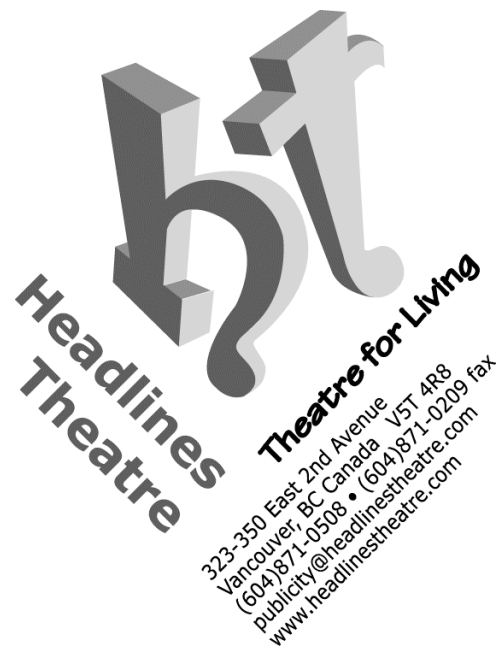


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Meth:

Forum Theatre to create dialogue on roots of addiction

BC Tour performances co-sponsored by Native and non-Native communities

A Native Elder tells Headlines that Meth use on reserves is “the new plague”. Mass media now regularly reports on the “Meth epidemic”. Addiction knows no racial or geographic boundaries, yet communities struggle to address it isolated from one another. Who are the addicted? Why? And what can be done?

Headlines Theatre is working with Native and non-Native participants to create and perform *Meth*, an interactive Forum Theatre production. Communities across BC will use the primal language of theatre to grapple with the human relationships and dynamics that lead to addiction, creating theatrical public dialogue in search of grassroots solutions.

Meth

Forum Theatre created and performed
by people who have struggled with meth addiction
Directed and Joked by David Diamond

At the Japanese Hall, 475 Alexander Street, Vancouver
8pm **November 30 - December 3 and December 7 - 10**

Pay what you can - Info/ tickets: 604-871-0508 or www.headlinestheatre.com

MEDIA CALL – 6 to 7pm November 29 @ Japanese Hall (473 Alexander)

Live, interactive tele/ webcast on Shaw closing night - BC Tour from January 15 to March 4, 2007

Headlines gratefully acknowledges the support of:

Canada Council, City of Vancouver, BC Arts Council, Vancouver Foundation, Health Canada, BC Gaming, CUPE, Law Commission, Central City Mission Foundation, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Japanese Hall, Vancity, BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, BC Ministry of Health, BC Centre for Disease Control, Columbia Institute, The Melusine Foundation, Hamber Foundation, CBC Radio One, CBC Radio Two, Co-op Radio, Westender, and Raven's Eye

Follow the process

Grassroots Participation – the Community Workshop - November 1 to 6

The process begins with an intensive 6-day community workshop involving 20 people who have struggled with Meth addiction. Some will be recovered addicts, others will be family and community members affected by the problem. Together, they will use *Theatre for Living* techniques to uncover the deep-seated desires, fears and motivations at play, and better understand the intricate dynamics contributing to the problem.

An Authentic Voice - Creation/ rehearsal - November 9 to 29

The material gathered in the workshop will be used as a springboard for the development of *Meth*, created and performed by a cast of five workshop participants, who will be supported by a professional production team of designers and technicians.

Public Dialogue - Vancouver Premiere - November 30 to December 10

At Forum Theatre performances, the audience will be invited to stop the action of the play, replace characters onstage, and test their ideas for dealing with the issues of addiction. The interactive events provide an opportunity to engage in dialogue, yielding surprising insights and possibilities for action.

Engaging the Province - B.C. Tour - January 14 to March 4

After the Vancouver launch, *Meth* embarks on a seven-week B.C. tour, stopping at approximately 26 communities across the province. Currently, participation has been confirmed for; Mission, Abbotsford, Kelowna, Trail, Creston, Cranbrook, Invermere, Kamloops, Ashcroft, Williams Lake, Prince George, Fort St. James, Vanderhoof, Kispiox, Terrace, Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Alert Bay, Duncan, and Chemainus.

“Few plays offer such an opportunity for collective understanding, and such a powerful catalyst for change.”

– Georgia Straight review of *Here and Now*, 2005

Headlines Theatre

25 years strong, Headlines Theatre has produced hundreds of *Theatre for Living* workshops and performances around the world. Recent mainstage events *Here and Now* (2005) and *Practicing Democracy* (2004) played to great critical and audience acclaim, with *Practicing Democracy* being honoured as *Outstanding Production of the Year* at the 2004 Jessie Richardson Awards.

With *Theatre for Living*, Diamond has adapted Brazilian director Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* to a contemporary context. Diamond's approach shares a starting point with Boal, using the powerful language of Image Theatre – metaphor, symbolism, archetypes – as a means for communities to investigate difficult issues. However, embracing concepts of systems theory, Diamond has left behind the binary model of Oppressor and Oppressed to create plays and stimulate community dialogue woven with the complexity and ironies of real life.

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The Cast

Kayla Cardinal – Kayla is 17 years old. She is from Prince George. Kayla struggled with her own journey through addiction involving crystal meth, and has been clean for 16 months as of November 2006. After making the choice to go to detox, Kayla became very involved with this type of work because it allows her to explore and express her beliefs in a safe environment. She believes theatre is very powerful, and wants to use her experiences with life to help people to see the truth about the issue, and she hopes people will take this opportunity as a chance to learn.

Jordan Fields - Jordan is 27. He grew up in an adoptive family that was a very hostile environment. Having used many types of drugs in his early teen years to adulthood, he entered the rave world, found crystal meth and used for six years. During this time he became homeless and very isolated. In his last two years of addiction he turned to crime to survive and as a way to stay off the streets. After doing repeated jail time he hit rock bottom and, on the urging of friends, entered detox. Since then he has been rebuilding his life and giving back to the community any way possible.

Cody Gray – Cody is 17. He is an ex-addict who has been clean for about 22 months as of November, 2006. He had very rough experiences during his addiction including a psychotic experience that led to heart failure. Since he quit he's been trying very hard to give the knowledge he's gained through life experience to others. He has been acting in Forum Theatre for about two years and enjoys writing and creating music. He hopes you enjoy the show because Truth is Knowledge.

Betsy Ludwig – Betsy is a mother, grandmother, sister, aunt who is concerned with the well-being of people and believes that education is better than punishment, as education prevents a lot of suffering through drugs and alcohol addiction. Her own experience with addicted lover ones has shown her that addictions are carried down through generations. As a mother Betsy spent a lot of time teaching life skills at home and now she spends her time in the community sharing her life experiences. Betsy was an extra in *Clan of the Cave Bear*, and acted in *Annie Get Your Gun*, and *Reclaiming Aboriginal Languages*. She also teaches Gitksan language and culture.

Sophie Merasty - Sophie is of the Dene and Cree Nation originating from Reindeer Lake in Northern Manitoba. Her own personal experience with a loved one's crystal meth addiction is what makes her involvement in this project much more meaningful and important. Sophie has worked extensively in the performing arts since 1983 and has performed across Canada including the Yukon. She was an original cast member of the 1991/92 Headlines production and tour of *Out of the Silence*. Her experience involves producing, directing, workshopping and developing new plays. She has also performed in film, TV, video and radio drama. Sophie is committed to making a difference in communities, particularly with aboriginal peoples, using her craft and skills in the field of performing arts.

Herb Varley Herb is 22 years old from the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation. He has seen too many friends fall into the world of meth - a drug that makes people rip off their friends and that destroys relationships. He has seen people who he would never have never thought would become drug addicts go nowhere with their lives. He feels that if the Meth Project can help just one person not get involved in the drug all of the hard work that went into creation and rehearsals will have been worth it. Herb would like to say "All My Relations."

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