the entire system is broken – there are some very good things that happen in Canada and in BC, but as a process of “mechanization” in the name of efficient cost-cutting happens across many sectors in Canada, (health care, education, immigration, environmental protection, etc.) human-centered mental health care is becoming more and more difficult to navigate.

As is always the case with us at *Theatre for Living* (TfL), word went out into the community that we were looking for people who were living the issues to be involved in the project. 191 applications came in from people who wanted to be directly involved in the creation and performance of this play. We had the ability to interview forty-four people (44 – 30 minute interviews in 4 days!), and out of these could hire 24 people; a very diverse cast of six and 18 workshop participants for a week-long *Theatre for Living* workshop, investigating the issues of mechanization in their lives. After the workshop, the cast, production team and I had 3 weeks to create the original production. A play that grew out of lived experience, but was a fiction – that told the truth.

A very talented production team came together. Rehearsal and performance space was booked a year in advance. Graphics designed...posters, postcards, bus shelters.

The response to *maladjusted* was tremendous in 2013 – so much so that requests started to come in to tour. It took about a year and a half to raise the money and book 28 events in 26 communities across BC and Alberta, plus 9 performances back in Vancouver at the Firehall Arts Centre.

Part of the power of the tour booking process was an attempt to bring Native and non-Native organizations together in each community. In many cases the organizations, because of historical context and different funding restrictions were not working together. The play gave them the opportunity to collaborate and in doing so develop new or deeper working relationships. This was successful to a large degree. A full report on outreach, written by Outreach Coordinator David Ng, and all other reports mentioned in this document, are available here:

[http://www.theatreforliving.com/past\\_work/maladjustedTour/reports\\_maladjusted.htm](http://www.theatreforliving.com/past_work/maladjustedTour/reports_maladjusted.htm)

## **The evolution of *Theatre for Living* and Forum Theatre**

*Theatre for Living* has evolved from Augusto Boal's "Theatre of the Oppressed". Since 1989 our work has slowly moved away from the binary language and model of "oppressor/oppressed" and now approaches community-based cultural work from a systems-based perspective; understanding that a community is a complexly integrated, living organism.

Forum Theatre is an opportunity for creative, community-based dialogue. The theatre is created and performed by community members who are living the issues under investigation. Over the course of a six day theatre workshop, participants engage in very specific games and exercises that help them investigate issues at a deep level. In a main stage production such as this one, after the workshop, the cast, production team and director then have 3 to 4 weeks (depending on budgets) to make the best art we can, that tells the truths that have risen out of the workshop process. When I say "tells the truth", I mean as true questions – hard questions – the questions for which we don't have clear or easy answers.

The resulting play is performed once, all the way through, so the audience can see the situation and the problems presented. The story builds to a crisis and stops, offering no solutions. The play is then run again, with audience members able to "freeze" the action at any point where they see a character engaged in a struggle. An audience member yells "stop!", comes into the playing area, replaces the character s/he sees struggling with the problem, and tries out his/her idea. We call this an "intervention". The other characters respond with their truth, not to "make it better", not to "make it worse", simply to investigate a shared reality. What insights do we have? What do we think? What do we learn? Who agrees? Who disagrees? In this way we engage in a creative dialogue about issues in our lives. The process is fun, profound, entertaining and full of surprises and learning.

In *maladjusted* the invitation to the audience was to yell "stop" if they understood the struggle that a character was engaged in and had an idea to *humanize* the mechanized care – in the individual, in the family, or in the system.

## **Ticket Sales, the Voucher Program and the Webcast**

We work very hard to keep our ticket prices affordable across the board. If each event on the *maladjusted* tour had to pay for itself, the cost would have been just under \$17,000 per show. Touring is expensive – 12 people on the road, a 5 ton truck, passenger van, good hotels, per diems, rehearsal cost, redesign cost, staff costs... We raised enough funds to subsidize the performance guarantees down to \$2,000 per event. The box office arrangement with Sponsors was that we got the \$2,000 guarantee and they could make all their costs (guarantee, hall rental, overprinting our posters, etc.) back through ticket sales. If there was a profit at the end, we would split that 50/50. Ticket prices were then up to the Sponsors to determine, knowing their communities. Some chose ticket sales between \$10 and \$20 (with vouchers for people living in poverty) and many chose admission by donation or for free. We asked Sponsors to put a ticket value on free tickets, as our

experience is that if people believe the performance is simply “free” they assume it has no value and must not be very good. Sad, but true.

In Vancouver tickets for *maladjusted* were \$12.00 (plus Firehall Box Office Fees of \$3.00 over the phone and \$5.00 online). To put this in context, theatre tickets in Vancouver generally are 25, 30, 40 dollars plus.

*Theatre for Living* has been evolving a **voucher program** for years. 700 free vouchers (covering 9 performances) went out through organizations in our network. We hope for about a 20 - 25% use rate. The vouchers are aimed at people living in poverty. We want to do this for a number of reasons:

- our projects often focus into issues that affect people living in poverty – they often are cast members and workshop participants in our plays – how do we ensure their engagement in performances?
- We want the diversity of audience at every performance. This means not stigmatizing free or 2 for 1 tickets into certain shows set aside for people who cannot afford a regular ticket. These vouchers are valid for any performance. We set aside 20% of every house for the vouchers.

128 vouchers were used throughout the 9 performance run. This is an 18% use rate.

A lesson to learn: We had a ‘glitch’ with the vouchers in Vancouver – they were printed without essential information on them, namely that the voucher needed to be redeemed no later than 7:45PM for an 8:00PM show, otherwise it may not be valid. We need to do that because the ‘no-show rate’ on vouchers is very high and we need to plan for the possibility that we will be selling out shows and to be able to let people on waiting lists in to see the play. Mostly this was not a problem but there were some instances where people with vouchers got turned away because they arrived too late and there were no seats left for them. We have noted this in internal manual material and it won’t happen again.

A detailed list of attendance figures for each event is attached.

On tour *maladjusted* reached 3,084 audience members directly. This translates into 87% houses on tour. In Vancouver *maladjusted* reached 1,132 audience members directly. This translates into 93% houses. We think it is fair and reasonable to assume that these numbers at least double with the ripple effect of a profound experience reaching further than the original audience member, that is into people’s families, friends and colleagues.

In the last 5 or so performances in Vancouver (out of 9), and at every performance on tour, when I asked people who in the audience had ever been to interactive Forum Theatre, only a smattering of people raised their hands. This is terrific, because it indicates that we were attracting a whole new audience to the Company’s work. I believe that in many, many cases, this would have been people’s first theatre experience altogether.

We had 311 computers log into the live, interactive web cast from various parts of the world. We actively encourage people to organize webcast viewing parties and so sometimes groups and even large classes watch from one screen. One of the interventions came from a class of 30 students, watching together from Lester B. Pearson Secondary in Victoria BC, for instance. Because of this, it is hard to tell how many viewers we had exactly. We also know that many people watch with a friend.

We estimate 933 webcast viewers. SHAW also did a broadcast on the Cable Network that they tell us averages 15,000 viewers. This totals 20,209 live and web/TV viewers of the project.

Here is a list of where some of the viewers for the webcast were – ones we could locate because they logged into chat. (Note that there were multiple viewers from many of these locations):

**BC:** Abbotsford; Burnaby; Chilliwack; Coquitlam; Delta; Kamloops; Kelowna; New Westminster; Nelson; North Vancouver; Penticton; Port Moody; Prince George; Richmond; Surrey; Vancouver; Vernon. **Canada:** Calgary; Edmonton; Grande Prairie; Kitchener; Lethbridge; Peterborough; Toronto; Waterloo; Whitehorse. **USA:** Albuquerque, New Mexico; Kent and Olympia, Washington; Lewiston, Idaho; Minneapolis, Minnesota; New York and Brooklyn, NY; Park Ridge, Illinois; Portland, Oregon; Tuscon, Arizona; Tustin, California; Valdosta, Georgia; Wayne, Pennsylvania; unknown, Florida. **Other international:** Brisbane, Sydney and Cleveland, Australia; Hamburg, Germany; Bangalore, India; Kawasaki and Tokyo, Japan; Paris, France; Singapore; Nottingham, UK;

## Beyond the numbers

Throughout this report are quotes we have permission to use about the project. It is my feeling that audiences speak about the impacts of *maladjusted* in a way I cannot, although I will try.

While *maladjusted* toured into a broad range of diverse communities, from large urban centres to small rural communities to Reserves, and while there were certainly issues that were specific to these different communities, there was also a connective tissue of similarity regarding people's struggles with the mechanization of the mental health system.

- In the individual: Across the board, people are people, and the internal stigmatization of being labeled 'mentally ill' or 'bi-polar' or 'ADHD', etc. is something that silences people everywhere. In every community audiences worked on ways for individuals (and at the events that always means 'us in the room, tonight'), to have the courage to speak up and to reach out. The subconscious knowledge is that so many people around us are struggling with similar issues. If only we knew overtly, maybe we would not feel so isolated. We are certain that the project helped communities make these invisible connections, visible.

- In the family: There are stereotypical judgments made about families of various racial origins being 'closed', but the truth is, families across the spectrum fall into the trap of 'what

happens in the family, stays in the family'. This came up over and over again. Couple this with the silence of the individual (above) and we have a very unhealthy environment that families live in, regarding mental health and other issues.

The interactive Forum Theatre events helped people rehearse breaking family silences every night. We are certain this stimulated transformational change in families. Beyond a theatre project, though, we need a broad public education campaign to get families talking with each other. This sort of thing can't be legislated and it will never be instant, but it is clear that this is one of the first 'lines of opportunity' to mental health and also to dealing with aspects of mechanization that have been internalized (by individuals and families). One of the reasons (there are many) that medication has become a "first solution" in so many instances is that people experiencing mental distress feel so isolated. We have heard from many people, both in 2013 and now, that *maladjusted* created conversations inside their families that would not have happened otherwise.

- In the system: This varied from community to community, of course. Urban centres have more services. We were in some communities that do not even have shelters, or do, but not for men, or a person can only occupy a shelter for a few days. The Community Action Reports that are being distributed both to local organizations in each community and collated into larger BC and Alberta documents to enter both Legislatures call on local organizations and Government to respond to articulated grassroots needs. In some communities this was access to medical professionals 24/7. In others it was the need for homeless shelters, or shelters for people escaping violence. In others it was a way for Nurses or other medical professionals to be able to honour prescribing Doctors' instructions; in others it was more time allocated to patient appointments.

Recommendations from the Community Action Reports making their way through bureaucracies will take time.

The current Federal Government has announced billions in cuts over the next years to health care. This will only make a bad situation worse. If this happens, we can look forward to more burnout in professionals (this was something that was recognized in every community we visited) and a deeper and deeper reliance on drugs as a first response.

"I felt that they play *maladjusted* asked me to move from introspection to action. I am struck at how the play showed great respect for mental health workers while simultaneously asking important and challenging questions about the system as a whole. This play is a gift for the growth and well-being of our whole community!"

Tim MacLoed, Community Health Educator, Olympia, WA

"My husband and I watched the *maladjusted* webcast from Bangalore, India. It was very moving, powerful and very effective as an experiential intervention in the mental healthcare system. As someone who does audience interactive theatre I learned so much. It was great! More power to you and your team."

Radha Ramaswamy, Centre for Community Dialogue and Change, Bangalore, India

"Congratulations on a great webcast for the closing night of *maladjusted*! Great job by the cast and crew and for some really challenging interventions during the forum theatre. It must have been a challenging task to remount and tour the production and an emotional one to boot! I'm very proud to have been a part of the original workshop of *maladjusted* and believe everyone accomplished some very important creative work here for the mental health community!"

Tom Mureika, Vancouver

“Fabulous webcast of *maladjusted*. Such good and valuable work. More and more we are seeing how empathy has value in these difficult situations. Thank you with a big hug.”  
Beverly Peacocke, Vancouver

## Community Action Reports

One of the exciting aspects of the *maladjusted* project was the potential to have input into local policy development. At each performance on the tour a local scribe took notes about audience interventions. Some of these interventions were desires for changes in policy or new policy or perhaps filling holes in policy. The Scribes then created local policy documents that local agencies agreed to receive. Here in Vancouver Carissa Kazys, who was our scribe in 2013 (when her last name was Wieler) agreed to fill the role again. She was at the 9 Vancouver performances.

After the tour, David Ng gathered all of the tour policy documents together and looked for how the policy suggestions overlapped from one community to another. He created larger über-policy documents for BC and Alberta.

ALL of the Community Action Reports are available here:

[http://www.theatreforliving.com/past\\_work/maladjustedTour/reports\\_maladjusted.htm](http://www.theatreforliving.com/past_work/maladjustedTour/reports_maladjusted.htm)

Sue Hammell, MLA and Mental Health Critic for BC, has offered to bring the Policy Document to the BC Legislature; Dr. Laura Calhoun, Provincial Medical Director, Addictions and Mental Health, Alberta Health Services will be following up on Community Action Reports in Alberta. We are grateful to both for their belief in and support of this grassroots process.

In David Ng’s (TfL’s Outreach Co-ordinator) document that gathers policy suggestions from all of the Community Action Reports together, he writes:

Some First Nations communities have raised the issue of cultural barriers in service delivery and a lack of understanding between First Nations and other cultures.

In these instances different levels of funding for mental health and addictions has also created barriers towards different service providers’ abilities to give holistic care. For example, because First Nations Health is funded through the Department of Indian Affairs, the jurisdiction of service delivery becomes further complicated when service delivery for one community must follow abstinence based models, whereas others can practice harm reduction. There are also discrepancies in funding allocations based on Indian Status.

First Nations communities have articulated specific needs, and desires. Having cultural competency trainings for service providers to increase their capacity to work with First Nations communities is necessary. The trainings should be done by First Nations people, from the communities that service providers are trying to reach.

It was also suggested that Federal funding for health care should be per capita on a Provincial basis, and allow the Provinces control as to how the funds are spent. This is apparently not currently the case with First Nations health, and there are discrepancies as to how much funding goes to First Nations communities, compared to non First Nations.



## The Finances

Fundraising for the original project in 2013 was surprisingly difficult. Most places we approached (many health-oriented agencies and Foundations, Government etc.) raved about the proposal, the insightfulness and importance of the focus and the potential for transformational change at both individual and organizational levels. But most of them also pointed us to other people and organizations for help.

Raising funds for the BC/Alberta tour was easier, partly because the project had a proven track record. The tour, however, would not have been possible without the very generous support of Alberta Health Services who contributed \$150,000. I mention this in particular not to minimize other agencies contributions, but to honour a relationship that grows out of the *Theatre for Living* work at the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at the U of Alberta and then morphed into a collaboration with Alberta Health Services. In the end, it is about people, relationships and recognizing the mutual benefit of collaboration – not just words on paper or a screen, and “best wishes” for a project.

## Will *maladjusted* Tour Again?

This question is coming up a lot. The answer is no, for a couple of reasons:

- I do not believe it is possible to raise the funds again.
- A play like this that grows out of the casts’ lived experiences has a shelf life. The young woman playing Dani for instance was 21 when she created the role of the 17 year old. She is now 24. Would the character and her reactions in Forum Theatre still be authentic as a 17 year old when she was 26? I don’t believe so.

Time passes. If we were to make this project in 2016, as successful as it has been in these last three years, it would be a different play. This comes with the territory of this kind of community-based, highly authentic theatre.

## Some Final Thoughts

The *maladjusted* BC/Alberta tour and Vancouver run were a tremendous success on numerous levels: It is hard to argue with these statistics:

|         |                         |         |            |           |                         |
|---------|-------------------------|---------|------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| BC Tour | 92% houses <sup>1</sup> | AB Tour | 79% houses | Vancouver | 93% houses <sup>2</sup> |
|---------|-------------------------|---------|------------|-----------|-------------------------|

Beyond the good numbers, though, is the response from audiences across the board. I am certain that the play opened up conversations about “humanizing care” inside families and workplaces

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<sup>1</sup> House capacities varied greatly from venue to venue on the BC/Alberta tour.

<sup>2</sup> House capacity was 136.

that would not have happened otherwise, while at the same time inspiring self-reflection about these issues in many, many individuals.

We were contacted today (April 27, 2015) by a woman who saw the play on Vancouver Island, early in the tour. She called the office asking for help with her son. She didn't know who to reach out to, so she called the theatre company. I am very aware that breaking the culture of silence (reaching out) is sometimes a revolutionary act. We were able to put her in touch with a mental health support person in her own community.

Gandhi said: "If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man (person) changes his (their) own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him (them). ... We need not wait to see what others do."<sup>3</sup> (This got transformed somehow into the bumper sticker "Be the change you wish to see in the world".)

This Forum Theatre project accomplished, though its authenticity and how that resonated for audiences, the task of challenging people to investigate their own behaviours inside the mental health arena, whether that was to break the culture of silence, or to stand up for their own health rights, or to make the space to see issues from another person's perspective, or to slow down enough to actually be present and listen and see, or to take a leadership role in structural change....so many other possibilities.

Pulling the project together and doing so much touring was very hard work for a lot of people – Theatre for Living people and Sponsors alike. We should, I think, feel good and celebrate what we accomplished.

The media page on the *Theatre for Living/maladjusted* website has photos, videos and links to interviews, if you are interested:

[http://www.theatreforliving.com/past\\_work/maladjustedTour/media\\_maladjusted.htm](http://www.theatreforliving.com/past_work/maladjustedTour/media_maladjusted.htm)

I want to give kudos to Mike Keeping from SHAW. The digital file that creates the DVD from the final performance and webcast was damaged beyond repair because of a power failure during the live event. Mike went back to the original camera shots and rebuilt the entire 2½ hour event, using and tweaking the sound from the cameras, because the sound track from the mics is embedded in the digital file. He had to then layer in our soundscape from our original sound files. A monumental task. Thanks Mike!

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<sup>3</sup> Suggestions in (...) are mine.

## The full *maladjusted* Report (the long version)

I make a point of writing after every day of work on a project. This accomplishes a couple of things: it helps me in my own processing and self-care inside what is always very intense work. It also forms the basis of reporting that is very honest and exists “in the moment”. What follows is an edited version of my daily notes.

### Rehearsals

This first day of rehearsal has been over a year in the making – from the conception of doing the tour, through fundraising, tour booking, the beginning of publicity, etc. It is a very good group of people. We have two new cast members as the original “Abby” and “Mia” could not tour. We also have our original “Jack” back, who created the role, but then had to have emergency gall bladder surgery just before we opened in 2013 and so could not do the run. We also needed to replace the support person, who could not tour. Missing from the photo are: our set designer, lighting designer, lighting TD and crew person, who were unable to attend today.



4

We have a new set design for touring and are going back in and re-working slides/video and sound, as we will be rear-projecting in this incarnation. The lighting design is also being redone – the difference between 90 or so lights in the theatre and 26 – 28 on tour.

After introductions, a discussion about touring and walking the cast through the set, we spent the rest of the morning talking about core issues in the play.

The characters:

Mia – Dani’s mother

Dani – Mia’s Daughter

Frank – Manager at New Springs Recovery and Mia’s brother-in-law, Dani’s Uncle

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<sup>4</sup> All photos from now on courtesy of David Diamond.

Dr. Deveraux – Psychiatrist and Director of the Clinic  
 Abby – Social worker at the Clinic  
 Jack – homeless, and Abby’s client

*While the play grows out of lived experience, all the actors are playing characters, not themselves.*

After lunch we did a stumble through of the play (after being away from it for 2 years!) Of course this was very, very rough, and at the same time, the shape of the play is there. I’d asked cast members to watch the 2013 DVD many times as prep for coming into rehearsals. I knew this would be possible for the original cast members, the story is deep inside them. Jack, for instance, was playing scenes with emotional integrity. This didn’t surprise me in a way, the actor has been so eager to get a second chance at doing this. One of the cast members did exactly what I asked them not to do – and that is write their lines out from the DVD. I asked them to get rid of their note-book today, and stop reading lines.

After lunch we made frozen images and this was very powerful – a terrific access into character, relationships, and the subtext of the relationships. I had each character sculpt the rest of the characters into an Image of Relationship to the sculptor. Then had everyone do internal monologues about their thoughts and feelings about the character who made the image. Then sentences – “Jack – I want you to....”...for instance. Then the character who made the Image said a sentence to each of the other characters. Many, many insights came from this:



In Frank’s Image – how deeply he feels that Mia (his sister-in-law) is a bad mother and is failing his deceased brother – and how deeply Mia knows this.

In Mia’s Image – how far away she has pushed her daughter after her husband’s death (and perhaps even before that). Dani is an “alien” in Mia’s world. How did she give birth to this chaotic child? She takes after her father. There is a bond between Mia and Abby – even though they never meet in the play. They



both feel they are surrounded by chaos and both feel they are on their own.



In Jack’s Image – it is the world against Jack, except for Abby who he depends on as his protector. What happens when he disappoints her and she is too burned out to accept that? What is it that has created a “Jack” who just can’t be self-sustaining?

In Dr. Deveraux's Image – how many of us see the medical professional in the shape Dr. Dev. is in? NONE of the characters see him that way or will accept that he is or could be that way. His whole training is aimed at him never appearing that way and there are no mechanisms inside the system to help him process. Frank made an interesting statement about this that he doesn't actually care what kind of rough shape Dr. Dev. may be in. He wants him to do his job.



Abby's Image brought up a discussion of how similar her shape is to Dr. Dev's. Does she know that? No. Does he? No. Jack is in a fetal position – he is in her care – his failure is her failure.

Dani's Image (which is missing for some reason) - I did something different with it on the spur of the moment and this ended up bringing the Company to tears (not a bad way to end the day...). Instead of sentences after the internal monologue I had each of them try to get what they wanted from Dani physically. They all converged on her, of course. Sentences were said. Dani's sentence to Dr. Dev was that she wanted him to "see her". His gaze, however, was to the ground and his hands were over his eyes. I peeled everyone away except them. Convince him, Dani. Get him to see you. She tried and tried. He can't. He is gazing at the ground, and his hands are over his eyes.

We left it there and will start to work on scenes tomorrow.

The hall got VERY noisy at about 4PM. Drummers (two of them) rehearsing right against our wall. It was really hard to think straight. I left with a headache as I am sure was the case for others. It was never this noisy last time at Renegade (which is also a music rehearsal studio). I called Dafne (Dafne Blanco is Theatre for Living's Office/Production Manager/Webmaster) and she called Jim who runs the space and he apologized, said he'd forgotten to inform people not to rehearse at that time and was going to get it to stop – but it never did stop....it was still going when we left. (This did sort out the next day.)

January 7, 2015

A very productive day. We put 5 scenes up out of 14. On schedule.

I've got one scene in rehearsal in the hall while the next scene is in the lobby going over the DVD and digesting....getting up and running. This is proving to be a good method. Once we get the play

up in rough we can start dealing with fine detail. I have to say it is nice to be in the rehearsal hall. I don't get to do this enough.

Mia is going to be quite different than the original, more complex. More layers. The character feels more real this time, because Columpa, who is taking over the role, is insisting on detail, of grounding her in understandable emotion. This comes, in part, from taking the role over and having to understand something that someone else created – to make emotional sense of the decisions and transitions, also inside a context of the play being constructed for Forum Theatre. This means that the moments do not resolve the way they might in a regular play; characters make 'bad' decisions. The authenticity comes from the bad decisions making complete sense to the actor inside the character. Her process is forcing me to question the arc of the character and because of that, also of Dani and of Frank, as they are all connected. This is a good thing.

Jack has come in with all the scenes functioning – this is making the task for his scene partners easier and this is good.

We did run into a set issue today: The wall separating the bedroom and Dr. Dev.'s office, seems to create a real sightline problem when Mia goes into Dani's bedroom. There is only one place she can stand – downstage left of the bed...but as far upstage as she can get so she can actually play with Dani. Tucked in there, about 33% of the audience (house right) won't see her. I put a request in to the set designer to fix this. This is the reason, for those readers who may not know this, that rehearsals happen with an exact duplication of the set marked out by tape on the floor.

My hope is to make it to the end of the play by end of the day Friday, then on Saturday do some deeper character work and some runs. Take Sunday and Monday off and get into deeper tuning runs, runs, transitions next week. All the transitions will change because we are now using our stage that has to be climbed on and off of for entrances and exits. In the Firehall in 2013 everything was flat. We had a good talk about this today – transitions – and the play being one long transition, not a series of scenes....of understanding it as music.

January 8, 2015

At the end of the day today we ran from the beginning to the end of scene 12 of 15. While we obviously have work to do some moments are already playing, and we all agree we are discovering new ones – new approaches to the original play.

I had a long talk with one of the actors today about the difference between saying things on stage because you are remembering what to say and discovering what to say. Of course discovery is only possible if the ideas, phrases, rhythms are embedded deep inside. This takes time in rehearsal. A key to success is approach – stop trying to learn the lines. Surrender to the emotional moments and let the right lines come from inside you.

The difference between playing on the floor at the Firehall Theatre in 2013 (with a raked audience) and now using our touring stage is emerging as one of the biggest shifts – this changes all the

entrances and exits, all the transitions. It is pretty amazing that we are looking at this after only 3 days of rehearsal.

Dr. Deveraux's phone call is much more relaxed and real feeling than it ever was. The relationship between Mia and Dani is deepening. A lovely rehearsal improvisation today with Charlene (our Support Worker) playing Mia's mother, who (we discover) suffered from depression, and making linkages inside Mia between her childhood trauma dealing with her own mother and now that behaviour manifesting in her daughter and the inappropriate ways she is dealing with it. This led to wonderful work in the diagnosis – an example of how the emotional history of the characters is truly the 'fuel' that makes the scenes work.

Good work by Jack and Frank on the street scene – this also has a flow and integrity to it. We see Frank 'pushing' Jack into a corner – trying to help him but not understanding how, until Jack, who has been off his meds for 3 days, loses it and assaults Frank.

The scene between Abby and Dr. Dev. is quite complex – a lot of information gets conveyed about how the structure is collapsing, and it needs to feel like conversation. This has always been a challenge with this scene. But it builds and blows up nicely when Frank arrives and challenges Dr. Dev. This led to quite a nice emotional breakthrough with the Doctor and Abby. It was a lot of work getting there but hopefully we can hold onto it. When Abby asks Dr. Dev. 'what happened to him'...this has to be a real blow for the character. The actor playing Dr. Dev. quit his practice and stood up to authority. Dr. Dev. doesn't have the courage. He just gives up inside the system and sees himself as a failure. If we can achieve this, it can be terrific and really bring the medical professionals' struggle into the story.

January 9, 2015

We blocked through to the end of the play today – the end scenes being really complex and intense. They took forever last time. Really – its quite amazing that we did a run that structurally, at least, held together at the end of the day today.

Frank and Mia play really wonderfully together – the actors are old friends and also seasoned performers, who also have lived knowledge of the issues. Its interesting straddling the various ways different members of the cast can be directed. They only have one scene together – very intense, near the end of the play.

The narrative feels darker this time around, perhaps just where we are in the re-creation process.

January 10, 2015

We spent the morning doing Character Interviews for Mia and Abby.

Mia was adopted at 6 into a nice family, but still ripped out of her home. She's never forgiven this trauma, has lost connection entirely with her birth family and has no intention of making contact.

As far as she is concerned Dani's maternal grandparents are her adoptive parents. She has no relationship with her First Nations heritage.

Greg, her husband, a First Nations man, killed himself when Dani was 13. (4 years ago.) He participated in sweats with Frank and healing ceremonies....but, hey – he killed himself! (This judgment from Mia) Dani is her father's daughter – this is one of the things that really worries Mia. There is no one in her life other than Dani – no one she confides in, no one she trusts. She is grateful to her adoptive parents but left where she grew up to make her own life. She is very much alone and proud of her accomplishments. Life is very ordered. If she lost Dani, all would be lost.

With Abby, what emerged is a sensibility of just 'knowing better'....the recovery house has to be better than the street – a step in the right direction. Abby knows best – she also needs to get Jack's file off her desk, as she is doing the work of three people.

We also did two runs today and while they held together structurally something is becoming apparent. The two new actors are discovering the play, which is what the cast were doing the first time around. It had a sense of being in their skin. Two of the original cast are in very different places in their lives now. More grounded and more 'distant' from the issues. At the moment they are trying to re-create the play and this just will not work. I have to find a way for them to give themselves permission to go back to that very messy territory and still be safe. It is clear that while intellectually they both want to do that, doing it emotionally is scary. I can understand why, but we have to if the play is going to have any real resonance. They can't "act" it; they have to "be" it. We'll have two days off now. I think having done so much in a short time, it is best to decompress a bit and also to let the play and characters bubble.

January 13, 2015

Some breakthroughs today. Mia and Dani took great steps to becoming mother and daughter today – we found some of the bonding between them via the flower in the hair scene.

We also may have cracked open the Abby/Deveraux relationship. I had them dancing together for quite a while today, running scenes (this also meant being somewhat physically intimate). It relaxed the lines...helped them to make sense of what they are saying and also built some 'bonds' between them. When we got to the scene where Abby confronts Dr. Dev and asks him what happened to him (to create such a heartless response) she was in tears. The character needs to be. This catapulted Dr. Dev. into an emotional place himself, which makes his exit work. Each character has their heart broken somehow in this play. Authenticity on stage is hard, risky work.

We had a similar journey with the scene that leads to injecting Jack. We deconstructed every moment to try to get the sequences right – what makes the sequences right is being emotionally grounded in the scene and listening.



January 14, 2015

Started the day redoing the Character Interview with Dani – I had thought I wouldn't do these with the old cast, but it proved valuable in terms of discovering the 'new' Dani who in THIS production is more clearly contemplating her father's and best friend's suicides ...and wondering about her own. It is a darker place. At the same time, the bonding with Mom (Mia) is also more clear – both the fun, playful parts and the struggles between protective Mom and young adult Dani. This manifested well in scenes.

Lots of work with Jack today – the scene with Frank in the street got much more aggressive from Frank – an insight into the "tough love" in the Recovery House and then also Jack and Dani in the street. Jack is giving a very real sketchiness...an edge to Jack while at the same time being a very sympathetic character. It is a far more dangerous thing that Dani does now, going into a back lane with this stranger to smoke weed.

We also did a run. Coming together....running at about 35 minutes right now we will get it down to about 32, I think. I have a welcome concern building and that is of the cast 'peaking' too soon. Something like this can be overworked. This is a result of pushing a bit to get the scenes back up in the first week – a good decision, I think, because the work we are doing now is all detail and deepening character and narrative. It is the detail of the small moments that creates the elegance and power of the production.

I'm considering shortening our hours or giving them an unplanned 2 day weekend – which would also mean Dorothy (Stage Manager) and I would get a very welcome day off.

Good things coming with production – the set is under construction, costume items are arriving, set/prop items...video is coming together....media interviews are starting to pop including I understand, interest from CTV.

January 15, 2015

We had two excellent runs today. Dima (Publicist) came and was in tears after, as was Charlene, who has seen it a dozen times. We have a play.

January 16, 2015

Another run and then I went over media stuff with the cast. The big focus there was:

1. They are not doing interviews *as their characters*....they are, however, speaking about issues in the play via the focus of their character. This is one reason the play is created and performed by people who are living the issues. Their own personal stories in all of their complexity MIGHT apply to their character's issues in the play...or might not. For instance, Christine's brother's suicide (this is in her bio, so it is public)...this fuels her desire as an activist, but the project is about the mechanization of mental health. It isn't a play about suicide and so the interview should not

veer off into a discussion about suicide. It is about mechanization of mental health and a desire to humanize care;

2. Various ways that they can be in control of the interview and only divulge as much personal information as they want to;
3. Their responsibilities to get the 'what, where, when and how' – to get ticket info into any interview they do.

Most of the day was spent getting into Forum Theatre mode and doing some internal Forum – cast members intervening on each others' scenes. I'm reminded how hard it is to make it to the end of this play in Forum – there is so much Forum potential.

We did a lot of talking today about the art of accepting audience interventions – giving the audience member enough space to try their idea....accepting and not blocking, and balancing that off with not just rolling over and doing whatever anyone wants....making it REAL however convenient or inconvenient that might be.

Amazing – tomorrow is our last day in the rehearsal hall!

January 17, 2015

Our last rehearsal day at Renegade....and what drama! Dorothy asked me at one point, "what sign are you born under?" There is history to the question:

In 2009 when she and I did *after homelessness*... together, the day after dress rehearsals we lost an actor and had to replace him; in 2011 when we did *Us and Them (the play)*, days before rehearsals were to start, the Vancouver Playhouse ended and we lost our rehearsal hall and scrambled to find a new one; in 2013 when we did the original *maladjusted*, the day before Tech rehearsals started, an actor needed emergency gall bladder surgery and needed to be replaced.

This morning, at about 8:45AM, the phone rang. Tim (Lighting Technical Director) was at the Maritime Labour Centre (MLC) to start moving things into the hall for set up, technical rehearsals and the last week of work before the tour. There was a fire upstairs at the MLC last night. The building was shut. Water and smoke damage downstairs, where the lights had been loaded in yesterday – they were fine. Thankfully, the set was still in the truck!

A lot of phone calling started to try to figure out what to do. I called Dafne (Office/Production Manager) who informed me she had had a sleepless night, with anxiety about something happening at the MLC (just too weird). She went to the office to start looking for new emergency space. Columpa, Sam and I posted an emergency notice on Facebook. One of the responses to Columpa (among others) was to check out the [Alpen Hall](#). I sent the suggestion to Dafne who was talking to many halls at that point. 3.5 hours after getting the news, Tim, Elisha (Technical Director)

and Robyn (crew person) were loading our stage into the Alpen (4875 Victoria Dr.)! Simply amazing. They are giving us a great deal.

While all this was going on, we cleaned up some scenes in the morning – the most important in a way, being Dr. Deveraux alone after Abby asks him what happened to him. I plotted it out step by step (subtext by subtext), emotion by emotion.... And we ran it many times.

We did a pretty mediocre run after lunch....this to be expected in a way – everyone is tired and also, I think, at this point, bored doing it for the same old 3 people. This happens. There is no juice. They need an audience.

Then we all helped get stuff ready for the move out – getting things into various piles and getting the tape off the floor, which seemed therapeutic for the cast ;)

And so, everything is being loaded into our new hall. We are, of course, behind schedule right now and the hall has ballroom dancing on Friday, which we need to accommodate...but all is fine. Let this be the last of the big surprises.

January 20, 2015

Numerous glitches.....We were going to give the cast 2 days off, Dorothy, Charlene and I one day, but the move created more complexity than originally imagined and the Tech Team needed more set-up time. So, the three of us got an extra day.

We were going to start cue to cue without actors this morning and start with the actors in the afternoon, but the lighting board is not the one we ordered. We have very knowledgeable people, but no one understands the board. Even the guy from the company we got the board from didn't understand the board! Some online tutorials helped, but Elisha and/or Tim finally called Dave, the Vancouver Playhouse head electrician and he came and together, over a few hours, he and Tim un-puzzled the lighting board. It became apparent we would have to push the schedule back further. We cancelled the cast coming in. This means 3 days without a run, but what to do?

We started building cues at 2PM and worked through to the end of the play, with a short dinner break, until 9:30 PM. Some of this is me – a directing style I guess. The transitions between scenes with light/sound/video and building an emotional narrative, so there are, in the end, a lot of cues, but the stage looks great – the video is working way better than in the first incarnation (partly because of the rear projecting and Cande also coming in with very rich images). We are doing a lot with 28 lights.

We promised the cast they would have their mornings off, and need to move into evening mode anyway. The cast is called for 1PM on Wednesday to get into costumes and body mics for a cue to cue. This will take some time. Then we HAVE to get a stumble through in tomorrow. We are OK, but we now only have Thursday for runs instead of Wednesday and Thursday. I am hoping we

don't have to do runs Friday daytime, but this is a possibility. We have an invited audience Friday at 8PM to get into the interactive Forum Theatre aspect, which is, actually, the bulk of the event.

For me, technical rehearsals are the most fun days of the whole process. Really getting to 'paint'. Thanks to the production team for being so present all day. Charlene said and I agree, that something that is so important is that this is not just a 'skit'....that the theatre production blows people away – even when we are in a school gym.

January 21, 2015

The cast arrived at 1:00, into costumes, mics....as is often the case with tech we had a hard time getting started. Not sure what that is, it is always like being in mud for a while. We got going by about 2:30.

We did a lot of good work yesterday and a lot of it stuck. As was to be expected, once we had the actors, timings of some things changed – them coping with real stairs was a big deal, and some of the cues needed restructuring – the idea of the cues with no actors being different than the reality with actors. We made our way through cue-to-cue which, because there are so many cues, was mostly a very detailed stop and start and stop run. The cast were great – no blow-ups, lots of patience.

There are a few sections of the play that are very dense in terms of light, sound and video cues. The beginning and end in particular. The video at the end still needs structuring work and so when we got there (at about 8:00 PM) we had to stop and abandon Tech. No point everyone waiting – we agreed to get to a run, knowing we still had the last 20 or 30 seconds of the play to understand.

The run went about 32 minutes. Pretty terrific considering all the cues we inserted and the cast having been away from it for 3 days. And the technical side held together really well. Wonderful work everyone.

Something very big became obvious in the run. We've just been dealing with this in Tech but I realized what it means in the run. There is a very big chandelier hanging in the middle of the room and a \$35,000 slide projector. These belong to the Alpen Hall and are both casting a lot of shadows on the actors. We would never allow this in a performance venue, this is an emergency rehearsal hall. But this means that all these shadows will be in any video shot and in any photos shot. I do not believe we can move either the chandelier or the projector. The folks at the Alpen have been very generous and understanding, but there are limits. So, what does this mean?

I think we have to move the photo shoot to the Firehall when we get back. There is zero point in shooting the show with shadows everywhere. We CAN continue to use the promo shots from the 2013 production for the tour and do an archival shoot at the Firehall, during a run – not a public show.

We did a great deal today and the run held together remarkably well. We need runs!!!

January 22, 2015

We cleaned up various scenes this afternoon and some video sequences, and finished Tech on the last 30 seconds of the play. The images look great and when the sequence runs integrated with actors I think it really moves the audience along into the final moment of Dani cutting. Then we set curtain and the lighting transitions into Forum.

We had a good run before dinner...integrate, integrate....After dinner we did another run – our best one yet. I always harp on this, but the emotional integrity is the very heart of the theatre. The lights, the sound, images have to work and support that (and they need to be crisp and elegant) but if the emotional integrity is not there, what we end up with is a sound/light show. No disrespect intended. We took steps today (and right on schedule) to breaking through into a really good piece of theatre with a powerful story, supported by really great integration of set, costumes, light, images and sound.

We are all really tired. So having consulted with Dorothy and Charlene I've not called the cast in for the afternoon tomorrow. They are called for 6:30 to get into costumes and mics. Doors open for the invited Forum at 7:30.

I am meeting Cande and Dorothy at 4:30 to finish up some cues and sequences.

January 23, 2015 (open rehearsal)

approx. 20 people

Our first real Forum. The idea of the open rehearsals was to invite original workshop participants and TfL trainees, people who really knew the work, so it was "family" to start doing Forum interventions with. I made a big speech to the cast about this at 7:30 to help them feel safe about this first attempt. At 7:45, having asked who the people were because I recognized so few of them, I learned that many of the original invitees couldn't make it (or said they were coming and didn't show) and so most (not all) of the 20 or so person audience were people who'd never seen Forum before....some of them clients from mental health organizations. The evening went quite well – but it was quite a bit more "real" than had been planned or anticipated as a "first open rehearsal".

The play, for understandable reasons, started off quite nervous. The first few scenes were tentative – quite 'performed'. We settled in at around the 'intake' and then from there on went pretty well. Some light/video glitches but we know what and why.

I have a lot to remember in terms of what needs to be said off the top. Forgot some things today, others out of sequence. It will settle down.

The Forum went well, though. There are editing decisions to make about which scenes to look at. I chose to do Forum on 'the street', where Dani and Jack meet tonight - something we usually didn't do in the 2013 run. There is the potential for completely different kinds of interventions/discussions there than in anywhere else in the play. It eats up time, though. I think it is a decision between that and where Frank and Jack meet and get violent.

I'm reminded that this really does take 2.5 hours. If we start at 7:30 it will be 10:00. If we start at 7:45, it will be 10:15. I just can't do it faster.

Lots of great feedback from people after, those that knew the work and those that had no idea what they were coming to. Both "kinds" of audience members made interventions. 1 down, 38 to go!

January 24, 2015

45 people

Interesting...there were more "friends" tonight and it was harder to get them started for the Forum. Many of them came to talk after and said they were so overwhelmed by the play that they didn't know what to do. (While appreciated, also not certain this is a good thing.)

The play is in good shape although the opening remains tentative for some of the actors. Nerves. Hopefully this will decrease. We are still missing some sound/light/video cues. I'm trusting it will wear in, like a good pair of shoes. The opening sequence is quite lovely when it all goes as designed. All in all the tech side has been amazing.

I'm struggling (like last time in 2013) to get to the end of the play in the Forum. There's just too much material. These are, I think, the essential Forum scenes:

Abby informs Jack about New Springs and he agrees;

The flower in Dani's hair (we won't do the first bedroom scene as the 2 scenes give us similar things);

The intake at New Springs (start this with just Frank and Jack);

The diagnosis;

\*Frank and Jack in the street leading to the violence;

Abby and Deveraux and Frank;

\*Jack and Dani in the street;

Dani comes home to Mia cleaning, and then Frank arrives;

Injecting Jack.

\*It is too many. And so I've been playing with EITHER Frank and Jack in the street, OR Dani and Jack in the street. BOTH have given us great Forum...the former Saturday night, the latter Friday night.

People loved the Forum. There was lots of laughter and tears, some beautiful interventions on behalf of Dani, and Mia, and Frank. I took time to ask the audience for insights at the end and this seemed important and the right thing.

The crew is tearing down at the hall today and taking their time loading into the 5 ton truck. The pack has to be very carefully thought out. Dorothy and I pick the van up on Monday. And so....off we go. The crew gets into the venue in Squamish 2 hours early; cast one hour early. It is our first time in the real world.

## Squamish

Capacity 140  
 Attendance 170  
 % of house 121%

"The issues addressed in *maladjusted* resonated deeply with me and with all of us in the audience. It took great courage on behalf of the actors and some audience members too and I really enjoyed the interactive and improvisational themes used."  
 Tennessee Trent, Squamish<sup>5</sup>

Well....after a very rough day yesterday and start to the day today, we had a great opening show! Wonderful work from the organizers.

Yesterday at about 3pm a saga started that involved a cast member who went into a personal crisis and was suddenly not coming on tour! After a lot of calls from Charlene, Dorothy and me it calmed down.

Then, half way through Dorothy picking up the cast this morning the van broke down! Which started a flurry of calls to the rental agency and BCAA, then cancelling BCAA and the rental agency sending out a new van from Langley. The cast who were sitting in the van with nowhere to go were very patient...we got 'on the road' about 90 minutes behind schedule.

This meant a lot of pressure at the hotel end to have dinner before getting to the venue an hour early as planned, to do the first dressing of the set and warm ups. The set was up and ready for us. I haven't yet heard how long that took. The Tech Team had an extra hour and I think used it all...there seemed to be agreement it would get faster.

There were things to sort out: If we want the cast to pack the set dressing at the end of the evening, (this really saves the Tech Team some time) we have to leave it all for them to do at the beginning of the evening. There was a great deal of stress on them after the show (this led to a company meeting) because they didn't really have any direction and not having taken everything out of the boxes (for instance the wine and glass were set when they got there)...they had no idea where it should go. We've also settled now that getting the set UNdressed and put away is a top priority. They will do this BEFORE getting out of costume and mics, but they have to have space to do it before the set starts coming down around them.

We had never done this before, so, things to learn about it. Important to understand they've just finished a very grueling and emotional 2.5 hours, doing the show and Forum.

I'm pleased to say that while we started 15 minutes late, we came down at 10:00 sharp, meaning we did it in 2 hours 15 minutes! ;). I did something the cast liked tonight – I gave the audience a choice of doing the Jack/Frank in the street scene OR the Jack/Dani in the street scene. This audience chose Jack/Frank.

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<sup>5</sup> All quotes are used with permission.

There were quite a few interventions that were about the power of youth – replacing Dani in various ways, all done by very strong young women.

Also interventions in which the medical professionals decided to break the rules...Frank gives Jack back his meds; (and risks consequences)...Dr. Dev. signs a release on meds for Jack (and, if anything goes wrong, risks malpractice)...Dr. Dev. takes the TIME to really talk with Dani – which is, in the system in which we are living, also breaking “rules”. I asked the audience how many had solved a problem by breaking the rules...70% of the hands went up. “wow...a room full of rule breakers!”...much laughter, but the message, subtly, is that we create change by rule breaking. A nice moment, I thought.

People commented on how much they loved the diversity of the audience. This is the Outreach methodology working....bringing Native and non-Native organizations together to bring the play into a community.

I was also asking for policy suggestions this evening, and as I am writing, realize I missed asking for things that are SPECIFIC to Squamish....although that could be because we are still so close to Vancouver. I didn't get a chance to talk with the woman who was the Scribe after, but I know she was very busy.

I really don't like the mics we have. We are having so many issues....they drop out...they overload...we didn't have these issues with *Meth*<sup>6</sup> and had the exact same set-up. It must be these mics. They seem to be way too directional. If situated on the left side, if the actor turns their head to the right, we can't hear them. Charlene is trying to ride sound now, as well as do the lights, but the sound is often muddy or too loud or not loud enough. Not certain what to do about it.

SO MUCH wonderful feedback from the people who run the hall, from medical professionals, from youth....a very good night. And so, we are open. I'm really hoping things calm down.

## Nanaimo

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Capacity   | 200 |
| Attendance | 185 |
| % of house | 93% |

"I took my 14-year-old son to see *maladjusted*. We loved it. I wasn't sure what my son would take from it but he was affected by one of the main characters being a teen. The play kept his attention the entire time and he talked about his favourite characters and favourite scenes for an hour after we left! Thank you to everyone involved!

Monica (last name withheld), Nanaimo

Nanaimo WAS sold out, in fact they turned people away at the door, but had no shows. We need to be explaining to the organizers that there will always be 'no shows' and they should keep a waiting list at the door.

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<sup>6</sup> *Meth* was a Forum Theatre project, created and performed by people who had struggled with addiction issues, played Vancouver and toured BC in 2006 and then toured Western Canada under the title *shattering* in 2008.

<http://www.theatreforliving.com/pastwork.htm>



We had our first standing ovation of the tour – interesting because the show was a little bit flat.

We arrived at the theatre 90 minutes before show time – 60 minutes before opening. We JUST made it. I didn't have a chance to chat with the Scribe – just ran out of time. But it is also the case that the crew had an hour less than in Squamish and they were not finished when we arrived. We can't arrive earlier. I am hoping everything gets more efficient – this was only our second 'real world' show.

When the first run of the play finished tonight there was dead silence. The cast came to the front of the stage and stood there in dead silence. It wasn't until they started to leave that the applause started. This is a very good sign as it is an indication of the deep place the audience is left when the play finishes.

Also, one of the interesting things about tonight was that the interventions all came really early in scenes. This sped the night along – we finished by 10 easily, even having started at 7:45. I didn't have to rush.

Insights that were articulated tonight were that situations and people are not as simple as they appear – that we need to ask questions - take the time for this – policies suggested around this to be enforced in diagnosis; that we need to stop prescribing drugs being the first response – policies around other options being tried BEFORE prescribing. I'm getting interested to see the policy documents that come. The organizers were very, very happy.

## Duncan

|            |      |
|------------|------|
| Capacity   | 104  |
| Attendance | 124  |
| % of house | 119% |

"I would like the cast and everyone associated with *maladjusted* to know how truly enriching your presentation was for our community. Our Service Area is impacted by client perceptions of 'Stigma' and Mental Health – particularly child and youth mental health - your efforts very clearly shone light on both issues. "

Malcolm Crockett, President of the Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association, Duncan

A relatively quiet day. Out of the hotel at noon (late checkout), an hour to Duncan and into the hotel rooms.

We are arriving 90 minutes before the show and the crew is just finishing set-up. It is taking them from 1:30 to 5:30 (4 hours). I don't think this is going to get faster. It is what it is. We take over. The cast dress the set, get into costumes and mics. I meet with the Sponsor and go over some details, Charlene starts putting her list together that I need for the stage, meets with the support team, organizes programs etc....Dorothy takes over the space and finishes getting Tech ready, props, etc. We run scenes with sound. Sound was ugly today – a big boomy gym. Lots of echo. It is what it is in community halls. Then I meet with the Scribe....(today's was a substitute and I had to tell her everything as she had't been briefed), and then if there is a First Nations Elder (there was not today) meet with him/her, and then into the show.

The play is strong. We need to relax with what we have – with its power. There was, again, dead silence when it ended.

Some interesting interventions. A man from the BCGEU replaced Dr. Dev. And started encouraging Abby to lodge formal complaints with the Union. Would Dr. Dev. do this? Well....it isn't THAT far away from what the actor did in real life. It was very entertaining and had a lot of laughter in it.

A woman replaced Mia at the end of the play and was building a bond with Dani, until Frank came in. And then things got very heated again....but the woman did a very interesting thing. She deferred to her brother-in-law...she recognized his expertise, something our Mia never does (again, this is about control) and also not wanting things to get 'unknown' and 'messy'. An interesting analogy came up of the 3 family members holding hands and jumping off a cliff into the unknown.

A woman replaced Frank in the final scene and calmed down enough to give Abby space to try to find a solution. This led to a decision, also involving Dr. Dev. to get Jack his meds. Then Abby said, well....let's sit down and talk (instead of getting the meds). The other players were taken aback by this. I froze the scene and step by step Jack, who was pissed off, got out of the clinic and into the street. I processed this with as much honesty as possible. People understood the pattern of deciding to take action and then disintegrating into talking.

The organizer was really happy and again, a standing prolonged ovation and so much wonderful thanks and feedback.

## Victoria

|            |      |
|------------|------|
| Capacity   | 300  |
| Attendance | 315  |
| % of house | 105% |

"I was deeply moved by *maladjusted*. What struck me was the number of young people and that several had the gumption to do an intervention. Most of the events I attend are full of retirees. So clearly you're approach is working. Thank you."  
Dorothy Field, Victoria

"Thanks so much for your *maladjusted* presentation. It was wonderful to see how many people participated and how deep some of the interventions were. For me this is the main benefit of theatre forums: the sharing of the power of theatre to express issues and discuss them in community: it is a beautiful activity and it never ceases to move me. I also loved the fact that half of your actors were First Nations, and I appreciated greatly their talent and their presence. It certainly makes a difference, and shows that we are developing and advancing in humanity, becoming more and more inclusive."  
Lina de Guevarra, Victoria, founder of PUENTE Theatre

A terrific audience tonight, and they loved it. I had, however a very rough evening. I started really frazzled, having run around trying to figure out chairs for the cast backstage, getting washrooms open for the public, having chairs moved away from being too close to the lighting trees, getting people stationed over the very long lighting tree legs so audience members wouldn't trip...

This was also a huge house. Great and also intimidating. How does one 'hold' that many people in Forum? In fact the Forum went really well but I forgot so many things in the in-between-bits:

Walked onstage having forgotten to turn my mic on; forgot to introduce the support people and scribe after the play and before the Forum; (did this after the first intervention and acknowledged I was having a rough night and a woman yelled...well – you are human – to much applause;)); then I forgot to bring the organizers to the front at the end (was too focused on remembering the Mayor who wanted to speak)...and feel REALLY bad about this, they did SO MUCH work. They both say it's OK...but it isn't, really. They needed acknowledging.

One of the problems I am having is needing to do some thank you items before, some in between and some after. I am thinking about doing ALL the thank yous after. The main organizing body can wait until the end to be thanked.

The play is, as we know, very strong. It is coming time to do a notes session, though. Moments are starting to wander. This is normal.

There were some wonderful interventions tonight. A young man replaced Mia in the hair scene and dove into telling Dani that Mia's father had suffered depression. He was shaking. This opened up a tentative space for Dani to talk with her mother and a conversation about the courage of being visible.

A young woman replaced Dani in the diagnosis and was very powerful in insisting that there were options other than drugs as a first response;

A young woman replaced Dani in the final scene and brought Mia to such tears, asking for a simple connection with her mother;

A woman replaced Abby in the take-down of Jack and got more than she bargained for, first calming Jack and then Frank, juggling so many different energies but persevering.

Another standing ovation at the end of the evening and the Chief coming to me and asking if it was ever possible to speak to his youth group. Lina de Guevara (an old friend who directs theatre – retired now and doing story telling) commented on how strong the cast is. A woman went to two of the cast members who have zero theatre experience prior to this and told them she'd looked in the program, wondering what theatre school they had gone to because they were so 'real' on the stage and realized they had no training! This made them very happy.

The actor who went into crisis seems much more stable now. Perhaps the rhythm of touring is becoming visible. The cast also found something – because my box office reconciliation took so long tonight and they had to wait for me, they put music on and danced together for quite a while after the audience left. This really worked to release them of the characters. A good thing.

## Port Alberni

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Capacity   | 150 |
| Attendance | 104 |
| % of house | 69% |

A very different night. We had a good day off but people are tired and a little cranky. We are starting our first of 4 shows in a row. I'm predicting we will be getting on the ferry a little ragged.

We had a major mic issue in the venue – all of the radio mics were going haywire. At about 7PM we realized that it was a radio mic transmitter on in the building that was interfering with ours.

Some of the cast feel they are waiting too long for the show to start once they finish what they have to do – dressing the set, sound checks, some scene runs. Dorothy, Charlene and I have a lot to do beyond what the cast needs to do, though. With something going wrong today we were barely ready when the doors opened.

Apparently, Port Alberni has great services through the First Nations health sector. They have a facility that WILL give people access to meds that were prescribed by their physician, as long as they verify the meds are what the label says they are. They have medical professionals on call 24/7. They have a 'housing first' policy....This made me quip that we should send our Vancouver homeless population to Port Alberni!

This also meant there were some wonderful and really knowledgeable interventions. There was also, in the end, some wishful thinking. A woman replaced Dr. Dev. in the diagnosis. This is happening a lot (and just changing him dramatically)....it doesn't seem to matter how much I try to avoid it by asking people if they REALLY understand his struggle and are on stage to engage in that struggle. Mia and Dani responded beautifully when this new Dr. indicated that the files he was holding about Dani were meaningless. They wondered why they were there and walked out, amid much laughter and much to the intervener's amazement. She was trying to help. But they are there for his expertise. This was a very deep moment in the Forum, partly because it had been so funny and humour cuts deep. But seriously...what do we want of him? What are our expectations of him? And how do these expectations help create the "box" he inhabits?

A woman replaced Dani in the final scene and broke hearts...asking Mia to be "the mother" and not "the child". We opened up a conversation about role reversals in families and whether or not Mia and Dani are prepared to change how they are together, not knowing what it means.

A man replaced Frank in the final scene and let go of Frank's anger towards Jack. There was a magical element to this and I called the audience member on it. This led us into a conversation, though, about how professionals let go of the emotions that build up – stay professional (but human)...a very tough balancing act.

So much more but I'm really tired. It will be very interesting to see the Policy Report from tonight.

## Campbell River

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Capacity   | 100 |
| Attendance | 50  |
| % of house | 50% |

"*maladjusted* sends an important message and it was such a very powerful experience. Congratulations to all involved, it was fabulous!"  
Linda Gardner, Campbell River

A lot happened today. One of our Tech Team learned this morning that their mother is very ill. The Team Member is flying to Kamloops in the morning. This threw us into disarray, of course. Word went out through various avenues but in the end it was The Team Member who found someone – an old friend in Ladysmith named Mike. We haven't met yet but people are sure Mike can fill the gap for the next two shows up the Island. Our person is counting on rejoining us on the 9<sup>th</sup> in Terrace – we have a show in Kitimaat Village on the 10<sup>th</sup>. (Everything turned out fine with their mother in the end.)

We had a difficult night. 50 people tonight, mostly via the Schizophrenia Society – meaning not the general public. I don't believe there was much advertising or outreach. It was a pretty private event.

There were six volunteers to get the set in (as contractually agreed upon) – three left after the play. The cast helped get the set down while I did box office and then I pitched in. This is not how things are supposed to be.

There were some interesting and heartfelt interventions tonight, and one quite surprising one – the last of the evening: A woman (a social worker, I think) replaced Abby in the final scene and when Frank came in she went after him for being so angry, and when Jack wanted his meds she snapped at him to wait until she dealt with Frank, and in the end, Jack went out into the street in a terrible state and Frank shut the door on his relationship with Abby – they both felt so disrespected. When I asked her what she thought had happened, her response was that Frank and Jack “blew it” and had to be responsible for their actions. Did the escalation have anything to do with Abby? ‘No – it is all in their reaction’, she said. I was quite taken aback by this and so asked the audience what they had witnessed – people talked about this Abby having escalated the arguments with both characters by her attitude, of missing the opportunity to separate the two of them and DE-escalate the situation, etc. She was very surprised by this. I'm pretty good at finding positive things in people's interventions but this was very hard. I do believe, however, that there was a lot of learning in the moment, if not for the intervener, then for other members of the audience.

We finished at 10:15 (the event taking 2:15) but it was a long evening for people. As is always the case, people expressed their appreciation in person. One of the organizers came to me and was sad there weren't more people and said, “well....next year we will do better”. I explained there was no ‘next year’ – it had taken 18 months to raise the money for this....”Oh – that's too bad”, he said. “I guess this was our chance.”

## Port Hardy

|            |      |
|------------|------|
| Capacity   | 100  |
| Attendance | 110  |
| % of house | 110% |

Some very good things happened today. The cast member who almost didn't make it onto the tour came to me today and we talked about their social anxiety, being in the van, staying with different people. They also had the courage to go to each cast member and be open about this and apologize for their behaviour and explain they were trying to do something about it. Odd to put it this way, I know, but I was so proud of this person it made me cry.

We got to the venue and everything was in order....the set was up, focus was happening, it seemed calm. Mike (Tim's temporary replacement) is a nice guy and certainly seems to know his stuff.

Then there are the microphones. Have I mentioned I hate our sound system? Today, the problem was with Frank's mic crackling terribly and cutting out. Two days ago it was Abby's. Also today the sash mic (that we use for audience members intervening) was working badly. Yesterday we could hear audience members, today not – even though placement is the same and the gain was up at the maximum.

Having said all that, we did really well tonight. When the play ended there was that absolute dead silence. I heard a woman gasp...."wow...."

There were also some powerful interventions. In particular, a young man replaced Mia in the last scene and instead of telling Dani how much Mia cared, loved, was worried – this Mia divulged her own weaknesses - became vulnerable. It was such a courageous act and many were in tears. There were such lessons in it about humanization.

The organizers did great here and were so thankful we had come to Port Hardy.

Off to Alert Bay in the morning and then the ferry to Rupert. The Company is looking forward to the "cruise break".

## Alert Bay

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Capacity   | 100 |
| Attendance | 76  |
| % of house | 76% |

Craziness at the cabins in Alert Bay. They sent Dafne an email this morning and mentioned nothing, but when we got there, they had had a flood two days previous and could not put us all in the cabins. It took forever to sort it out, at one point all of us from the van standing in the rain trying to figure out who was going where. The folks from the cabins couldn't seem to understand

why I needed to know where everyone was going to be, and what the accommodation was going to be like.

In the end, Elisha and Mike are in a cabin, Robyn is in a single cabin, Martin, Micheala and Charlene are each in a single cabin, Sam, Christine and Pierre are 'downtown' each in lovely single rooms on the water, and Columpa, Dorothy and I are in a house. We all have cooking facilities. We will need to shuttle people to the venue and then back after...then pick them up in the morning to get the ferry.

And then, a very good house considering there was a death in the community, a bingo tonight, and a Feast tomorrow! Lots of courage amid the silences in the Forum.

I'm writing the next day from the ferry to Prince Rupert. Water is getting a bit rough and the excitement of some of the company is turning a bit green....;).

We continue to be plagued by mic problems. Sometimes from the console and sometimes from the body packs. It is happening for a different person at every show, and really compromises the integrity of the play.

Having said that the response in Alert Bay was, once again, very strong. Silence and tears at the end of the play. Some of the interventions were also filled with real clarity – around humanizing the system in a way that served people and not the system itself: Clear information and counseling prior to medication, the ability to honour prescribing Doctor's prescriptions.

We stopped in Port Hardy this morning at a mall for a couple of hours, before going to the ferry. Cast members were getting stopped by people who saw the show in Alert Bay last night and who loved it. One of them got asked for an autograph. He was beside himself.

Next morning – still on the ferry. The company is awake and tired – many of them, apparently, were up very late last night...;) They all look rough but happy – they've loved the ferry. I was going to call a Company meeting for when we got ON the ferry – it is time for one, and then decided to do it this morning, and have now pushed it to when we get to the Terrace hotel. We haven't had one yet and giving everyone a chance to speak in the group...concerns, grievances.... applause.... helps keep the group healthy. The waves calmed down, by the way, (and increased again around midnight for a while when we hit open water for a bit) but mostly its been very smooth.

And so we will start the next chapter of the tour, in winter. There's been concern about blizzard conditions around Terrace. Maybe it is the Winnieperger in me, but I have a hard time getting worried about snow on a majour highway.

## Kitimaat Village



Wow. Its been a while since I had time to write. How'd that happen? Briefly:

We got to Terrace a day after the worst storm to hit Terrace and Kitimat in a decade had dumped many meters of snow on both communities. It didn't take long to figure out that the Kitimaat Village show could not happen. The Village had to be evacuated because there was no power. Many people were



camping in the rec center which was supposed to be our venue. Eric, the main organizer, was still trying to find a way for us to perform, but after chatting he and I agreed that trying to do the show was not appropriate. The timing was just wrong. If we were touring something light that might have uplifted their spirits, it might've been different. But we are touring this play. It is very challenging.

This meant we had a few days on our hands in Terrace. People managed but some of the cast got quite bored. I decided it would be best to leave for Hazelton a day early. This meant we did not have to travel two hours and do a show the same day. We are in Hazelton now, and have a show tomorrow.

In the meantime a crisis opened up in Chetwynd. After speaking at some length with Dafne and David Ng, I called the original organizer. It's a complex story. The original organizer had been very, very excited about bringing the project into the community. They became ill, however, and is currently on health leave. They handed the organizing over to another person. It turns out the new organizer is now in their own crisis. They evidently may be taking their own mental health leave. Ironically, this is part of the content of the play...the burnout factor in health workers, but organizing the play became just too much of a burden amidst all the other crises. They have canceled the show in Chetwynd.

The original organizer spent a fair bit of time on the phone with me. They expected more people to embrace the organizing work, having been so enthusiastic about the project. When it came time to do the work necessary, people just did not step up. The irony is that *shattering* (our play on addiction issues) did very well there a few years ago. I agree with them it is very sad. But it is what it is. They agree completely that under the terms of the contract their cancellation means they owe us the fee. They were very good about this.

We have had requests for the show from Dawson Creek and from Tumbler Ridge. David Ng is investigating both options. The Tumbler Ridge option is difficult as it is over three hours in and over three hours out to Fort St. John. Dawson Creek is just over three hours in and only an hour to



an hour and a half out to Fort St. John. We shall see what happens. Yes, it is only a week away, but if Dawson Creek wants it badly enough it can be organized this quickly.

We visited K'san today, have the show tomorrow, and will visit with my adoptive parents on our day off. Gloria is making moose soup. ☺.

## Hazelton

|            |      |
|------------|------|
| Capacity   | 100  |
| Attendance | 128  |
| % of house | 128% |

A great night in my "home away from home"<sup>7</sup>. We had a really diverse audience – lots of youth from various Reserves came in on buses, Elders, and also the non-Native community. A few local Doctors. Treatment centre people.

Stuff continues to bubble in some of the company. I tried to explain to everyone before we left that a tour like this has a shape to it: It is very exciting at first, and then the honeymoon ends and "the work" starts. For some people it will feel like purgatory and they'll want to go home. This is normal. And then, suddenly... it's ending and everyone loves everyone, and what a great time we had. The problem is telling people this and them really understanding it inside themselves are two different things. We talk, we process and we keep breathing.

The play was a little sleepy off the start tonight – to be expected, I guess...first show in five days (!) It really lit on fire about ¾ of the way through, at the Jack/Dani scene.

The Forum was so different. In the first intervention in the Jack/Abby scene a man yelled stop and replaced Abby and did what many have done – he took the time to really deal with Jack but something else happened. He suggested Jack meet some of the guys from the recovery house. Okay, this led me to ask if there were any men in the audience who had experience in recovery houses. Three of them came onto the stage (one quite a young guy) and we played a scene where Jack got to meet them and also Frank. This has never happened before (and never happened again) and it broke the ice in such a great way. The young guy really connected with Jack. So much so that they had a real heart-to-heart conversation after the play. The actor gave this young man his spare shoes because it's winter and his shoes have holes in them.

A young woman replaced Dani and spoke so quietly no one could hear her, even though she was miked. Mia was great with her. She managed to play the scene as Mia but also really support this teenage girl who had an idea and was terrified to be on the stage. This new Dani asked her mom for help. This sounds simple but really it isn't. We got a chance to talk about that, and the wonderful things that can happen if we have this kind of courage.

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<sup>7</sup> I carry a Gitxsan name, given to me by Chief Bill Blackwater Sr. in 1987 when we were collaborating on No` Xya` (Out Footprints). I've remained very close to the Blackwaters and other members of the community.

A young man replaced Frank in the Dr. Devereux/Abby/Frank scene. He found a way for Frank to really keep his cool with the doctor. This led to Dr. Dev. agreeing to call Jack's doctor to see if he would okay the prescription. 'In order to play this scene, we need another doctor' and so I asked if there was a doctor in the house knowing there were three. One of them offered to come onto the stage and agreed, because she knew the patient and knew the doctor calling her, to fax over an okay for the prescription. Lots to learn from this in terms of how we do not alienate people in a crisis and how we network and then use those networks.

A young man with obvious experience with his mother replaced Mia in the last Mia and Dani scene. He worked hard from a very emotional place and when Frank arrived he gave Frank the space to be family and to help Mia and Dani. After, in front of the audience, he talked about the importance of family and giving people the space to be family members. Very powerful.

And then the young recovery house guy replaced Jack in the final scene. I asked him if he understood Jack's struggle and the intensity in the moment and he assured me he did. I actually think he did, but gave us a very serene Jack. It was unrealistic to say the least. And yet there were things to take from it. He managed to own the mistake he made going to Frank's nieces house. This opened up space for Frank to maybe forgive him in the future.

Lisa the central organizer, made a lot of thank you's and a long speech at the end. She called the crew onto the stage and give us all gifts. The evening had been a wonderful success.

We have the day off tomorrow. The Gitanmaax Tribal Office has agreed to open K'san at noon tomorrow so the company can get inside the museum and gift store there. Then we are going to Bill and Gloria's, my adoptive parents, for a visit and moose soup. Then the next day, a 3 hour drive and a show in Burns Lake. The company is happy to be working again. We had too much time on our hands.

## **Burns Lake**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Capacity   | 80  |
| Attendance | 45  |
| % of house | 56% |

1:30 AM First let me say that we had a great show and Forum tonight. Really proud of the company. The play had a very deep emotional integrity tonight. Numerous things happened today to bring the cast together. It was very good. And then the Forum was wonderful with many unusual ideas in it, even from this very small audience. Some highly emotional and heartfelt interventions on the stage, from people who were really living the issues.

There were many young people in the audience tonight, I'd say about 50% of the audience. One of the interventions was about Dani speaking her truth. Saying what was really on her mind. The opportunity presented itself to speak to the young people about this. To say to them that if they have the courage to do what happened on the stage, good things can happen. The young people were riveted to the event. We did good here tonight. Another standing ovation.

However..... The volunteers for get-in were 4 teenage girls who spent most of their time texting their friends. The Tech Team had to commandeer people from the Gym Class to help them unload the truck. Then after the play, I asked for help and 3 people stayed – which meant the cast and Dorothy and I helped tear everything down and get it into the truck. The cast were great about this. We finally finished at about 12:45 AM. The sponsor had left by then and so had all the volunteers, except for 2 people who came because they had been told they would be paid to help. The Sponsor told me – it is on the reconciliation sheet, that she had \$500 to pay volunteers. She left and no one got anything. All that was open this late in Burns Lake was the Town Pantry attached to the Chevron Station. We took everyone there and they got what “food” they could...chips, juice, sandwiches...microwave chili...and the Company paid for it. It came to about \$100.

The school where we performed has a very strong Drama program. When the Tech Team got to the school the people in the drama program were saying, ‘there’s a play here tonight? Really?’ The advertising and networking simply were not done here. And the issue with the volunteers is inexcusable. We are very clear about needing 6 strong and committed people. It is part of the contract.

Also the scribe did not show up and the two support people also did not show up. So I asked the sponsor and Charlene to be the support people. This meant we had no scribe tonight and there will be no community action report.

### **Fort St. James**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Capacity   | 100 |
| Attendance | 53  |
| % of house | 53% |

The volunteers were plentiful and great. The Health Centre sponsored and bought 100 tickets at \$20.00 each to make the guarantee. Then gave the tickets away for free. The organizer imagined that everyone would come – each ticket cost \$20! Of course there was a very high no-show rate. This is just a sad reality of the overarching culture in which we all live. Things that are free are undervalued.

The play was pretty solid tonight. The Forum was really tough. The quietest audience yet. Part of the issue tonight, I think, is something they mentioned from the audience. They all know each other. There is no anonymity at all in a community this small. There are good and bad things about that. While difficult this isn’t a “bad thing”. Part of the power of this work is that it meets each audience where that audience is, not where we wish or assume they could or should be.

An intervention that really hit me involved a woman who replaced Mia in the hair scene and talked with Dani about her own mental health struggles. Dani related to this very well. Of course ‘our Mia’ would not do this so readily, but this woman did it in such a way that it had integrity for the character. In discussing it ‘breaking silences’ came up and a deep wave of emotion came through me. Not certain what that was....might be the stress of the tour....but it was impossible to

contain. My emotion created the same in the woman from the audience – now we were both in tears....and I looked over and so were some cast members, who were offstage. In the midst of the company tensions, this was a good and vulnerable human moment.

This was such a silent crowd tonight. There was a different feeling at the end tonight. This is the first time there were not a lot of people coming and saying how amazing the event had been...or saying that from the stage...I think this audience found the event very challenging. I had to ask for interventions in every scene...cajole, etc. They really wanted other people to get up on the stage, or just throw ideas out from their seats.

The scribe tonight was the Director of the Health Agency, though, and she took a lot of notes. I am hoping for something strong from her. This is the first community we have been in where there is no shelter for men – or at least the first time it has been mentioned.

We did an intervention on the floor tonight, with a woman who uses a walker. The cast were wonderfully flexible. This “Abby” really laid into Frank in the final scene. He has crossed the line. But it really is personal. People understand Frank’s dilemma and yet want him to remain professional. This Abby really put herself out there and was going to spend a lot of time with Jack, getting him his meds and perhaps other housing – and also report Frank to his supervisor. I asked her what she was going to do to take care of herself in all this. Does she recognize Abby’s potential for burnout? Yes, she obviously did from the emotion inside her. How do we have Abby do all this and still keep her safe? ‘That’s a very good question’, she said.

## Prince George

|            |      |
|------------|------|
| Capacity   | 100  |
| Attendance | 122  |
| % of house | 122% |

"I attended *maladjusted* and am forever changed."

Kay Robinson, Prince George BC

A great turnout tonight and another standing ovation.

There were issues that we have to resolve somehow – again a lot of sound problems and only two of the six volunteers came back after the show. Some of the cast members and Dorothy and Charlene helped for a while, but we had to get the cast etc. back to Vanderhoof (an hour away) as one of the cast members has been ill. (For those of you not ‘in the know’, the Winter Games are on in Prince George. This meant there was no accommodation available in Prince George. And this meant that the closest we could stay was Vanderhoof. And so today we had an hour drive to the show and an hour drive back from the show.) We could not stay and help with the strike and truck loading. This created a real dilemma because I didn’t want to leave our technical team doing the work by themselves. And yet we had to get people back to their beds. Another aspect of this is that one of the volunteers that did stay couldn’t work on his own. He needed a buddy with him at all times. I ended up having a talk with the sponsor, who had done a great job bringing an audience out. She got on the phone and rallied as many people as she could to come to the venue. The

show came down at 10 PM and by 11 there were still no volunteers. Three of them did arrive as we were pulling out.

I just got a text from Elisha (Technical Director) who says in the end they got out of there in not bad time. But he said to me he is seeing a pattern, and I agree. We have to find a way to fix this. I may start calling sponsors myself the day before the show.

The company was nicely cohesive this evening, a good thing. Prince George is one of our cast member's hometown, a place they left. They were understandably nervous about performing here. Their whole family came and sat in the front row. The cast member was a trooper tonight, also considering that it was their microphone causing most of the problems. We've never had a problem with their mic before. This is part of my frustration with the sound issue, every day it seems to be somebody else's mic.

In the Forum, we got a completely different Mia in the first scene with Dani. This Mia put her feet up on the table, Dani joined her playing it very well. Mia, of course, would never do this. She has a 'tidy phobia'. This Mia also played with her daughter just joking around. It was quite lovely. And then she "went for it". She asked about Amy and the suicide. There was an interesting insight from this. Perhaps there are times when talking about the elephant in the room is the wrong thing to do. Usually in this Forum Theatre production we want to have the conversation. In this case it would've been better to just have Mia and Dani be able to relax together. Talk about nothing. Joke around.

A young man replaced Jack in the street scene with Dani. He refused to share the weed with her. He said he didn't want her to turn out like him. Our Jack would never do this - he smokes a lot of weed. And so there was a sense of magic to the intervention. But I really believe this work does meet a community where the community is at. And there are people, hard-core drug addicts, who discourage the people around them from doing the very drug to which they are addicted. The result of Jack's generosity, was that Dani did not pick up the shard. How do we translate this in a symbolic way into other parts of our lives?

We also had our first profit share tonight. This comes from the organizing body having gotten a grant to help cover the costs. \$135 each. I'm sad that the evening ended dealing with the lack of volunteers. The organizer, other than this, did a great job. I've sent her an email thanking her for rallying the troops.

But another aspect about tonight is that there doesn't appear to have been any First Nation involvement at all. There were no First Nations organizations credited at the end of the show, which is strange because Prince George has a very strong First Nation presence. David Ng says the local First Nation people he could contact were just not interested in participating and the local organizers don't seem to have reached out, or been successful at the outreach they did. This was one of the least diverse audiences we've had so far. This has not been the case up until now.

## McKenzie

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Capacity   | 150 |
| Attendance | 125 |
| % of house | 83% |

We stopped on Highway 16 today (The Highway of Tears) and did a smudge for all the missing women. It was a very good thing to do.

Evidently the volunteers here were great. The Tech Team finished set up at 4:30 – they start at 12:30. This might be a record. When we left the venue tonight there were many people helping. Tim actually mentioned he was concerned there might be too much help ;-)

The sponsor did a great job of bringing people out, and says she only used Facebook! Possible, perhaps in this kind of small town. One thing I know is that McKenzie was very grateful that we were here. We also had a very good show, and the Forum event was really lively. I'd say this Forum was the most fun I've had on the tour so far. It was like swimming in warm water. Ironically I started off very, very tired. The energy came from the audience.

There were some wonderful moments in the Forum tonight. A young woman replaced Jack in the intake and really made Frank accountable for his actions and for the recovery center policies. She created a situation where she insisted on protecting herself and knowing what would happen. This led to the very strong possibility that Jack would not enter the recovery house.

A man replaced Frank in the scene between Jack and Frank in the street. He has obviously lived these issues, and with great compassion convinced Jack to come back to the recovery house with the knowledge that he would find a way to get Jack his meds using Abby as a conduit. It sounds simple but his approach created many tears. The same man intervened in the final scene, replacing Dr. Deveraux. This Dr. Deveraux really took charge of the situation when Jack and Frank are confronting each other. This man knows the situation that Frank is in, and dealt with him both professionally, firmly and with compassion. He created the space for Jack to be safe and for Frank to understand that he had crossed the line. No one has done this in this way. He caught the fact that Frank had laid hands on Jack in an aggressive manner. He also put Jack in a safe room while he dealt with Frank and then insisted on finding a way to get Jack his meds. When explaining his actions he burst into tears, and talked about how there was no humanity left in the medical system.

One of the things that came out of tonight is that McKenzie has no shelter, although it has a homeless population. There is a women's shelter for battered women, a safe house that one can only stay in for three days. Hopefully one of the things that can come out of tonight is the escalation of organizing around the women's shelter and the lack of a men's shelter at all in the community.

There was a great deal of laughter and certainly tears tonight. There was also another prolonged standing ovation after the Forum. We did good in McKenzie tonight. We dropped into the 7-Eleven for snacks after we left the venue. A man – on the surface a rough and tumble kind of guy –

stopped me. He was at the show and was deeply moved by what happened, so appreciative of the play, the interactive forum and how real it all was. In a way he is the reason to come to McKenzie. I asked him what brought him to the play this evening. His daughter is schizophrenic and in Vancouver on East Hastings. He came to the play out of compassion for her, he said. And he learned a lot, he said.

## Fort St. John

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Capacity   | 100 |
| Attendance | 61  |
| % of house | 61% |

The play was once again very strong tonight. While the house was relatively small they were very deeply affected and appreciative and it was a good number for Fort St. John. We had a wonderful Elder tonight. Her name is Deb and I recognize her as a real healer. How do I do that? She did smudges for everyone at the end of the event tonight. When she did me she recognized that I am having a problem at the back of my neck. This is true right now. She had no way to know other than her understanding of energies.

There were a lot of youth in the audience, and Deb has already told me that people have made requests for mental health services. We agree this is a very good thing.

I had the same thing happen with the scribe here as has happened in the last two shows. What appears to be happening is that our office is having conversations with the organizer about the duties of the scribe, but these conversations are not translating to the scribe. As much as possible, we need to have conversations with the actual scribe. It was the case again today that the woman who was the scribe had very little knowledge of what was expected of her.

A travel day tomorrow to Grand Prairie and then a show day and then a day off. We've all been working very hard and are looking forward to the schedule becoming less dense. Sleep time.

## Grande Prairie

|            |     |            |     |
|------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Capacity   | 200 |            |     |
| Attendance | 160 | % of house | 80% |

"I attended *maladjusted* in Grande Prairie and was so impressed. Thank you so much for creating it. The play brought out a lot of emotion as I feel part of it was my own life."  
Victoria Champion, Peace River

Hello from Alberta. Very nice turnout tonight in Grand Prairie. The company feels in pretty good shape right now. Perhaps are over the hump of the tour. We shall see.

There was potential disaster when we checked into the hotel here. The person who accepted the reservation is no longer working here. Before he left he canceled our reservation and never informed Dafne. So when we arrived there was no reservation. But I had a confirmation sheet. It took a while to sort out and the manager was very apologetic. In compensation he insisted that I

take the “presidential suite”. It’s really excessive. I’m going to have a company over on Sunday for an Academy Award party, and open the Jacuzzi to the company. I haven’t used it myself, just can’t bring myself to do it. It feels so wasteful.

A complication tonight with the show, the start is at 7:30 but the sponsor’s material that went out said the show is at 7:00. This explains why so many people burst in the door at 7:00 when we opened the doors! When we figured out the confusion I made an announcement and people headed for the concession to buy coffee and pastry.

Mostly the play is holding together, but I think it’s coming up time to give notes again. Moments fluctuate in a long run.

The audience tonight might’ve set a record for yelling stop the earliest in the scenes of any audience before them. Having said that there was a desire this evening for “magic”. Not always, but from one woman in particular. This woman replaced Jack twice, and my sense is that she had never been homeless ever in her life. She just wanted things to be different. There were also some lovely and interesting interventions.

A woman replaced Mia in the first scene with Dani and really opened up a space that was nonaggressive in which Dani could come to her in the future. In chatting with Dorothy later, she knows the woman, who has 16 children. Imagine what one learns.

A woman replaced Dani in the diagnosis. She sent her mother out of the room and then was very honest with the doctor. This led to a diagnosis that did not involve drugs. When Mia came back she was very clear that she could not make family counseling sessions until she was finished work. This led to a bit of a confrontation between mother and daughter. Mia tried to explain that she had to work - it is what keeps a roof over their heads. The audience member burst into tears. She said she needs her mother to help her.

This led to a great exchange in the audience about Mia’s real dilemma. She is a single mother and her working does in fact make it possible for them to live. How does Dani understand this? How many of us are Dani? Half of the audience. When the woman left the stage she thanked me for giving her the opportunity to do something, to say something to her mother that she always wanted to say. There was a great deal of applause from the audience.

A woman replaced Mia in the final scene with her daughter and tried a very ironic intervention. She drank a lot of wine, and asked Dani if they should start smoking weed together. This did not go over well with Dani. This Mia was trying something quite dangerous: Irony. The actor playing Dani understood this but agreed that her character did not. She just thought her mother had gone over the deep end. And so when Frank arrived, Dani wanted to go away with him. Ironically this might’ve led to a good conversation with her uncle. But it was not the outcome this Mia had wanted. Very complicated.



The Grand Prairie audience loved what we were doing. And interestingly, half a dozen people came to me and appreciated the facilitation of the event. This doesn't always happen. Audience members also ran after cast members to complement them on the evening. An audience member went to Jack and asked him for acting advice! Jack said to him "Don't act. Be." The audience member was evidently very impressed with this advice. Jack of course was overwhelmed by being asked this question. And he gave good advice....advice I've given him. ;-)

We have a 7 hour drive day after tomorrow to St. Paul. Our longest travel day yet. It will be challenging. We are going to leave at nine in the morning with two hours of stops, we will get in at 6PM.

## St. Paul

|            |     |            |     |
|------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Attendance | 107 |            |     |
| Capacity   | 136 | % of house | 79% |

*"maladjusted was an experience I will never forget."*

Lyn Phillips, St. Paul AB

A nice turn out for St. Paul and the show was mostly OK, although we had a lot of technical issues.

The projectors were not hooked up properly; the support wall in between Dani's room and Deveraux's office was not attached. Tim fixed the wall and Dorothy, Tim and I figured out the projectors. Then we had massive mic problems, yet again. Tim insists that it is wireless interference from other wireless networks – this may be part of the problem. I believe that the connectors into the packs are garbage and at this point it is going to be very difficult to convince me otherwise, as the problems are often when people are moving – the connectors can't take any stress. These would be fine if people were just standing or sitting (perhaps for interviews) but we are doing theatre.

Tonight, we had to abandon one of the mics – Dr. Dev's this time – always someone else's. Thankfully Frank has a big voice and so we gave Dr. Dev. Frank's mic and Frank did the show without a mic. He was a real trooper.

It was quite a quiet audience tonight although there were some powerful interventions. A woman replaced Mia in the first scene with Dani and wanted to reach out to her daughter. When she started she just couldn't find the words and kept looking at me for advice. But then she engaged emotionally in the scene. The words started to tumble out of her. Words about her own fear and failure and vulnerability. And tears. There was something about the sincerity and gentleness of this, that really touched Dani. There was no fight; there was a really sincere reaching across difference. And we got to talk about how scary and important it is.

A young woman replaced Dani in the final scene with Mia. Very soft-spoken, and obviously compelled to enter the scene because of her own life experiences. She began by not pouring Mia a glass of wine. She sat her mother down and tried to tell her about her own state of mind, where she's at in her life. A very honest thing happened. Mia took over. She started to tell her daughter

that she'd always be there for her that she knew she wasn't doing a good job, that kind of thing. When Frank arrived there was no fighting. He went upstairs and chatted with Dani and something had really become gentle and open.

In the analysis I asked the audience member if she had gotten to say what she wanted to say. Some of it, she said, but not everything. Yes, I said, I saw that happen. And then I asked Mia if she had meant to step on her daughters desire to open up. Mia talked about her own need to feel loved. Agree or disagree with what Mia does, how many of us recognize ourselves in her? So many hands in the air.

Another standing ovation tonight. A man came to me and marveled at the acting ability of Dani and Jack. Jack in particular. He said he was completely incapable of seeing a performance in Jack, it was just all very real.

## Edmonton

I didn't do any writing yesterday. It was another big day, in meetings of one sort or another from 10 in the morning until 5 in the evening, either with company members or with the office.

At about 1:30 my phone rang. It was Tim. They had arrived at the venue at 12:30 as planned and there were no volunteers there. This is surprising as there was an email at 10 o'clock this morning indicating everything was in place. They were unloading the 5 ton truck on their own. Tim's call put me into overdrive. I called the central organizer, (who was not from Canadian Mental Health, or the University of Alberta – the actual Sponsors of the 2 Edmonton shows) only to leave voicemail. I called the secondary organizer, also to leave voicemail. I did the only thing left to do, which was to text the cast and ask for help. Most were away, some responded with apologies. It was Dorothy, Charlene, Columpa and me. The company van was completely blocked in the parking lot by other vehicles and so we hopped in a cab to the venue. When we got there, the central organizer was at the venue as were some volunteers!

I talked to our Tech Team who no longer needed any help. It would have been great if someone had called and let me know! (This sounds cranky, I know, but.....Geez.) Dorothy stayed and Columpa, Charlene and I returned to the hotel.

Edmonton (evening show)

|            |     |            |     |
|------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Attendance | 143 |            |     |
| Capacity   | 175 | % of house | 82% |

"I found the experience of watching *maladjusted* to be very moving as the entire performance shed light to some hidden sides of the mental health system."

Brigjilda Gera, Case Manager for Assets for Success, DECSA, Edmonton

"I have seen several Theatre for Living shows over the years. I'm always amazed at how masterful David is at drawing out rich and meaningful dialogue from every moment of every community intervention. This is based in his deep faith that as a living organism a community can heal itself."

Diane Conrad, Director, Arts-based Research Studio, University of Alberta

"The impact of *maladjusted* is strong when audience members stand up and take the stage to have their voices heard in a theatre venue. We are reminded of the need to tell our stories, and then to tell them again to those who will listen, be affected, and make changes towards better care." Anne-Marie Lindell, Program Manager, Ventures, DECSA

"I really enjoyed *maladjusted*. I didn't understand how it worked at first, but then I caught on and I thought it was a great concept. To get the audience involved was brilliant!! Your group has definitely made a difference in society!!" Michelle Black, Dovercourt Community in Edmonton, AB

When we got back to the space at 6:30PM the Tech Team was mostly ready.

Then, the information I had about who was actually sponsoring the evening was wrong. All evening I was acknowledging Alberta Health Services as the event sponsor. Tonight's sponsor was Canadian Mental Health. CMH had also lined up six strong volunteers for the load-in. The central organizer had, evidently, sent them home, and told them to be back at 5 PM to put out the chairs.

It was a very nice audience but all the surrounding chaos really textured the evening (for me, Dorothy and the Technical Team).

There were some "helper" interventions tonight. To be expected in this audience, many health care providers, policy people; many of the interventions had an unusually magic element to them. I really pushed the policy aspect today. Lots of people wanted to make comments from the audience instead of physical interventions. The power of the event is in people entering the physical and emotional reality – not in yelling suggestions from their seats. I had to really navigate that.

In winding up I always thank the central organizer. I acknowledged her and asked her to stand, everyone started looking around the room. Finally a man said, "she went home". Sigh. I can't pretend to understand this.

And yet... another standing ovation at the end, in fact they wouldn't let me finish speaking. When I asked the cast to come onto the stage I usually launch into "this work is a circle". They just started applauding and wouldn't stop and then stood up and clapped some more.

Strange and great to not have a tear down the set tonight. We have a matinee tomorrow.

Edmonton (Matinee)

|            |     |                |
|------------|-----|----------------|
| Attendance | 126 |                |
| Capacity   | 175 | % of house 72% |

Interesting to do an afternoon show. Today had a very different energy, of course. A good turnout again and a very different texture to the audience from last night. There were far more youth and far more patients in the audience today, as well as medical professionals.

Daytime poses unexpected issues: There was a very large window stage left, very high up at the ceiling, the top being at least 20 feet in the air. The Tech Team tried to cover it with a black drape but it was just too dangerous. To their great credit, they realize that there was a roof outside and

they could hang the drapes from the outside. No small thing because it was -12° C and windy during the day. We could not get to complete blackout in the space, but we could at least get to gray. Kudos to them for doing this.

The central organizer didn't show up at all today. Of course one wonders, and is concerned for her, but she didn't even call anyone. No one knows what is happening, the others on the organizing committee are frustrated.

We were told the space would be secure. But when we got in one of the actors realized that her costume jacket and bag were gone from the chair where they had been preset after last night's show. We searched everywhere and they were really gone. I informed the front desk of the venue. They, in turn, informed their executive director. She went backstage and was very insulting to the cast, insisting nobody had taken the things and that one of the theatre company must've stolen them. (??) I heard about this after-the-fact, and went back to the desk to ask what this had been about. The two young guys just looked at me, shook their heads and said that is our boss. Did I want to speak with her? We were about to start the show, and I figured, what's the point?

We used Charlene's jacket for Mia and cut the bag. This worked fine and we will continue to do this until we get back to Vancouver and can replace the costume item.

There were a lot of interventions that involved policy today, but as I'm sitting here writing, I'm just too tired to remember them. Day off tomorrow and then Maskwacis.

## **Maskwacis**

We were really looking forward to the show in Maskwacis. When I was at the desk checking out of the Edmonton hotel, Dafne called to say the organizers were canceling tonight's show. It took some back-and-forth to understand that it was because of "blizzard conditions" in the community. This was strange because it was clear and sunny in Edmonton, but perhaps it was different an hour away. We then got word that the Superintendent of the School District had ordered the school closed down, because the roads were too dangerous.

We had to leave Edmonton, though – our hotel rooms for the night were in Wetaskiwin (next to Maskwacis). Some of us drove out to the Reserve - I wanted to look at the roads. The school is certainly shut down, but this boy from Winnipeg is having a hard time understanding what happened. There is gusty wind that is sometimes blowing over the roads, but it is not consistent, and is clear moments later. The roads themselves are completely clear. There is not now nor does it appear that there ever was, a blizzard.

It turns out that the RCMP shut down the main highway in the morning due to two jackknifed semi-trailers, which likely meant the school busses weren't running, which one would assume also meant the school shut down. It remains a mystery why we could not have set up, though, and done the play in the evening.

We have an unexpected night off in Wetaskiwin. We are all feeling a little strange, as all of the shows feel very important to do.

## Red Deer

|            |    |            |     |
|------------|----|------------|-----|
| Attendance | 45 |            |     |
| Capacity   | 80 | % of house | 56% |

A disappointing turnout in Red Deer, especially after the show being canceled in Maskwacis. But then, the whole day was odd.

Tim called at about 1:30. It is never good news when the Tech Team phones during set up. The information we got from the sponsor about the height of the ceiling in the venue was very wrong. We were told it was 40 feet high. It was 14 feet high. I called Dafne and she checked her notes and this was not a typo on our part, we were told 40 feet. We like 20 foot ceilings, and must have minimum 15 feet. We could not use our stage in the venue, because if we did, the set would not fit in.

I asked that the Tech Team talk to the venue about risers for the audience. Out of that came renting some bleachers. And so they put the set on the floor without the stage and put the audience on bleachers and chairs. Problem solved.

There have been a lot of conversations about the 220 V plug that we need. Evidently the venue didn't have one, and so we knew an electrician would need to be brought in. That didn't happen until today. When the electrician arrived he pointed to the 220 V plug that was in the middle of the wall in plain view. Then he charged the sponsor \$253 for the visit. I've suggested that they bill this back to the venue because the venue should've known they had a 220 V plug in plain view, in the middle of the back wall!

The local Friendship Center had wanted to bring the project into Red Deer, but didn't have the \$2,000 for the guarantee. This is why the Cosmos Group of Companies<sup>8</sup> got involved in the first place. They agreed to provide the money, do central organizing, understanding that other agencies would be on board. The Friendship Center was bringing a busload of 30 people to the show today. This afternoon they called to cancel entirely. No one seemed to know why.

The organizers were expecting at least 100 people. We anticipated a good house. They sold 66 tickets and expected sales at the door. Plus the 30 people from the Friendship Center. 45 people showed up, meaning 28 people bought tickets and did not come. We have been trying to get organizers to understand that this happens. There will always be at least a 20% no-show rate. Overselling is standard practice. We have to keep hammering away at this, because "sold out" never means sold out.

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<sup>8</sup> A network of many not-for-profits, including the Red Deer Friendship Centre, and many mental health agencies and homeless organizations.

During the course of the Forum I asked the audience how many of them worked inside the medical profession. One person raised her hand. This really took me by surprise – it is highly unusual. What happened to bringing out the professionals? Likewise, Dorothy and I had dinner at a restaurant across from the hotel. One of the people who works in the restaurant came to talk to us. It turns out he is from a local theatre group. He had no idea the show was in town. If he would've known he would've brought many people, because he found the subject matter, the kind of theatre it was, and the simple fact that the play was touring into Red Deer very interesting.

I am very aware that on a tour like this we have a broad diversity of central organizers and that regardless of outcome, people do their best. I asked the organizer here about this, acknowledging that tonight seemed to be kind of “exclusive”... for instance, the homeless community didn't appear to have been invited, as we've been asking people to do.

The organizer was frustrated and said “this is the problem with Red Deer”. Her frustration, she said, is that organizations talk a lot about supporting each other but do not walk the talk. People who said they would put all kinds of networking and other work in, evidently did not. Her hope was that at least a small conversation had begun tonight. Many people had terrific feedback about the event.

While the audience number was small, the Forum was lively. It's often harder with a small audience, they feel exposed, and are often quiet. That was certainly the case tonight, it was a lot of work to animate this audience, but in the end there were some wonderful interventions.

I'm thinking in particular of a 12-year-old girl who replaced Dani in Dani and Mia's final scene. She was so present emotionally. She was deeply grounded in the scene and managed something quite complex. She managed to be vulnerable when Dani's impulse is to hide. This girl is not naïve. She understands Dani wants to hide and yet she finds a way to be open. Why? Because something has to change, she says (in not these exact words). This opened up the possibility for me to acknowledge that this is not only about a 12-year-old, a 17-year-old, it is about any of us at any age. But let's be clear, the wisdom is coming from a 12-year-old girl. I hear often enough that because the work is so gritty it is not appropriate for young people. Bullshit. Often the interventions from 12-year-olds, 8-year-olds and younger are the most incisive and inspiring. Not only do they know and understand all these issues, they speak a kind of unadulterated truth. They are true experts because, as was obvious with this girl, they are living the issues.

There were many policy suggestions tonight that had to do with professional responsibility, ways to avoid burnout, and transparency inside the system. There was also a call for a crisis centre. Apparently Red Deer does not have one.

An event like this is like a bottle thrown into the ocean. You never know where it will wash up. I wish there would've been more people. But perhaps, as is always the case, it is what it is, and what it is, is what the community created.

## Lethbridge

|            |     |            |     |
|------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Attendance | 105 |            |     |
| Capacity   | 110 | % of house | 95% |

"I attended *maladjusted* and was very impressed by the depths reached. I left realizing that the system does not always meet the needs of those with mental health. I realized that people needed to be kinder, but more than that, the whole system needs to be kinder. Thank you for doing what you do."  
Mandy Bretzke, Lethbridge AB

"I thought *maladjusted* was fantastic! I think that it made not only an impact on the people who were there that night but the people they shared the experience with after the play. I am excited to see the changes that will start to occur in the community."  
Sabina Schmidt, Lethbridge

"*maladjusted* was very thought provoking and beneficial to my understanding of the mental health system. Humanizing the system is something that should be held at high importance in our community and I think that the play really provided some good ideas to go about executing this."  
Samantha Martin, Lethbridge

Hello from Lethbridge. We had a good travel day yesterday. Energy in the van was light and we made a good tourist stop at Head Smashed in Buffalo Jump.

Lethbridge was good to us. It was a really nice event tonight.

It's interesting, the photos we had of the venue (Sterndale Bennett Theatre) made it look kind of flaky. The photos do not do it credit. The technical director there and I agree, they need new pics. Is a beautiful small venue and we had no trouble setting up in it.

An odd thing off the top, I seem to remember this flying by me in a conversation with TfL staff... I didn't pay close enough attention, I think. We had 26 scribes set up for tonight!! One of the organizer's classes was going to use the scribing as a student project. This may have been a good idea in terms of a class project, but a really bad idea in terms of the chemistry of the evening and the interactive Forum. It would've meant 25% of the audience was not emotionally engaged in the Forum, and taking notes instead. When I realized what had been organized, I explained what bad chemistry this would be. The organizer understood immediately and we agreed that I would release the students from their assignment from the stage. I did this to a tremendous round of applause from 26 people. We had one scribe.

Because the space was so intimate we also did the show without mics today. This was challenging for some of the cast but a good reminder of what will happen at the Firehall Theatre in Vancouver.

There was something quite special about tonight, in who it was who was intervening most often. Many of the interventions came from people who were obviously long-term mental health patients. And their expertise shone out of them.

We started very dramatically, though. When the takedown was happening in the play a woman the audience started screaming and ran screaming out of the theatre. This has never happened before (and it never happened again). Fortunately one of the support people went out after her. What I

know now is that she calmed her down and went home with her. I'm sure she will be helped to plug into services. This is, of course, why we have support people.

In the very first intervention between Abby and Jack an elderly woman replaced Abby. It was obvious she had had a very hard life. She also knew the issues inside out. She called the doctor at the recovery house, something she can do on the day when Jack first comes to her. People have called Frank but no one has ever called the doctor. She worked it all out. Jack knew what he was getting into, knew that it would be difficult, had a senior "buddy" set up for him, and had his anti-anxiety meds okayed by the recovery house physician. All this was possible if Abby was organized enough.

A man who self-identified as having been inside the system a great deal replaced Frank in the scene between Jack and Frank in the street. He also did something no one had ever done. In order to convince Jack to come back, he opened up his own room to Jack for the night. He knew he couldn't get Jack the meds, but offered to see him through the night so they could get them in the morning. This scene ended with Jack's head on this new Frank's chest. In discussion Sam (the person playing Frank) spoke quite emotionally about how he in fact has done this himself in the recovery house. What makes it possible? Breaking through one's fear of having your offer of help rejected, said the audience member.

A woman replaced Mia at the end and, wanting the best for her daughter, got completely lost in trying to help her. It was difficult to watch and also so true. This was so insightful for the audience. Mia has to not just find a way to communicate, but also has to find comfort in her own authenticity with her daughter. It can't be an act. An example of how there are always insights when interventions go "badly".

Standing ovations have various textures to them. Sometimes it feels like the audience is standing because they feel they should. Tonight was not like that. It felt very authentic. Tonight was important for us. Onward to Medicine Hat.

## Medicine Hat

|            |     |            |     |
|------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Attendance | 105 |            |     |
| Capacity   | 114 | % of house | 92% |

(Around 2PM): Our Technical Director just called. The ceilings in the venue are 15 feet, but the fluorescent lights hanging from the ceiling make it quite a bit less. This means we can't put our stage up again. The organizers have no idea how many people are coming. If it is more than 30 or 40 people, they won't see. I just got off the phone with the central organizer, and she can rent platforms to elevate the audience. I am trying to coordinate this now between her (she isn't at the venue) and our TD, but his phone is dying. This took quite a bit of juggling but all worked out in the end. And then a great turnout!

The first intervention was quite challenging. A woman yelled stop and replaced Abby in the first scene with Jack. She just thought Jack didn't want to get out of the street badly enough, and she



was quite disrespectful, in a way. During the intervention she mimed giving him a card and said 'here, this is a guy who can get you into housing'. Jack of course asked her what was on the card. "I dunno"... she said, laughing. He blew up at her. Really, the veins were popping in his neck. It was a completely appropriate response. It also allowed me to point out how real this was. People want to help, and perhaps with the best of intentions, they offer meaningless help. How many of us know this? Many hands in the air. How do we make our helping of others meaningful?

A young woman replaced Jack in the scene with Frank in the street. She started screaming at Frank about how he had 'dumped her in the shit'. She would not relent. This really backed Frank into a corner, until he had no choice but to suggest that he call Abby and Jim (his boss) from the street. We played this out, with me commandeering a young man from Alberta Health Services to play Jim (well...he did agree). This Jim agreed to release Jack's meds. No one has accomplished this before. Yes, it is unfair to expect Jack to have to push this hard to create safety for himself. But how many of us know this is what's being asked of him? And so what do we do? What policies need to be in place? Many suggestions.

A young woman replaced Dani in the final scene with Mia. She also worked hard to take care of both herself and her mother. When Mia pushed against her, she didn't run away, she didn't get angry, but she did stand up for herself. This scene ended beautifully with her and Mia and Frank united; united through Dani's strength and vulnerability.

The final intervention was very dramatic. A woman in the front row who had been wanting to give advice from her seat all evening, (I had had to ask her to stop), yelled stop. She replaced Abby in the takedown seen. She tried to talk Jack down. And then when Frank came in she got down on her knees and apologized for the mistake she made, sending Jack to the recovery house. She went on and on about her mistakes and how bad she felt. "Wah wah wah....I'm so sorry for you, said Jack...now can I have my meds?" Then, when Frank left instead of trying to get Jack his meds she wanted to talk some more about her failings. Jack took his backpack and left her sitting all alone in the office. This really surprised her for some reason.

We got to talk about timing, and tactics. The audience related to this very strongly. What is our focus in the moment? Yes, Abby needs to process her error. But timing is everything.

There was a great deal of appreciation for the project after the show.

## Calgary

"I thought *maladjusted* was a unique and important theatre performance. I appreciated the care for persons watching and/or volunteering their input on stage (counsellors present and the considerable skills of David Diamond in directing). I liked that scribes were capturing decision points and suggested ways to improve the health system. An illuminating evening that brought home our 'humaneness' and collective ability to influence and heal."

Linda Lathorp, Calgary AB

*maladjusted* was very raw and honest. Theatre for Living got right to the heart of the issues, which is the exact place we need to start. People working within and participating in the mental health system can quickly feel helpless and powerless (repeated emotions during the showings). However, this play allows people to have a voice, break it down, reflect and figure out new ways of thinking and being."

Melanie Hennig, Aboriginal Health Program, AHS

## Calgary evening show

Attendance: 175  
Capacity 240 % of house 73%

This was a good house, and the organizer here is really a STAR for us, but there is also a frustration attached to tonight. They've been telling us for weeks tonight was completely sold out. Many people didn't come because they were not going to be able to get in. Again, this is what happens when the tickets are free for everyone, including people with money. The sad reality is that free tickets just are not valued.

Also, I would LOVE to have two shows in a row without bad mic issues. It is so frustrating, and undermining to the event. We did sound checks – had issues that SEEMED to be resolved. But then Frank's mic blew completely (a NEW one)...Dani turned hers OFF by accident, and Abby's went all crackly. A professional touring production of Phantom of the Opera doesn't have these issues and there is no reason we should. We got a "good deal" on the sound system, and it shows. It is a false economy and it compromises the integrity of the art.

The show was scheduled for 7 PM and we started about 20 minutes late. People had issues with finding parking and, I think finding the venue. This put a real pressure on the evening. The event ended up taking almost 3 hours if you consider the 7 PM start that a lot of the audience arrived on time for.

We had a very medically knowledgeable audience this evening. This was to be expected with two universities sponsoring. This meant there were a lot of interventions that involved the profession and also policy. A man replaced Frank in the scene between Frank and Jack in the street. He spoke to Jack with respect and then asked Jack to come back to the center with him and promised to talk to his boss Jim and get the meds. And so (the actor) Sam played Jim and it took some time to convince him to release even a few of the meds. It is a recovery house, after all, and they have their rules. This opened up a conversation about how Frank allows himself to be so open, and does not get burnt out. This issue also came up when people really wanted Abby to help more than she does. The audience was deeply affected by the questions around this. Many of them are Abby and Frank.

We also, because of an intervention and something that was said by the intervener, got into an in-depth dialogue about doctors taking responsibility as a collective voice. This is something that most of the room believes does not happen and should happen. It was interesting that some people in the room thought it was already happening. They were vastly outnumbered.

There was a lovely intervention where a young man, I think a medical student, threw the DSM 5<sup>9</sup> out the window, and just talked with Dani. His prescription was individual and group counseling. It seems like it should be simple, but in order to do this, he really had to break rules.

There was terrific feedback after the event, people found it provocative but in a good way. I knew I was pushing professional buttons tonight and feel it is my role to do that. There are things I'm seeing through my work at the University of Alberta in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry that connect to the conversations we had tonight.

In the closing I acknowledged that we had been told we were sold out and we had many empty seats. I asked the audience to contact anybody they know who might want to come, and to ignore the word that we were sold out. It would be very nice to have a full house tomorrow afternoon.

Calgary matinee

|             |     |            |     |
|-------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Attendance: | 200 |            |     |
| Capacity    | 240 | % of house | 83% |

The 11AM call came around very early. Matinees are important to do, they're also quite straining, when we are deeply into an evening schedule.

I am going to be publicly blunt about something: This venue, the Ross Glen Hall, has been the singularly most difficult venue to deal with on the entire tour. Just some examples: They wanted the wattage of every bulb in our lighting system. They also wanted the dimensions of every platform. The dimensions of the stage were not good enough. They drove us crazy. I think it's fair to say that in terms of staff time, this one venue took more time than every other venue combined on the tour. Dafne, who production managed, says this is wrong – it was more time than all the other venues in TWO tours combined! I'm saying this because other things happened once we got there. When we arrived at the venue yesterday, the chairs were set up wrong, although the venue people kept insisting they knew what they were doing. The chairs were set up one directly behind the other which makes sightlines very difficult. We were told explicitly that we could not touch the chairs. Too bad. I moved every second row so we had the staggered theatre seating that was appropriate. When we arrived for the matinee the cleaning staff had cleaned up our stage!! We have "garbage", some of it essentially important props like the glass shard on the stage, in the back lane scene. It had all been thrown out. I talked with one of the people from the venue who simply could not fathom that they had no business being on our set.

All that said, we had a better turnout than the night before. Both very respectable houses here in Calgary. The play is holding together pretty well. And cast members are deepening their Forum Theatre skills as we go.

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<sup>9</sup> The DSM 5 is used by clinicians and researchers to diagnose and classify mental disorders. One of many controversies about the DSM 5 can be found here: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/conditions/psychiatry-bible-dsm-5-one-step-closer-to-publication/article5937980/>

Both shows in Calgary had a large representation of people from the profession in the audience. (There was also, though, a representation of the homeless population at the matinee.) This, of course, really deepens the texture of the event. There was a lot more focus on the professional relationships in these events and because of that, the possibility of stronger policy documents. The professional relationships are subject to policies more, of course, than familial relationships. We shall see. I am certainly aware that for me the opportunity presented itself to push the profession from the stage. Why is it that nurses present a unified voice and doctors do not? Doctors, people have said, have a "lone wolf" mentality. Also, somebody mentioned the fear of speaking out. When I asked the people in the room yesterday how many were afraid to speak out, about 80% of the hands in the room went up.

This conversation became possible because a woman from inside the profession replaced Abby in the scene with Dr. Dev. She really pushed him to help her go public with what was happening around staffing and money and burnout. He told her he would support her morally but would not stand in public with her. So many people in the audience recognized this as the truth.

We also had some very emotional interventions inside the family. A young woman did something that no one else has ever done. She sat Mia down and explained very gently but in deep terms that Mia was the mother, not the child. This young woman was obviously speaking from personal experience. Her intervention affected the audience quite profoundly.

There was, once again, tremendous feedback after the show.

## **Kamloops**

|             |                |      |  |
|-------------|----------------|------|--|
| Attendance: | 170            |      |  |
| Capacity    | 160 % of house | 106% |  |

The organizers here did a terrific job. We had a very lively Forum.

I had to have a chat with one of the actors after the Forum. All of a sudden, they started controlling the interventions in a very unhelpful way. It has been a long run and there is always tweaking to do. In one of the scenes we ended up going over to the healing center to try to get Jack's meds approved before the intake. This didn't happen, though, because the intervener suggested it. It happened because the character in our play suggested it. This is not the actor's role in Forum Theatre. All of a sudden the character became very proactive in the interventions when the job is to be reactive. Forum Theatre is one of the most challenging forms of theatre, in that one must always stay so present.

An older woman replaced Mia in the first scene with Dani. In a very gentle way she talked about her own abuse and her own issues. Dani said she thought that this Mia's stories were boring. Harsh. But the audience indicated they understood why Dani was saying this. And there was no fight. So there was no trip to the psychiatrist. There were no meds. I asked the audience and they articulated that they thought Dani was in denial about whether or not she was hearing her mom's story, and that's why she thought they were boring. An interesting tactic from me as a Joker. I felt it

was necessary to question our Dani's response and, not wanting to undermine her on stage, used the fact that everything is an image. I used the image to ask the audience to investigate their own responses. A lot came from that.

This happened again when a young woman replaced Dani in the final scene with Mia. This 'new' Dani gave her mother a bit of a lecture about drinking and not listening. I watched the audience during this and many of them were hanging on every word. Their eyes were watering, their mouths were turning down. I think this young woman was speaking to so many parents in the room. I asked them if they could articulate what they were hearing. Many spoke quite personally about their own relationships with their children....or just relationships, I suppose.

I think I figured out how to deal with the professional relationship and burnout issue in the play, finally. In the Forum I'm using that very last short scene between Dr. Deveraux and Abby when she asks him 'what the hell happened' to him. The scene is short and intense. There's always silence after it. But I can ask the audience how many of them recognize the issues, the burnout, the sense of betrayal. Lots of hands go up. I acknowledge that there's a lot of discussion out in the public about stigmatization, but the conversations between professionals about burnout in staffing are hidden. And the reason for this is fear of speaking out inside the profession. Who knows this is true? So many hands... And so what do we do? And so interventions come about speaking up, about organizing, something. And this gives me the opportunity to talk about the silence of the doctors' collective voice. It is an overt political moment for me. And I give myself permission to do it. It seems really important.

There were three scribes at the event tonight - they came to me after and we're just amazed by the event. So where the organizers. They loved it.

We travel to Penticton tomorrow and do our final show of the tour. And then the next day we travel to Vancouver and drop everyone off at home.

The organizers here came to me as a delegation tonight. They wanted me to know how much they appreciated the work of TfL staff. They thought the support that was given was wonderful.

## **Penticton**

|             |     |            |     |
|-------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Attendance: | 80  |            |     |
| Capacity    | 100 | % of house | 80% |

"Thank you for the opportunity to participate as the Penticton Sponsor for the amazing *maladjusted!* It was an excellent opportunity to gain insight into how community members view the mental health service system. I am looking forward to the local Community Action Report to be able to use the policy suggestions in various venues when we (BCSS) are speaking out on behalf of our families. My compliments to all your staff for their dedication and hard work ."

Sharon Evans President, BC Schizophrenia Society Penticton Branch

Our last show on the tour. We had a strong ending tonight – not the biggest audience but very appreciative. They were also very, very engaged in the Forum.

What happened tonight that was unusual?

A nurse replaced Dr. Deveraux in the short scene between Dr. Dev. and Abby. She made a speech, which was not a great thing, but the content was terrific. She talked about the doctor's need to step up and have his voice heard. This prompted me to throw a challenge out to the room. "Nail your doctors to the wall" I urged them. The conversation with your doctor is a two-way street. Demand that they speak up about the trouble that the medical system is in. Demand that they do this not just as an individual but as a collective. Lots of applause.

A young woman replaced Dani in the scene with Mia at the end of the play. She suffered from schizophrenia. I know this because she declared herself when the intervention was over. She was wonderful. She entered Dani's state with tremendous knowledge and worked her way through, pushing against Mia, insisting that Mia hear her and see her. Frank arrived and she did the same, now with them both. Her clarity and her sincerity worked on both of these tough characters. She was an inspiration to everyone in the room. She was also a perfect example of what I mean when I talk about the knowledge being in the room.

### **Vancouver**

We had a good drive back from Penticton into Vancouver. We were warned that there was a lot of snow on the Coquihalla and so we took the #3 highway. Beautiful, but it added 2½ half hours to the trip.

Dorothy (Stage Manager) and I returned the van the next morning and this really marked the end of the tour for me. It is great and also kind of strange to be back home.

The technical crew loaded into the theatre yesterday and left the truck outside the theatre overnight. Someone broke the lock on the back and stole the toolbox out of the truck. This is all they took. We will need to gauge the cost of replacing the tools against the deductible and any increase in premiums. There always seems to be something.

We were not going to have a Scribe at the Vancouver shows because we did that in 2013. I came to the conclusion today that not scribing the Vancouver shows was a bad idea. I called Carissa, who did it in 2013, chatted with her a bit and 15 minutes later she decided to take the job again. So we will generate another community action report from these shows. It is two years later and seems important to do.

Dorothy and I join the technical team in the theatre at 10 AM tomorrow to look at lighting states. The cast arrive at 2 PM. We will spend one hour tightening up some scenes, and then do some runs with the new lights and some new cues.

We open on Friday. Evidently, opening is full, the two matinees are sold out, and about 70% of the rest of the available tickets are sold. This is terrific. This does not include the 20% of each house that is set aside for free vouchers for people living in extreme poverty. It will be important to

oversell the houses so that we do not have empty seats. We need to learn this lesson from the “full houses” on the tour.

There has also been some good coverage today in the two local newspapers:

<http://www.theprovince.com/health/Theatre+Living+latest+project+maladjusted+centres+mental+health+care+issues/10900205/story.html>

<http://www.straight.com/arts/412461/theatre-livings-maladjusted-creates-change>

“I just got home from seeing *maladjusted*. Thank you for making real theatre – theatre about and by people personally involved in large-impact, under-discussed, systematic experiences within our culture. Thank you for doing the impossible – for catalyzing deep and important conversation between strangers. As a somewhat disillusioned theatre student, and citizen, I appreciate your work deeply.”  
Kathryn Binnersley, Vancouver

“*maladjusted* was a life changing performance!!”  
Jenny Chen, Vancouver

“*maladjusted* was so touching and well performed. 10 thumbs up!”  
Micha Souaid, Vancouver

“Thanks to you all for being so creatively *maladjusted*. It's that kind of leadership that helps change the system.”  
Rev. Meg Roberts, Vancouver

“The cast was superb, giving life to their characters with great authenticity. I cried and I laughed and cried some more. *maladjusted* is an excellent and important piece of theatre!”  
Iris Paradela-Hunter, Vancouver

“*maladjusted* is a powerful, moving play that raises critical issues about how our society fails to support single parents, children, the homeless, and others who cannot get the help that they need.”  
Peter Prontzos, Vancouver

“*maladjusted* was a wonderful piece. The play itself was totally engaging and to realize who the actors were made it even more poignant. I was sitting beside a woman who was part of a practical nurse training class who had all come. She had never been to the Firehall, and I'm not sure had ever been to a play - certainly nothing like your theatre! She was totally engaged.”  
Roberta Beiser, Vancouver

“I am a nursing student at UBC. It felt like you were speaking directly to me with the content and purpose of *maladjusted*. Knowing that mechanization is something I'll confront every day in my work, and knowing too how that mechanization can profoundly effect those people caught up in it - patients and practitioners alike - is huge. *maladjusted* introduced a new word into my conceptualization of the medical system.” Jesse Whitehead, Vancouver

## Friday, March 20

|                 |     |             |     |
|-----------------|-----|-------------|-----|
| House Capacity: | 136 | Attendance: | 118 |
|                 |     | House %:    | 87% |

A very good opening night at the Firehall Theatre, but considering word was we were sold out for many days prior, there were too many empty seats. This feels familiar and we need to fix this, ASAP. As with shows on tour, “sold out” does not mean that because of the voucher program and a high no-show rate.

I've sent an email to the Firehall Box Office to ask if we can rework the formula and take the "sold out" signs off of the website and start taking waiting lists over the phone. I'm waiting for a response. (The Firehall agreed.)

A very friendly crowd. Something interesting about last night was that it was "opening night", but we had done 27 shows already. So, there was an edge to the evening, some of the cast were nervous, but we had a lot of experience under our belts.

Another interesting thing last night was the silence in the audience when the play had finished. I don't mean no applause as was often the case on tour. I mean silence when I asked the audience what they recognized in the play. It wasn't that they didn't recognize anything – that became very obvious. I'm not sure what the silence was. A reluctance to speak because many were friends (opening night)? A deep sense of sadness or other emotion in the room? I don't know.

I think it's time to speak with the cast about doing Forum Theatre for a long period of time. I have a concern that the Forum is getting a little programmed. As I mentioned earlier, this is the most challenging style of theatre that I know, because the actor has to be so present at all times during the Forum. I have a concern that characters are getting a little "dug in". This leads to not really listening to, or seeing each audience member for who they are or what they're doing. Just because someone did something a certain way doesn't mean the next person is doing a similar idea in the same moment the same way. We need to be able to respond to subtleties, tone of voice, body language, it demands being very deeply present.

There were some very heartfelt and knowledgeable interventions last night. A woman replaced Mia and tried her best to open up a conversation with Dani about her friend's suicide. Her approach while gentle was also blunt. It closed Dani down. But this opened up a conversation in the audience about how we give space.

In the final Mia and Dani scene, another woman replaced Mia and got more than she bargained for. She wanted to say to her daughter, "you are not crazy". There is a good impulse here, but an idea on the stage is more than one sentence. Everything has meaning and every action has a reaction. And so we got into an argument between mother and daughter that led to Dani stomping off to her room and this mother admitting she had no idea what to do. Then Frank arrived. She continued and Frank responded very well to her vulnerability. It is fascinating how often vulnerability is a key.

Is it the case that our impulse so often is to want to "fix" the other, when what is the most effective is to become vulnerable ourselves? Is it a shared vulnerability that is a healing factor?

The chemistry in the company seems much easier now. We are no longer living on top of each other. A lot of compliments on both the play and the interactive concept and the facilitation last night. It's going to be nice to settle into a run in the same place for a little while.



**Saturday, March 21**

House Capacity: 136

Attendance: 125

House %: 92%

We had a very good run tonight. The pacing and emotional connection in the play was better than it's been for a while. Also, interestingly, when I asked the audience how many had experienced Forum Theatre before, only 40 or so raised their hands! This means about 85 of them were "new audience". This is terrific.

They were very deeply engaged. It is often the case that some audience members leave sometime during the Forum. It just isn't there a cup of tea, or perhaps they have babysitters, or something... This did not happen tonight at all. The event was long, almost 2½ hours. Not only did they stay to the very end but they gave us a rousing standing ovation.

A woman intervened in the intake and did something no one else has ever done. She suggested that Jack sign the contract but not be admitted into the recovery house. Having signed the contract, he would remain in the street over the weekend until their doctor could look at his meds. Our real Frank, who has experience in recovery houses, agreed this was a viable option. Amazing. No one has ever thought of this. Our scribe scribbled.

There was a very well-meaning woman who replaced Dr. Devereux in the diagnosis. This intervention took forever. I kept giving her time deadlines and she kept ignoring them. The irony of course is that Dr. Devereux wants more time. My problem is we are in the theatre and things cannot happen in real time. Interestingly, this woman kept trying to empower Dani and Mia and ask them what they wanted. She went too far with it, though, and they got very annoyed. They both got up and left. This opened up a really valuable conversation about the balance between patient empowerment and doctoral expertise and responsibility.

I wonderful young woman replaced Dani in the final scene with Mia. She tried to tell Mia that she just needed time alone to gather her thoughts and that her way to be healthy was to think on her own. In her state of deep worry, Mia had no way to hear this. It was a true and honest response. Frank entered and Frank and Mia ended up arguing about Dani, both of them standing above her. This, also, felt like it was a very true moment. I asked this young woman if she was going to end up cutting in her room tonight. She didn't know. Maybe. It was going to depend on how intense the argument about her became. She had tried to empower Dani's voice. The adults around her refused to allow that to happen. The audience recognized this as so real.

This young woman came to me after the show and was so moved by the theatre event. She hugged me and thanked me "from the bottom of her heart for the work". I was swamped at the end of this evening. So were any of the actors who remained in the theatre after the applause. So much gratitude. And also promises from some to bring or send more people to the events.

We have two shows tomorrow. 2 PM and 8 PM. This will be a real test.

## Sunday, March 22

2PM

Vancouver

House Capacity: 136

Attendance: 132

House %: 97%

8PM

House Capacity: 136

Attendance: 95

House %: 70%

After two shows today I am WAY to tired to write, so will try to do that tomorrow.....well...I didn't get this done on Monday and am doing it now (Tuesday).

It is a while ago and the matinee is very fuzzy in my memory, but it was very engaged, with a terrific standing ovation.

There was one intervention I remember. A young man replaced Jack in the final scene. He spoke after about his own brother being "Jack". This led him to do an intervention which was, I think, "on behalf" of his brother. It was complicated. He brought us a very coherent Jack; a Jack that was able to take command of the situation and really orchestrate his own solution. He was wearing Jack's blanket and at one moment he took the blanket off and "let go" of the character altogether. Let's remember that Jack has been off his meds for days at this point.

We wish Jack could do this, but in the state he is in at the time it is highly, highly unlikely. I tried to navigate the intervention as delicately as I could. I asked Jack how possible this was for him. Absolutely impossible, he said. I referred to the moment when the audience member took off the blanket. Everything is symbolic... It seemed that what was taken off in that moment was the fact that Jack is homeless. But Jack is homeless. Something occurred to me and I asked the audience this question:

Is it the case that this intervention is asking Jack to take responsibility for his current situation, when his current situation is the creation of a number of factors outside of his control? I actually heard some people in the audience gasp. Who thinks we do this to the Jacks of the world?... Many hands in the air. I want to be clear - it is not that people should not be responsible for their own lives. But it is also sometimes the case that people are acted upon, sometimes by others, and sometimes by circumstance. Sometimes they need our concrete help, not to be told that they should solve it all themselves. I have a feeling the audience member was challenged by this because he had very particular views about his brother, and at the same time he was very appreciative of the insight.

The evening show was our smallest house so far – there will always be a dip in a run. I am also seeing, though, part of this highlighted by the intervention in the afternoon, that we are not getting the homeless community out to the show. The mental health community, yes, but not people who are homeless. People from the homeless community came to *maladjusted* in 2013 and also to *after*

*homelessness...*, so a question arises: has it become harder to access the community or is there something we used to be doing that we are not now? The mental health community is however, coming in droves.

There was a wonderful intervention from a young man (maybe late teens). He replaced Dani in the hair scene with Mia. He obviously had a great deal of experience with being bullied at school. I say this both from things he said and from his demeanor. He found a way to really cut through Mia's defenses that lead her to seeming so aggressive. He talked about needing her to at least see and hear him because nobody else does. Something about this really hit Mia. It opened up (again) a brief exchange with the audience about the courage of vulnerability. It was obvious people were very moved by this.

At the end of the evening we had what may be the singularly most challenging intervention (for me) of the project. A young woman yelled stop and when she came onto the stage I mentioned to her that she looked familiar. Yes, she said, I did this intervention two years ago. I want to try it again. Alarm bells going off now, but, she was on the stage and people have done this before and it's been beautiful. Still, there was something about her...

She replaced Abby in the final scene with Jack, when he's been off his meds for days. She tried to convince Jack to come to a Sweat Lodge and take Ayahuasca. (This is a very strong Amazonian hallucinogen that Dr. Gabor Mate is using to deal with addiction.) I will add, because of her Sweat Lodge invitation, that this woman was not Indigenous. Jack was incredulous. Frank arrived with Jack's file and she got into a screaming match with Frank, telling him that she tried to explain to him two years ago that he should not come into the scene with this kind of attitude, and here he is again. I stopped the improvisation and explained that there was no, "two years ago". Frank left very angry with Abby and she returned to Jack. I asked her if she was done and she said no. She returned to the Ayahuasca, asking Jack over and over again to join the Ayahuasca community. I stopped the intervention.

I asked the audience if they thought Jack taking a strong hallucinogen in the state he was in was a good idea. No hands in the air. It is rare that I find myself angry in a Forum. This took some control. How many of us have been in a situation where someone is very convinced that they have a solution, but the timing of that solution may create an extremely dangerous situation? Perhaps 50% of the hands in the air. Jack, what will help you right now? "My meds". Jack may very well benefit at some point from joining a community like this. Who knows? But it's not tonight. The woman from the audience said that she 'just wanted to introduce everybody to the possibility'. I understand that, I told her, but we are not here to make advertisements. The scene takes place in a particular moment in time. I think it's clear that Jack isn't going to benefit from taking a hallucinogen in this precise moment.

**Wednesday, March 25**

House Capacity: 136

Attendance: 136

House %: 100%

This morning we evidently had 50+ reservations. The office ran a two-for-one for students and this really paid off. Good work folks. The rest of the run is evidently quite healthy. I am hoping for a very large houses for the rest of the run.

Having two days off was good for the show. This was, perhaps, the best one we've had since moving into the theatre.

There were some adventures in the Forum:

A young disheveled man with an Irish lilt yelled stop and replaced Abby in the first scene with Jack. He launched into this very poetic diatribe about how Jack needed to "break through the wall" (of addiction)...he needed to "look through the keyhole" and "find what he really wanted" .... Jack very rightly so, told this Abby he was finding all this very confusing. He had come because Abby had a place for him to get off the street. What was all this?

It was a challenge to make any sense of this intervention. I latched onto whether or not the audience understood that Jack would do anything, say anything, to get off the street. And that of course the recovery house was the wrong place for him.

A young man replaced Dani in the first scene with Mia. Somehow, he cut Mia to the core with a simple statement. He told her she'd forgotten what it was like to be a teenager – everything is dramatic. Something in Mia really heard this, and she remembered. It seemed so simple, and they really talked. We got into another conversation about vulnerability.

A medical professional (self-identified) replaced Dr. Deveraux in the final scene with Abby. She rattled off all kinds of possible innovations that she is exploring in the Department of Oncology here in Vancouver. Abby did the right thing, she challenged all the talk and asked for it to turn into action that actually helps her.

A young woman replaced Dani in the final scene with Mia. She began in what seemed like a very theatrical way, she really confronted her mother saying that Mia had no control over her, she could do whatever she liked, this really turned into a screaming match between the two women. What was a bit weird was it seemed like a game for the intervener. But inside it Mia played it for reality in a great way. I brought Frank in because it was time for him to arrive. Frank broke through this young woman with his sincerity and tears. He grounded her in the reality, and it got very authentic. You could've heard a pin drop in the audience. We got to open up many things. How do we help Mia be less aggressive and listen? The audience agreed many of them were or had been Mia. How do we help Dani know that her mom actually has her best interests at heart? Even though at this moment it doesn't feel that way, and her behaviour is not helping? Lots of tears in the audience, people really resonated with this.

I've already received an email tonight from someone who was there:

"I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of *maladjusted*. Really great. I went with a fellow social worker and the journey home was full of inspired ideas and ways of improving our practice and the 'system'. Thank you!"

### Thursday, March 26

2PM

|            |                 |     |             |     |
|------------|-----------------|-----|-------------|-----|
| Vancouver: | House Capacity: | 136 | Attendance: | 129 |
|            |                 |     | House %:    | 95% |

8PM

|            |                 |     |             |      |
|------------|-----------------|-----|-------------|------|
| Vancouver: | House Capacity: | 136 | Attendance: | 137  |
|            |                 |     | House %:    | 101% |

The matinee was a nice house and quite different in that there was a huge amount of laughter during the play. They got all jokes. This isn't always the case, or perhaps what happens is that people just don't think they should be laughing.

We had a mishap during the takedown this afternoon. Jack hurt his shoulder. We thought it was more serious than it ended up being. He went to a doctor in between shows and, ironically, the physician would not give him anything for the pain. He ended up buying an OxyContin on the street in between shows. Life imitating art imitating life.

It was great to have a real full house for the evening – there's just something psychological about all the seats being filled. In the intake, a woman, who works in the sector, suggested something new. She wanted Jack to come with her to a pharmacy and have them verify the meds as being what he said they were and then she could administer them. She works in a Recovery House in Vancouver and evidently this is possible there. Our Frank disputed this. The pharmacy will identify the meds, yes, but they can't verify the prescription. Only a Doctor can do that after assessing Jack. This opened up great policy suggestions (nothing new) regarding physicians' availability and authority to prescribe small doses of meds.

A woman replaced Mia in the first scene with Dani. She did a great thing. She just sat in silence and watched the movie with Dani. The audience loved it. And it was really profound. Again, no one has done this before. This changed the whole play. What did Mia have to conquer inside herself to do this? Her fear; her need to fix her daughter; her shame... the audience had many insights, many more than I can remember.

I wonderful young woman replaced Dani at the point where she stops her mom from cleaning. I spent some time setting this up because it is a delicate starting place and I wanted both characters grounded. This young woman confessed her own fear to her mother in the middle of her mother's tears. This prompted the young woman's tears, which led to many, many tears in the audience.

The exchange was both full of emotion and humor from both women. It was so real, as if they'd known each other for a very long time. The young woman confessed that this story was also truly her own story. And that she had had to soul-search in order to find her own generosity for her own mother. You could've heard a pin drop in the audience. In the end this isn't only about mothers and daughters, they are after all, also simply two humans.

A very prolonged standing ovation tonight. We have two shows left, including the webcast, and then we are done.

### **Friday, March 27**

|                 |      |             |     |
|-----------------|------|-------------|-----|
| House Capacity: | 130* | Attendance: | 129 |
|                 |      | House %:    | 99% |

\* we had to reduce by 6 seats tonight (and tomorrow) to make room for the SHAW cameras in preparation for the webcast.

This was a very quiet audience. It's so interesting the difference show to show. Sometimes there is a lot of laughter, and sometimes, like tonight, there are snickers at the jokes but no real laughter. I don't think it's that people don't get the jokes, I think it's that they think is impolite to laugh. Weird.

The Forum started slowly tonight but was, in the end, very lively. What happened that was unusual?

A woman – a doctor - replaced Dr. Devereux in the scene with Abby. Often, what happen in this moment is that the doctor has somehow offered support to Abby and perhaps even help organizing a staff meeting. This was not the case this time. This real doctor began discussing cutting back even more, removing programs, lowering the workload, in order to protect both herself and staff. This did not sit well with Abby who did not enter the profession to serve fewer and fewer patients. In discussion about this I asked the intervener what would happen with patients? Her comment was they would continue to serve the patients as best they could. Of course this is a real solution from a real doctor. I used this opportunity, as I have been, to challenge doctors to speak up. My impression is that she (a real doctor) did not appreciate this. Speaking personally, I have come to believe it must happen if there is going to be a real movement on the issues in the play.

A very young woman replaced Dani in the final scene with Mia. She was so open and engaged and honest. At one point she looked at her mother and simply said "I know I'm fucking up"... and Mia did something I've never seen; she dropped to her knees. It was as if her knees just buckled. It wasn't an act. This led to a very caring and honest exchange between the two of them and when Frank came this Dani went to her room and Mia was able, somehow, to just be vulnerable with Frank. He never entered the home. A lot of the audience was in tears. Learning and self reflection going on in this moment.

A man replaced Frank in the final scene that leads to the takedown. Instead of barging into the clinic he knocked on the door. He was trying to remain professional. When he saw Jack, he informed Jack that he was going to call the police for showing up at his niece's house. This led to a very interesting turn of events. Jack took the first opportunity he could see to leave by the back door. Abby got very engaged with Frank, so much so that when Jack left she did not go after him. What were the results of this? Abby's relationship with Jack was compromised. Jack was out of the street where, tonight, many bad things could happen because of the state he is in. Symbolically, how does our desire for "professionalism" dehumanize care?

Another prolonged and heartfelt standing ovation. Cast members and I were surrounded after the curtain, people wanting to complement the event.

The SHAW crew were "blown away" by what happened tonight. A number of them have never seen Forum Theatre. I understand the dry run went quite well. One more, our last, tomorrow.

### **Saturday, March 28**

|                 |     |             |      |
|-----------------|-----|-------------|------|
| House Capacity: | 130 | Attendance: | 131  |
|                 |     | House %:    | 101% |

Wow. Everything has beginning a middle and an end. Hard to believe, but except for tidying up and of course the final reports, we are done.

The evening was not without its glitches. 30 minutes before show time the SHAW truck had an electrical short, caused, Mike (the Director from SHAW) thinks, because of the pouring rain, and lost all power going to the board that he does the switching (live editing) from. Mike had to go to SHAW, downtown, get a new part....and yes, made it back in time!

Last night had a very different energy. Not only was it closing night, but the webcast is always a larger event. It takes a great deal of extra organizing, of course. For me, there is the added awareness that colleagues from around the world are watching. I know they are watching the joking - the facilitation - with affectionate and yet critical eyes. It's like being under a microscope. Added to that, the webcast becomes the DVD. The DVD becomes the representation what the entire project was, and yet... it is really only one show. And so there is a hyper awareness that happens: 'oh, that moment will be there forever'... there are ways that this night it is more difficult to simply be present. Nevertheless the evening went very well.

The first intervention came from a man from a group home (I found out later) who only wanted to ask Jack what it was he wanted, and to take his intervention no further. I encouraged him to continue so we could see what would happen but he didn't want to. I did something very unusual for me and asked if there was an audience member who could take over the intervention, to move it forward; someone who was inspired by it. A woman took over and never mentioned going to the recovery house at all. She offered to spend as much time as it would take to find Jack some kind of

housing that was appropriate for him. Jack and the audience loved this. It did open up the question of how Abby could do this and still deal with her other clients. How does she take care of herself?

A woman replaced Frank in the recovery house and was so transparent with Jack that he ended up leaving and going back into the street. There were a lot of people in this audience who were very knowledgeable about mental health and the street. They really understood that Jack was more safe in the street than he was in the recovery house.

A woman replaced Frank and went back to the recovery house and got the meds out of the safe, risking losing her job. The audience loved this - lots of rule breakers in the house. When asking for policy suggestions a number of audience members suggested rule breaking as a policy. This is difficult of course, because we're trying to come up with real policy, but I understand the desire. This suggestion comes, I think, from a place of frustration and anger at "the system". A young man addressed this from the stage in a way. He told the audience, after replacing Dr. Devereux, that he has spent a lot of his life demonizing people who hold power. He is realizing, though, that many of them are "just people" and if we want to move forward we need to approach them with the same compassion as we would the oppressed. He was recognizing, I believe, the heart of Theatre for Living.

A different Mia held herself together when Dani came home and created space for Dani and Frank to talk. This intervention, as has often been the case, was very emotional for the audience. We recognize ourselves, I think, in the complex relationships inside the family.

Regarding the webcast: Evidently, YouTube was not a good idea for the web streaming because it stalled a couple of times, for lack of bandwidth. Also, there was a second major glitch in the truck during the evening, and all the power went out momentarily. This might have jeopardized all the shooting that was done so far until that point. Mike is going to work to salvage the file. He's worried it might be damaged. I'm waiting, holding my breath a bit....I think the worst-case scenario is he will have to re-edit some of the raw camera shots. ....Technology.

As I usually do I called anyone who's been involved in the project onto the stage for this final curtain call. It was a very emotional closing for me. This is the end of a project that started in 2012 and while extremely powerful, it has also been very intensely draining.

We finished with a very long standing ovation that was not just for tonight but for the entire project.

ADDENDUM: I want to give kudos to Mike Keeping from SHAW. Yes, indeed, the digital file that creates the DVD was damaged beyond repair. Mike went back to the original camera shots and rebuilt the entire 2 ½ hour event, using and tweaking the sound from the cameras because the sound track from the mics is embedded in the digital file. He had to then layer in our soundscape from our original sound files. A monumental task. Thanks Mike!





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<sup>10</sup> Photo of final curtain call by Jing Zhang.