

# šxʷʔamət (home)

## Final Report



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and Associate Director  
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## Some context

To say that Canada has a complex and hidden past, present and future would be an understatement. I travel both nationally and internationally extensively and know that most people I meet have little or no knowledge of our true and brutal history of settlement, theft, colonization, deceit, abduction, abuse, murder, assimilation and ongoing broken promises with Indigenous Nations. Until recently most Canadians had little knowledge. Why would they? None of this had been taught in our schools, (and even now it is minimal). To a large degree Indigenous populations learned to keep to themselves in order to avoid the abuses of the dominant culture.

I've had the privilege over the last few decades to work closely with many Indigenous people across Canada, from many different Nations. They have almost always been exceptionally generous with me and I like to think that our collaborations have benefitted not just me but the individuals and communities with whom I've worked.

As my knowledge deepened, my perspective about the realities of where I was born, live and call home changed. What does it mean to me to understand even the small amounts that I do about Canada's colonial past and present? Especially if I have a desire, as I do, to be a responsible Canadian?

People have asked me in interviews and in private why I wanted to do šxʷ?amət (**home**). One might imagine a romantic, selfless, altruistic reason but in reality it is selfish. I want to live in a healthy country. Canada cannot hope to be really and truly healthy unless and until we (and I mean all of us) embrace the truth about our Nation. We are on stolen land on which a genocide was attempted. We all must do the work to repair very broken,

unhealthy relationships, and we must do this actively – not sitting back and waiting for Government to do it on our behalf. Here’s some reasons why:

In the last few years, Canadian Governments (Federal, Provincial, and Municipal) have embarked on a process of Reconciliation. There was an apology from Prime Minister Harper – in my opinion an empty gesture – one that was cynical theatre. Why do I say that? My best way to explain is to address you as if you were standing beside me:

“(Insert your name here) I’m sorry I’ve been treating you so badly. It’s shameful, and I want to acknowledge that. You should know that I’m going to continue to treat you the same way and....well...I want to apologize for that. Truly. I’m sorry. We good now?”

An apology that has meaning implies a change in the behavior that made the apology necessary in the first place. If that does not happen, and quickly if not immediately, the apology is rendered meaningless.

And yet, there was the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (TRC), a National process through which many, many Indigenous people, Residential School Survivors and their children and grandchildren, exposed their wounds to a horrified public. So, there was truth shared by the victims of terrible, systemic and personal abuse. But what of the perpetrators? Were they asked or compelled to appear and speak? No. They were both invisible and silent. And so, what was that process? And how did the compensation claims, that seemed more like insurance company claims, calculations regarding exactly what kind of abuses and how traumatic they actually were (How many abuses? What kinds of violence? Let’s put that in the calculator and see how much money it’s worth)...how did that dehumanizing process serve Reconciliation? Especially when receiving payment meant also agreeing there was no further claim possible?

Prime Minister Trudeau swept into power and it seemed as if a new, “sunny day” was dawning in many areas, including Canada’s relationship with Indigenous people. To be fair, there HAS been movement in some areas. But the PM rightly linked Reconciliation to issues of consent; Indigenous consent over what happens in what is left of their Traditional Territories. Having done that, the decision to move the Transmountain (Kinder Morgan) Pipeline to completion through the Territories of the local (Vancouver) Musqueam, Squamish and Tseil-Waututh Nations is a betrayal of monumental proportion.

And so MY reasons for doing **šx<sup>w</sup>?amət (home)** are grounded in wanting to live in a healthier Canada; to be a responsible Canadian. I am also a theatre artist, of course, and my way to accomplish the former is always to try to make wonderful art.

## It started with...

In 2013 Theatre for Living (TfL) did a collaboration with John Sakamoto Kramer, who was then Executive Director of the Vancouver Aboriginal Policing Liaison Centre (VAPLC). The



history there is that despite numerous attempts, the VAPLC could not do much liaising with the Vancouver Police, who simply would not engage, and so John had turned the Centre into a place for Elders and healing. We did a project together called “*I have to Tell My Story*” about the Legacy of Residential School issues. This Power Play<sup>1</sup> was supposed to have only one performance, at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre. The plays were so well received, though, that there were

subsequent performances at the Native Women’s Centre, The UBC House of Learning (as part of the TRC) Vancouver City Hall and the Vancouver Public Library.

*“During the 6 day Power Play that led to forum theatre (**I have to Tell My Story**) about the Legacies of Residential School, I gained an understanding of symbolism and how an individual can perceive themselves, or discover how they interact or isolate within their own personal life. I can honestly say that I am more aware today in how people engage with each other on a personal/professional level, as well as how our past trials and tribulations manifest within the theatrical realm. It was an amazing spiritual journey and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to partake in such a powerful and expressive theatrical experience.”*

Siémthalt – Melodie Pierre, BSW, Katzie/Shishalh First Nation

*“I attended **I have to Tell my Story** and was really impressed by the depth of ideas explored with community members. It was so inspiring to see the diversity of people that can be brought into the discussion. I really appreciate the way sensitive and controversial issues could be explored in an environment where people could feel comfortable with opposing ideas. It's refreshing to sit in a room and feel that it is ok to disagree, that we can still move forward. This was one of the most useful and important dialogues I have had the privilege of attending. Thank you so much for providing this very important opportunity for me, and our whole community, to examine and explore solutions for some of the most troubling issues in Canada.”*

Nikki Yee, Vancouver

*“As an International Chinese Student at UBC I didn’t know much about Residential Schools. It was difficult for me to link the difficult situations of today’s First Nations people with the Legacies of Residential Schools. Today’s presentation of **I have to Tell My Story** made the legacy more easy to understand for someone without this knowledge. This was complex, sensitive, deep and thoughtful. I will share how many impacts residential schools have on current family issues in aboriginal communities. Both the historical legacy of residential schools and foster care and how the cultures and traditions of aboriginal communities make some elements of family life different. Also how universal family issues can be.”*

Anonymous audience member (from an evaluation form).

<sup>1</sup> A Power Play is what I call a 6-day process that takes a group from zero through creation and performance of interactive Forum Theatre plays.

John and I decided over lunch one day that it would be a good idea to follow up on this somehow. In the meantime, he had left the Vancouver Aboriginal Policing Liaison Centre and founded *Journeys Around the Circle Society*. He committed to networking and recruitment help as well as helping with fundraising.

## The fundraising

And so the long process of fundraising and creating the infrastructure for a major project such as **šxʷ?amət (home)** began.

Fundraising has become more and more difficult over the last number of years. Over the last decade or so (under the Conservatives) the places in Government we received funds from (Crime Prevention, Environment, Indian Affairs, Secretary of State, Heritage Canada, and others), all closed their doors to theatre projects. Some, like Heritage Canada still fund Festivals, which we are not. As that happened, the Foundations became inundated. As a response to that, many of them have both shrunk and also mechanized their criteria. We were never at the 'very centre' of the criteria – always off to the side somewhat, but still inside the catchment. Shrinking the criteria (a self-protective move) ended that. As a result, many people inside Foundations now tell us that while they love what we do, their Board of Directors' decision means we are now outside the funding model and so.....sorry.

Here's one example of many: A local Foundation, a long-time supporter of Theatre for Living has 'corporatized' their funding approach recently into a "social innovation" model that demands a 3-5 year project arc, with very mechanical, pre-determined outcome measurements and a top-down approach that negates the very possibility of grassroots development. I have spoken at length with Officers there (long-time colleagues) who are very distressed by this because they see and understand what I am saying. It flies in the face of real community development, which by its very nature needs to be responsive and adaptive, from the ground up not the top down.

And so we struggled to raise the funds for **šxʷ?amət (home)** and **I want to really thank the funders who came on board. Their logos are at the front of this document.**

As the funding was being brought into place by Susan Shank (Financial Administrator) Dafne Blanco (Office/Production Manager/Webmaster) and me, David Ng (Outreach Coordinator) and Dafne prepared workshop participant and cast recruitment material.

## The recruitment

David Ng has written his own Outreach Report, so I will be brief about that process here.

Participant and cast recruitment for **šxʷ?amət (home)** was challenging. Our experience with previous projects has been that while it is certainly a lot of work, applications come

in rather steadily and then a rush of them as the deadline approaches. Not so with this project. For months it was like looking for water in a desert. Why was that?

People in the non-Indigenous community, we've realized, seem to think Reconciliation is the domain (and responsibility?) of Indigenous communities. Ironically, this makes any reconciliation process more difficult. Others from non-Indigenous communities want the whole thing to go away. It's too big, too complex, too long-term and has the potential to change the country in profound ways. Yet others (and by this I mean often [but not always] from the recent immigrant community), are legitimately ignorant of the issues. Nothing in their immigration process informs them about this aspect of Canada. They've come here to a peaceful, safe land full of opportunity and promise. Many of them wonder 'what the problem is with those Native people'?

From the Indigenous side there is a deep distrust. For many (and it's taken me a while to understand the depth of this) the word "reconciliation" has taken on very negative connotations. In my conversations with numerous Indigenous Elders I've asked this question: "Is Reconciliation an invitation to assimilate more deeply?" Every single Elder has responded with: "Of course it is!".

There are many blockages on all sides of the issue.

Recruitment did of course proceed and in the end 131 applications came in – most of them at the last moment and as a result of a lot of hard work. We had to process them all and interviewed 35 people. Out of these we hired a workshop group of 15 and a cast of 7.

I then went to India for the great adventure of doing a TfL training, that has led to the formation of a TfL/India group, and to make plays in the mental health sector and returned home to start the workshop/creation/rehearsal process of **šxʷamət (home)**.

## **The Community Workshop, Creation and Rehearsals**

The community workshop, creation and rehearsal process was surprisingly smooth! It's often been the case with our projects, working with the homeless community or the mental health community, that somewhere in the process we've gone into high drama mode. Not the case with this.

We pulled together a wonderful group of people – workshop participants, cast, design team and Susan Powell (Lakota) as Support Person and of course Renae Morriveau (Cree) as Associate Director. Hiring Renae was a good (and somewhat risky) move. Risky because we didn't know each other very well and were embarking into very sensitive territory together. I've been around for a while and have been invited to work with many Indigenous communities. For a white guy, I think I'm fairly knowledgeable. However, I also know that I have the Colonial eyes and ears I have – changing them is impossible. I wanted artistic Indigenous eyes and ears standing with me during the process. Renae was

a great choice. She was open, patient, generous and also not afraid to be critical. One of the many things we worked on well together was ensuring that nothing was 'pan-Indigenous' - everything was culturally specific. I know (because she's told me so) we learned a great deal from each other. Her participation was invaluable to me.

### **The community workshop**

Below is a pic of the entire team – all the workshop participants, cast, production team and staff on Day 1 of the process. It's the only time we are all in the same room together.



It's important to understand that in a process like mine, we walk into Day 1 knowing almost nothing. We've done interviews of course, recruitment, participant and cast selection. I have a central question that will engage the workshop. For this project I asked the group to offer moments out of their own lives when they encountered a "blockage" to reconciliation – either inside themselves or between them and others. Everything then emerged from group process.

The purpose of the week-long workshop, to be clear was not to create material for the play; nor was it to serve the needs of the participant group, although Susan Powell was there and sometimes busy to provide support to any participant who needed her. We were there, (and everyone was being paid and fed healthy food) to 'till the soil' out of which the large play would grow.

There are photographs of Images that were made during the workshop process, but they are not for public consumption, even here, in this report. We covered a lot of territory from White guilt to Residential school trauma and shame; from Indigenous impatience, anger and resentment to non-Indigenous fear of being blamed and losing one's concept of Canada. We cried and laughed a lot together and there were very courageous ways that the workshop itself was a process of decolonization and reconciliation, inside and in between people.

Once the first week was done, the workshop participants were released and the cast, production team and I remained.

### **Some interesting aspects of the creation rehearsal process:**

We then spent a lot of time, a whole week in a three week creation/rehearsal process, working on character elements and relationships before starting to create content. This might seem like a risky choice but I have come to trust that given the right ecology, the narrative will emerge out of the characters without having to be 'created'. This is part of my commitment to a systems-based approach. The character work paid off. The narrative did in fact emerge and flowed rather easily, once I sorted something else out:

When the narrative started to appear and we started working actual scenes, I was really unhappy with what we were making. It has been the case with other projects that the characters' journeys have been action-based. Theatre is active, after all. This approach wasn't working for this play and it took me a while to understand why. In *maladjusted* (our play on the mechanization of the mental health system) the basis of scenes were things like, 'character x gets misdiagnosed', 'character y finds inappropriate housing', etc. The core of this play is Reconciliation. The heart of the scenes needed to be the deterioration of relationships – not actions per se. Of course the characters needed to want something, and this must be active, but they needed to fail at Reconciliation somehow in every scene. The texture of this is quite different. When I figured it out, everything started to fall into place.

We had a wonderful design team – I want to single out Bracken Hanuse Corlett (Video) and Alan Brodie (Lights) in particular. This was Bracken's first theatre production doing video and he was a real joy to work with. He brought his own talents and perspective into the project and at the same time was able to really serve the story that was emerging from the workshop participants and cast. He had to do a lot of specific shooting, (of forest, Crab Park, loading bays) and also design work, sometimes in the wee hours. Alan is one of the most respected theatre lighting designers in Canada. He was terrific and created a beautiful design. He was very taken with the emergence of the process and we talked about this at length sometimes. His sense of theatre, what works onstage and what does not, his flexibility and understanding of transitions helped make this play the lovely jewel that it is.

### **The story**

While *šxʷamiat (home)* comes out of a process investigating real issues in the workshop participants and actors' lives, no one is representing their own actual story or that of any single workshop participant.



A video of the final performance and webcast is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoD6veo41QA&t=409s>

**šxʷ?amiat (home)** weaves together three storylines:

1. Lucas is 18 and Cree. He was adopted by a white, Christian couple (Doug and Sarah) when he was 5 days old. While they have given him a good home, they have also kept his identity from him. An encounter with Siya (whose mother is from the Sylix Nation) who is the daughter of Joe (Snaw-Naw-As), a poker-buddy and work colleague of Doug's, launches Lucas onto a path of insisting on knowing his identity. Siya gives Lucas a Medicine Pouch, which becomes a very big symbol in the play. This opens up a crisis in the family because of Doug and Sarah's fear-based deception and lies of omission.



2. Siya is 22 and is emerging as a leader in the Indigenous rights community. She is passionate about land/water protection. She is discovering her own power and in order to do so wants to pursue her activism and also to know her father's (Joe) stories and Indigenous language. Joe is a Residential School survivor and has pushed that part of his life deep inside him. He doesn't want his daughter to know that pain. He also wants her to succeed in the world of the dominant culture and resists her thirst for language and activism. Her need to know and his need to not reopen the trauma are at odds with each other.



3. There are two other characters in **šxʷ?amiat (home)**:



- Chase's parents immigrated from the Philippines. She was born in Canada. Siya and Chase are best friends and comrades in their activism, until Chase wants Siya to recognize Chase's Indigeneity. The delicate place that the two friends are in their own perspectives on Indigenous issues in Canada jeopardizes their friendship.

- Vincent spent his childhood moving from one foster home to another. He is disconnected and 'floats' through our story. Years ago Joe was his group home counsellor, before Joe burned out and went into construction work. Joe tries to get Vincent work in Doug's warehouse. Vincent struggles, though, with an addiction issue that brings him into conflict with Doug, Joe and himself.



These three threads intertwine into a series of beautifully overlapping scenes in which the characters fail at various forms of the work required to make Reconciliation true and honourable from within the non-Indigenous community and in between communities. In the end, we build into a crisis in which the two youth are alone, isolated, and afraid of the future.



## **This White Guy Joking<sup>2</sup> the interactive events**

Renae and I had chatted early on about co-Joking the interactive events. It became clear quite quickly though, that that was not going to work for numerous reasons:

It is very challenging for two people to facilitate this kind of event together. It is best if one brain can swim around in it, as it is a bit like live dramaturgy, or directing as performance art. Renae also had another project directly after we closed. I have 30+ years experience Joking and she had some but very little. There was also something powerful in a White man taking responsibility – being transparent about his own struggles, blockages, working through his own colonialism and colonization. Me being the Joker, we agreed, was good 'modelling' for the non-Indigenous community. We have a lot of catching up to do in

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<sup>2</sup> The "Joker" is a Theatre of the Oppressed term that I have kept in Theatre for Living. It describes the facilitator, the emcee, of the interactive theatre event.

terms of the time and energy invested in the process of true and honourable Reconciliation.

I'll be honest and say it was very scary for me to do this every night, even though I knew I had the cast's, the production team's and Renae's complete support. I am not naïve. It is impossible for me to not be a 63 year old white male walking onto the stage. I carry the symbolism and the reality of the colonizer. Having said that, our very diverse audiences were wonderfully generous with me and feedback from every sector has been terrific. (See quotes below.)

### **Audience interventions**

**šxʷ?amət (home)** was interactive, Forum Theatre. As my work has evolved the invitation to audiences has changed from project to project, adapting to the themes of each particular play. This was the invitation to the **šxʷ?amət (home)** audience:

If you understand the struggles that the characters are engaged in – the blockages they face to true and honourable reconciliation, either inside themselves or in between them and another characters – and you have an idea about how to move through that blockage, yell 'stop'. The action will stop. You'll come out of the audience area, into the playing area, take the place of the character whose struggle you understand, and try your idea. The other actors will improvise with you in character and....we'll see what happens.

I want to be clear about what I am asking of you. I'm asking you to replace characters whose struggle you understand and enter that character's struggle. Not to turn the character into someone nicer, or a more balanced individual, and move through the blockage by some magic. Each of the characters in our play have a particular world view, for instance. If you replace that character, you enter their world view.

But there is another layer. The appropriate casting of this play was of course essentially important. But now we are in Forum. AS challenging as this may be, we give you the permission, and ask that you give yourselves the permission, to set aside all those things that separate us: Race, gender, age, orientation...many things. As long as you feel you truly understand the struggle of the character. I can tell you many stories about, for instance, an older woman of one colour replacing a young man of another colour and doing something very profound on the stage – something from which we all took insight.

The Forums were all very different, depending on audience chemistry. One of the great things about this project was realizing how much of a "bubble" we live in. By that I mean, the community of people I know and work with, are for the most part, informed about issues regarding Reconciliation. A sign of the success of our Outreach was that some of

our audiences were not. Ideas to break through blockages to Reconciliation that came onto the stage were sometimes very misinformed, naïve, steeped in Colonial attitudes...although always well-meaning. The cast were terrific, always being in character and responding honestly, even when that was very challenging. This meant that the learning that was happening in the theatre was very deep. Feedback about this is that the kinds of conversations that were happening through the Forums virtually never happen – making the project really valuable to people who attended.

There were themes that emerged out of audience interventions during the run. Here are just a few:

- The non-Indigenous community has a lot of work to do, internally, and needs to start taking responsibility for doing the work, in terms of our own knowledge of the Indigenous cultures in whose territories we all reside. A Canadian tendency tends to be to ask Indigenous people to teach us and sometimes this is appropriate, but it is also deeply fatiguing for Indigenous people to be considered a constant source of information. We need to take responsibility ourselves for understanding where we are and for educating ourselves.
- The same applies to non-Indigenous knowledge of the truth of Canadian history and how events of the past are still manifesting today. For instance, while Residential Schools have closed, there are more Indigenous children in care today than during the Residential School era. Indigenous children being removed from their families and cultures has not stopped. The systems through which it is happening have changed. If Reconciliation is to be true and honourable, the apprehension and assimilation of children must stop.
- Intergenerational trauma around Residential Schools remains an important but evolving issue. The younger generations have not attended Residential Schools but have a deep need to understand their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents. How can this be accomplished without also either having survivors relive the trauma and/or transferring the trauma from one generation to the next? An insight from the Forums is learning language and, that being the focus, story-telling of all kinds becomes a natural and step-by-step process – not something forced.
- There is a difference between acknowledging Indigenous Territories at all our events and really understanding that our 40 years, 100 years, even 150-200 year-old roots in this land are not the same as the roots of people whose ancestors have been here for 10,000+ years. This is challenging. We all want to claim “home” somewhere. But the realities of this must be faced if Reconciliation is to be true and honourable.

- Non-Indigenous people need to find a way to stop making the Reconciliation process about their own guilt and shame. While both of these emotions are real things that may need to be moved through, neither is useful as both create a kind of paralysis. These reactions also tend to elevate Indigenous people into some kind of iconic, all knowing, shamanistic category which, in the end, is oppressive.
- On the other end of the spectrum, non-Indigenous (in particular White) people engaged in reconciliation processes need to check that they are not dominating the conversation. It is essential, I feel, to be part of the conversation, but having grown up inside the privilege of the dominant culture, it is easy to continue that uneven relationship and it is essential that it evens out. What accomplishes this is more silence and listening than one might be used to.
- A question arose as to whether true and honourable Reconciliation is possible from within a Christian structure. I think this is a very interesting question. We all know that the Churches have a lot for which to answer and official apologies, while they have happened, have not come from all denominations. Churches have created programs for Reconciliation (some have funded this project). Can Reconciliation, though, be real, if it is situated inside a religious Christian context? Audiences were divided about this. And so one wonders, can the Churches provide essential funds and perhaps basic structure for Reconciliation and remove any and all religious doctrine and symbolism, creating a space for the true re-emergence of the spiritual (non-religious in Eurocentric terms) cultures that the Churches were part of attempting to eradicate?

Audience responses to the project are at the end of this report and speak to many of these themes.

### **Attendance at the Firehall Arts Centre**

The run was almost entirely sold out before we opened. This is a testament to the Outreach work of David Ng and his assistant, Cindy Charleyboy. A puzzle inside this is our voucher system, which we have had in place for many years. We set aside 20% of the seats of every performance for people living in extreme poverty. These are non-stigmatizing free tickets that are distributed through agencies. The tickets must be RSVP'd and picked up by 15 minutes before the play starts. We feel having the voucher system is very important as it is one aspect of achieving the great diversity of our audiences. It does carry its own bit of chaos...

It was especially problematic for this project. Perhaps it is a sign of the times – people are very busy, life is more and more volatile. Even when David and/or Cindy would check in with organizations 2 or 3 hours before the show to see if people were using the tickets,

and they were assured that would be happening, the no-show rate was occasionally very high. Sometimes up to 100%! This was so frustrating and, we all feel, disrespectful. It has made us rethink the voucher system. We may reduce the number of vouchers available to 10% of the house and try to get them directly into the hands of possible audience members instead of through social service workers.

We played to 91% houses at the Firehall Arts Centre.

## šx<sup>w</sup>?amət (home) Attendance Figures

House Size: 145 x 11 Performances = 1595 capacity

	Comps*	Vouchers Program	Tickets Sold	Total	%
<b>Thur Mar 2 - Preview</b>	9	16	102	<b>127</b>	88%
<b>Fri Mar 3 - Opening</b>	30	47	51	<b>128</b>	88%
<b>Sat Mar 4</b>	6	17	102	<b>125</b>	86%
<b>Sun Mar 5 - Matinee</b>	0	0	111	<b>111</b>	77%
<b>Sun Mar 5 - Evening Show</b>	19	51	65	<b>135</b>	93%
<b>Tue Mar 7</b>	6	0	102	<b>108</b>	74%
<b>Wed Mar 8 - Matinee</b>	3	16	123	<b>142</b>	98%
<b>Wed Mar 8 - Evening Show</b>	5	11	123	<b>139</b>	96%
<b>Thur Mar 9</b>	6	15	123	<b>144</b>	99%
<b>Fri Mar 10</b>	6	25	114	<b>145</b>	100%
<b>Sat Mar 11 - Closing</b>	12	31	97	<b>140</b>	97%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>1113</b>	<b>1444</b>	
		<b>Grand Total:</b>		<b>1444</b>	
		<b>Production Final:</b>		<b>91%</b>	

\* This includes Theatre for Living and Firehall Staff, Webcast Production Team as well as special guests and Opening Night Invitations

## The webcast

On closing night, as we have been doing for many years, we were able to offer an interactive, global webcast through a long-standing partnership with SHAW TV.

We had 1,069 individual ISP addresses logged into the webcast. We know many of the computers had large groups around them – some parties and/or classes. So we are estimating approximately 2,000 web viewers. SHAW also rebroadcasts the event on local television and tells us to estimate 15,000 viewers.

This indicates a total of **18,444 live and remote viewers of the project.**

They were from these places (understanding that these are the places that were visible in chat, lots of people don't enter the chat, they just watch. Some only indicate country logging in – we have city names when we could see them.):

Canada\*      Abbotsford, BC; Calgary, AB; Chilliwack, BC; Hamilton, ON; Lewgumkem Territory; Quebec City, PQ; Sylix Territory (Okanagan); Whitehorse, YK

\* We were unable to gather all of the Canada locations

United States      California; Illinois; New Jersey; North Carolina; Oregon; Virginia; Washington

International:      Afghanistan; Argentina (Tucuman); Australia; Austria; Bangalore, India; Colombia (Cucuta); England; Ethiopia; Finland; Germany (Berlin, Marburg); Greece; India; Indonesia; Iran; Japan (Osaka); Mexico; Philippines; Saudi Arabia; Serbia; Slovak Republic; Taiwan; Thailand (Phuket)

I understand that there were internet 'time-out' issues during the first 15 minutes of the webcast, during which some people gave up viewing. We are trying to understand what the glitch was in order to fix it for the next webcast.

A DVD of the closing night webcast is available upon request.

## What happens now?

Requests to tour the production are coming in, with contacts already from Victoria, Alert Bay, Kitimaat Village, Hazelton, Vanderhoof, Chetwynd, Peace River, Edmonton, Medicine Hat, Nelson and Penticton.

We are starting the organizational work to fundraise for and book a BC/Alberta tour for February/March of 2018 with a short run back in Vancouver when we return. We anticipate being able to reach up to 21 communities. It is likely we will have more requests than we can accommodate.

## The Finances

The final budget for this project as of April 20, 2017 was \$192,107 with income currently at \$180,842. This is BEFORE \$11,000 in final payments that will be generated from final reports. After those come in, income will be \$191,843 leaving us with a very manageable shortfall on the project of (\$264).

This is about the normal cost for the creation and performance of a new play for us. We try to pay everyone involved a living wage. One does not do work about empowerment by exploiting people. If this is a report to a funder, a detailed budget is attached.

I trust this completes the final report requirements. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Diamond".

David Diamond  
Artistic/Managing Director



## Media and Audience responses to šxʷʔamət (home)

We've just heard (April 24, 2017) from the Vancouver School of Expressive Arts Therapy that because of šxʷʔamət (home), they have instituted a week-end intensive on Reconciliation issues into the program every year.

"For the past month I have been thinking about šxʷʔamət (home) and how to find language that adequately expressed the power of the experience I had. The script was tight and complex. The acting was uniformly strong – rich characters with humour as well as heart, edge and honesty. Most importantly, I was struck by how all of us in the audience were now taking a small step forward in the work of reconciliation, thanks to the theatre you and your company have created. I wish everyone in Canada could have a chance to witness and participate in šxʷʔamət (home) - it would make us all more conscious and compassionate people."

Jane Heyman, Faculty Emerita, Langara College; Former Associate Director, Studio 58; Freelance Director & Dramaturg

"Theatre for Living connects directly to the poor, the disenfranchised, the powerless, the different and the absolutely ordinary citizens in our communities. Then, it does something even better. Adding these folks to the mix, adding their voices, words and experience, Theatre for Living showcases right before our eyes *Vancouver's beating heart, as it truly is.*"

David Berner

"šxʷʔamət (home) is a provocative and powerful piece of theatre and engagement."

Andrea Warner, Georgia Straight

"('šxʷʔamət (home)) proved so compelling that audience members lingered in the Firehall Theatre lobby long after the show, until ushers had to urge us out into the driving rain on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-waututh Nations."

Lincoln Kaye, Vancouver Observer

"Still thinking about šxʷʔamət (home) this morning - very impactful. Thanks to everyone for all their work - it is a play to remember for always!"

Ginger Gosnell-Myers, Aboriginal Relations Manager, City of Vancouver

"I haven't seen any other piece of theatre before šxʷʔamət (home) that I actually felt had the capacity to shift people's minds and hearts towards authentic reconciliation. This is important work and I was so glad to share in it."

Natalie Davidson

"šxʷʔamət (home) is great piece of theatre and sets up a great interactive theatre dialogue."

Stephen Heatley, Head, Department of Theatre and Film, UBC

"WOWOWOWOWOWWWW WHAT A NIGHT!!! People! šxʷʔamət (home) by Theatre for Living is a MUST SEE!!! If you do nothing this year... at the very least GO SEE THIS PLAY!!! Hands up to the Cast, Director and Associate Director who was more awesome than awesome!! My hands are raised HIGH in honour and respect!!"

Betsy Bruyere, Aboriginal Community Equity Services

"The tragedy in šxʷʔamət (home) is mortifying, the complexity and hope are breathtaking. The systemic ensconcement of pain, self interest, and fear is brilliantly re-enacted by the performers, then instrumentally disrupted by audience participants. David Diamond highlights, negotiates and problematises these unpredictable and profound performativities with unthwarting respect, tenacious sensitivity and unfettered courage. There is so much movement in šxʷʔamət (home): it is really a volatile verb.

The stakes around the promise and perils of real and honourable reconciliation and its dissemination are high. Not only should this play be performed nationally and internationally, it should also (with requisite permissions) be made into a documentary, and submitted to International film festivals."

Renée M. Fountain Ph.D

"šxʷʔam̓ət (home) is a very good piece of theatre and without doubt lends itself to deepening in respectful ways the critical issues of reconciliation that all of us in Canada need to address."

Patti Fraser

"šxʷʔam̓ət (home) was an extraordinary performance, made even richer by the forum theatre format. About 20 members of the Outreach/Justice group of the congregation with whom I serve (including myself) are coming back from the play with stories of challenge and transformation that I believe will continue to help us with the internal and cross-nation work that needs to be done. Thank you for that opportunity."

Rev. Richard Bott, Congregational Development Minister, Dunbar Ryerson United Church

"Over the past few years, I have informed myself about the history of the settler relationship with indigenous people. I have read the TRC Report and the Indian Act. But it wasn't until I attended Theatre for Living's šxʷʔam̓ət (home) and felt the everyday struggles of those on the stage—both cast and audience members—that this became more than intellectual knowledge, and I began to understand how challenging and necessary is this process of reconciliation.

The interactive theatre process gave one hope that, although it won't be easy, it is possible to live up to our promise as a country of diversity, inclusiveness, and fairness. One of my takeaways is that settlers cannot expect indigenous people to teach us, to make things right. We need to educate ourselves, to look after our own healing, and work humbly to develop healthy Nation to Nation relationships."

Pauline Le Bel

"The excavation of emotions, assumptions and primary needs in šxʷʔam̓ət (home) was reconciling in and of itself - while at the same time shining a flashlight on just how large and complex the task ahead of us really is!"

Debbie Forbes

"šxʷʔam̓ət (home) was such a beautiful, moving and satisfying experience. Which isn't to say it was all feel goody. No, like good theatre it was challenging and harrowing and sad making at times as well. I so appreciate what all the actors in this show are doing. Putting themselves in such vulnerable places in order to move the conversation around Reconciliation forward. David Diamond does an excellent job of pulling the light forward from each encounter during the voluntary audience participation part."

Crystal Verge

"I was very moved by the extraordinary power of šxʷʔam̓ət (home) to address reconciliation and those blockages that pop up in our everyday lives. Congratulations on an amazing project, and thank you for inspiring us all."

April Liu

I loved every minute of šxʷʔam̓ət (home). Thank you all for the brave act on stage. I was totally hypnotized in a positive way. A big HUG to you all from India!

Prathibha Parameswaran

"I cried, I sighed, I smiled, and I thought very, very deeply. Something profound shifted watching the webcast of šxʷʔam̓ət (home). Thanks to everyone. Wow. My students at university were engaged and watching. Monday will be an interesting class debrief. Wow. Good work."

Michelle La Flamme

"I watched the webcast of šxʷ?am̓ət (home). Congratulations David for the very high quality of the piece. I was impressed by the play of the actors and their sensitivity. Thank you to all those who made this wonderful human experience possible."  
Suzanne Bolduc

"šxʷ?am̓ət (home) was absolutely profound. I watched the webcast and felt so blessed to be able to be a part of it. The interventions were amazing and I truly feel that productions like this will help social change progress. Reconciliation is such a difficult and scary thing to talk about, this production was a safe space to open up and bring some of the thoughts forward, regardless of where you stand on the subject. The awareness this created is so valuable to Canadian society."  
Victoria Champion

What a perfect night 'participating' (from afar via webcast) with Theatre for the Living's production "šxʷ?am̓ət". David Diamond, the cast and audience were absolutely amazing. Best three hours I've spent in a long time.  
Richard Wainwright

The production of šxʷ?am̓ət (home) had me wiping my eyes and choking back sobs as I was confronted with the realities of secrets and their bitter legacies. The experience of this interactive play, reconciliation and humanity and what it means to all Canadians is brought forth in all its forms."  
Lloyd Koski

The šxʷ?am̓ət (home) webcast was a captivating, thought provoking and well delivered presentation. I watched from Williams Lake, BC. Hope this show can be presented throughout the province, and perhaps the country!  
Heather Rankin

"I watched šxʷ?am̓ət (home) via webcast from Hamilton, ON. So well done! Such complexity, compassion and love conveyed for the reconciliation process. I wish every Canadian could witness this. Thank you."  
Lynda Archer

"šxʷ?am̓ət (home) was a truly moving experience. What a way to learn about and participate in the dialogue of reconciliation. The actors brought their whole selves to the stage! David Diamond was an amazing facilitator."  
Nancy Woodham

"šxʷ?am̓ət (home) was the most thought provoking work I have seen yet. This production has touched on the core issues in reconciliation from all sides. Would suggest it tour the whole country. Kudos to the team. Brilliant."  
Sandy Tonello-Greenfield

"I went to see šxʷ?am̓ət (home) and was amazed. What a powerful show, what great acting, what an incredible learning and sharing space."  
Allison Jones

"As a sixties scooper I want to thank all of you for šxʷ?am̓ət (home) and you David for your relentless pursuit of truth and healing. With deep gratitude and the spirit of healing and light."  
Sharon Jinkerson-Brass (Wapse Panashi Equay)

"šxʷ?am̓ət (home) was the most emotional, challenging, difficult and inspiring piece of theatre I have witnessed in a very long time. It asks difficult questions, resisting simple answers. It asks much of the audience and we learn much in the process. The deep symbolism within this show stretches far beyond the obvious story. The show touches us in many ways reflecting within it many of our own stories. There is magic in the space that opens up within the framework of the show at hand. I can't recommend it enough. We have a lot of work to do and Theatre for Living are pointing the way." Frank Rader

"Congratulations on šxʷ?am̓ət (home). You managed to turn some of the hardest of hard asses into something workable.... and some of the softest hearts into beating hearts that will make the difference. The work you have done has made reconciliation number one for many and has motivated and re-inspired me."  
Gunargie O'Sullivan

"I brought my class of 30 students to šxʷʔam̓ət (home). They loved the show and said they were thinking about it for days afterwards. I feel it brings great insight to complex First Nations issues, but also an understanding of the meaning of the word reconciliation in any context."

Judy Snaydon, Faculty IDEA Program, Capilano University

"šxʷʔam̓ət (home) was a truly inspirational piece of work that I doubt I'll forget. The honesty and authenticity of the actors and the opportunity for the audience to join the dialogue was a beautiful communication and learning opportunity for us all. An amazing evening of art, dialogue, courage and humanity."

Michele McCabe

"Thank you for your profound performance of šxʷʔam̓ət (home). It was an *extremely* effective method for motivating my own personal changes of action and learning. This was my first Theatre for Living performance, and I found that the format created a strong container of empathy and honesty, without taking away any of the risk, honesty, challenge, or demanding necessity of this work. I am stunned by your courage. I would like to share what has happened for me as a result of the performance:

I left the performance with equal amounts of discomfort and hope: discomfort from the raw realities presented, and hope because I had just seen ways to actually make change and seeing blaring points of my own blindness. In response to this, I have

- o begun educating myself about residential schools,
- o initiated a conversation with my parents about what it means to me, to them, to us, to be descendants of white, settler-colonialists, and what we can identify as our responsibilities in this context.

I have initiated several get-down-and-real conversations with friends about appropriated spiritual practices, using the experience of šxʷʔam̓ət to engage in conversations around respect, consent, and permission. I have increased my research about my own indigenous backgrounds and spiritualities (Nordic and Celtic), and feel a fire in my belly to follow that learning *now* and not later. I attended an event for the Unist'ot'en people in BC to help raise funds for their healing center, and am beginning to coordinating a fundraiser in my community to offer back financial to the Unist'ot'en people in the ways they request. I have befriended a homeless man here in my own town, and am giving him my time and resources in order to help network him to resources for which he is requesting.

Daily, I am finding myself asking my own self, "Is this fear really a limit?" "Is this vulnerability a reason to stop?" "Is this based on a story I have been fed, or is this actually based on this human being right here?" "Am I listening?"

Thank you for this work. Your play was challenging, and it was stunningly beautiful in craft. You offered beauty and it made the risk bearable. Thank you to your dedication to art, to the human body, and to humanity."

With humility and gratitude, Anneliese Kamola

"Thank you for reaching out to us far away folks with the webcast. Watching the forum component provided so much additional insight. I hope you get to expand your theatre run in BC and AB, and maybe further east someday. I need to do more personal growth work toward truth, healing and reconciliation as a non-Indigenous person and appreciate the learning opportunity of your closing night webcast." James Garland

"A truly moving experience. What a way to learn about and participate in the dialogue of reconciliation. The actors brought their whole selves to the stage! David Diamond was an amazing facilitator."

Nancy Woodham

“Watched the Reconciliation show via webcast, last night. So well done! Such complexity, compassion and love conveyed for the reconciliation process. I wish every Canadian could witness this. Thank you.”  
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