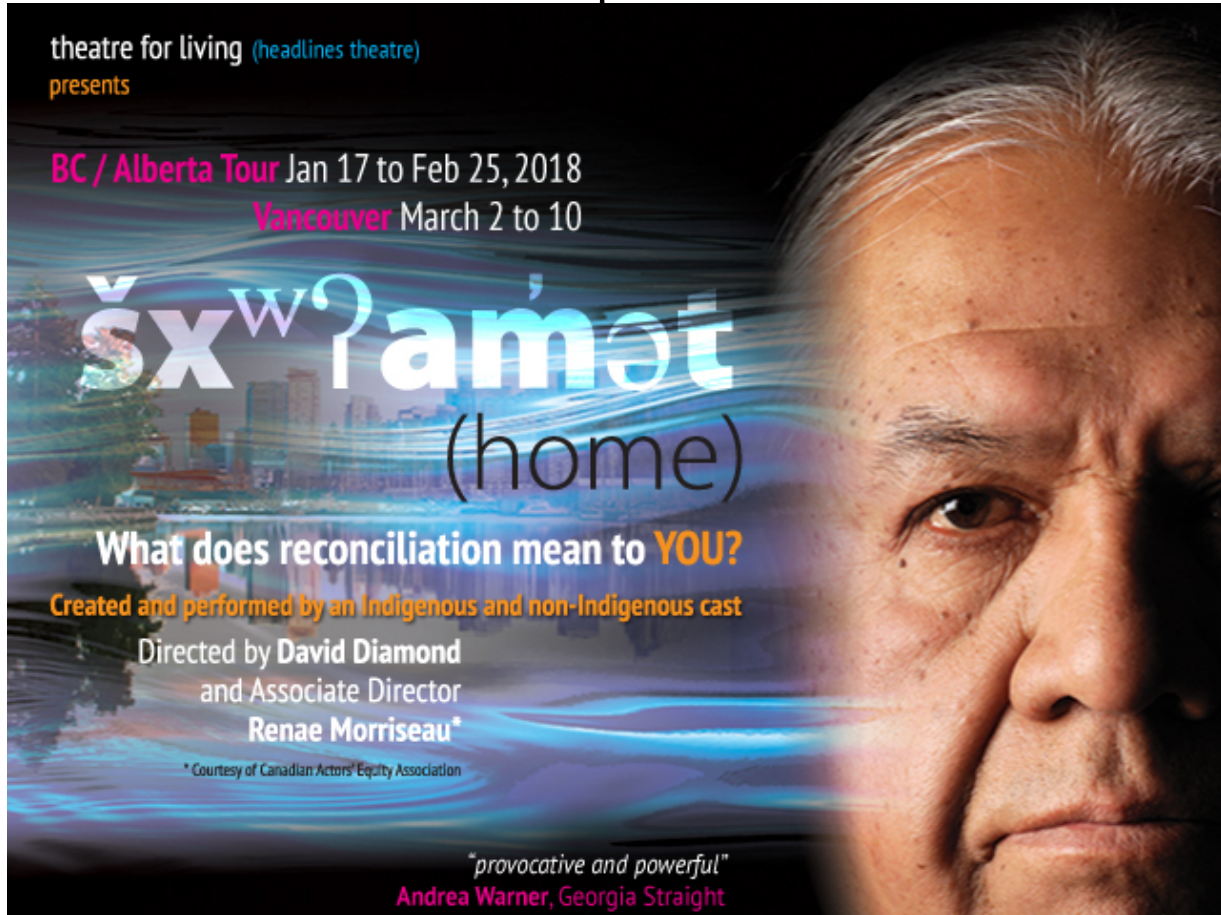


šxʷamət (home)
 BC/Alberta Tour and Vancouver performances
 Final Report (2018)



“šxʷamət (home) is absolutely, the most amazing Forum Theatre show ever seen in history.”
 Antonio Graziano, Teatro della Tenerezza, Italy

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Operating Funders:



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If you haven't seen this production, it is viewable on YouTube, here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNvOF8sb3-A> Watching it will help you understand this report.

My FINAL Final Report

This is, I should say, not only the final tour of Theatre for Living (as we advertised), but the final production. I will continue to respond to invitations to do workshops and trainings and speeches in community, but am retiring from fundraising. We will close the office by the end of October 2018. Tfl's tremendous Staff are moving on to other things. At a very personal level, I want the stress and responsibility of raising between \$300-500,000 every year, out of my life.

I had hoped that with the infusion of new money, the Canada Council for the Arts would increase our operating grant to a realistic, sustainable level. We should be, I believe, a "poster child" for the Canada Council in terms of our level of community engagement and artistic product – having been doing what we do for decades – long before "community engagement" became an important buzz word. Community Engagement was supposed to be the CENTRE of the new criteria. There are theatre companies who got 300% increases to their operating – I asked for a 125% increase. Instead, we were frozen once again at \$55,000 a year. That news sealed the decision for me to make this transition. The mountain is just too high each year and is not physically/emotionally sustainable.

People have asked 'why not hand it over to someone'? A high percentage of the company's earned income is from me going out and giving workshops and making speeches. I am going to continue to do that. Anyone taking it over would not only be burdened with a monumental fundraising task every year, but that income that I bring in would also be gone. The theatre company would have to transform completely in order to manage and would no longer BE Theatre for Living. Everything is born, everything lives, and everything eventually transforms. This idea that ANYTHING continues forever is against the laws of Nature.

All of the funders of **šxʷ?amət (home)** are acknowledged on the face of this report. My heartfelt thanks for your belief in this work, the theatre company and this project.

A very short version with some conclusions

The BC/Alberta tour and Vancouver run of šxʷ?amət (home) were a tremendous success. Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations came together to bring the project into their communities and generally this went very well, with relationship building being a part of the tour booking process. Attendance was very high in most communities (sometimes well over capacity, pulling out more chairs, people standing...). The tour averages out at 100% capacity! The Vancouver run at 95% 😊.

Reaction to the artistry of the play was very gratifying and we had many deep, interactive Forum Theatre events, standing ovations every night. A few of the shows were controversial – interestingly, anywhere we had TWO shows, one of them was challenging (Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary). Kind of weird, that, but true. These are written about in the detailed final report.

Attendance Figures

Date	City	Venue	Capacity	Attendance	% of House
BC/Alberta Tour					
17-Jan-18	Chilliwack	Tzeachten Community Centre	150	172	115%
19-Jan-18	Victoria	Songhees Wellness Centre	300	368	123%
20-Jan-18	Victoria	Songhees Wellness Centre	300	322	107%
21-Jan-18	Nanaimo	Snuneymuxw Recreation Centre	200	250	125%
23-Jan-18	Parksville/ Qualicum	Winchelsea Place	170	170	100%
24-Jan-18	Comox	Mark R. Isfeld High School	250	242	97%
25-Jan-18	Campbell River	Thunderbird Hall	250	197	79%
26-Jan-18	Port Hardy	Port Hardy Civic Centre	140	93	66%
30-Jan-18	Kitimaat Village	Haisla Recreation Centre	120	61	51%
1-Feb-18	Hazelton	Hazelton Sec. School Gym	140	152	109%
3-Feb-18	Vanderhoof	Saik'uz First Nation Multiplex	110	90	82%
4-Feb-18	Prince George	Connaught Youth Centre	170	164	96%
6-Feb-18	Chetwynd	Chetwynd Sec. School Gym	100	38	38%
8-Feb-18	Peace River	T. A. Norris Middle School Gym	100	85	85%
10-Feb-18	St. Paul	Ukrainian Cultural centre	140	202	144%
11-Feb-18	Edmonton	Boyle St. Community League	150	158	105%
13-Feb-18	Edmonton	Boyle St. Community League	150	140	93%
16-Feb-18	Medicine Hat	École Connaught School Gym	100	93	93%
17-Feb-18	Calgary	MacEwan Conference Centre	120	115	96%
18-Feb-18	Calgary	MacEwan Conference Centre	120	127	106%
22-Feb-18	Nelson	L. V. Rogers Sec. School Gym	300	304	101%
24-Feb-18	Penticton	The Shatford Centre	120	132	110%
25-Feb-18	Kamloops	TRU, Grand Hall	180	210	117%
BC/Alberta Tour Totals			3,880	3,885	100% avg.

Vancouver Run at the Firehall Arts Centre

2-Mar-18		136	120	88%
3-Mar-18		136	136	100%
4-Mar-18		155	119	77%
6-Mar-18		155	153	99%
7-Mar-18	Matinee	155	153	99%
7-Mar-18		155	154	99%
8-Mar-18		155	154	99%
9-Mar-18		155	149	96%
10-Mar-18		155	155	100%
Vancouver Totals		1,357	1,293	95% Avg.
Webcast Estimate			7,660	
TOTAL Estimated Audience			12,838	

The Finances

Touring is expensive, although I also am pretty certain that if Government did the same project we just did, the budget would have been tripled.

From community engagement into tour booking, publicity, rehearsals and then taking 13 people on the road in a 15 passenger van and a 5 ton truck, (23 shows in 20 communities across BC/Alberta) and then 9 shows back at the Firehall Arts Centre and final reports, the total expenses are **\$355,525**.

This covers a Vancouver staff of 4 (Financial Administrator, Office/Production Manager & Webmaster, Outreach Co-ordinator/Publicist, and the Outreach/PR Assistant.) The Associate Director was in rehearsal with us and Designers were either paid fees for touring redesign, or royalties if no redesign was necessary. On the road we had the Cast of 7 people, Director/Joker/Tour Manager, Stage Manager, Support Person/Ceremony Consultant, Technical Director and 2 Crew.

Technically, we had a 15 platform stage, 5 stair units, 4 lighting trees with approximately 40 lights, body mics, video projections on 2 screens and a sound system.

People are paid based on Union (Canadian Actors' Equity) rates with realistic daily food per diems added, and hotels are of high quality, 2 people to a room (not 3 or 4 as is often the case touring), with 2 "floating" singles for occasional privacy or sickness. If travel of more than 3 hours was necessary, there would be no show that night.

Income, including earned income, operating income allocations and project grants as of March 30, 2018 is **\$340,110** leaving a shortfall of **\$15,414**. After final payments come in from funders, when final reports are OK'd, the project will show a surplus **\$186.00**. Not bad budgeting.....;)

Conclusions

People are asking what conclusions one can come to from the Forums. While I am always reluctant to do that because I think these are only my opinions, I can reflect on some issues that came up over and over again:

Reconciliation exists in layers. I've understood this thanks to the collaboration on this project with Renae Morriveau, Associate Director.

One layer is the internal work non-Indigenous communities need to do – coming to terms with and out of denial about the truth of Canadian history, colonialism, genocide...many things. We are in the first baby steps of this journey.

Another layer is the ongoing internal work Indigenous communities have been doing for a very long time. Recovering from and reacting to colonialism, Residential Schools, language loss, land destruction...again, many things. They are way ahead of the rest of us.

A third layer is the work in between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. This third layer can't and will not be healthy unless the two layers mentioned above are healthy. We have a lot of work to do, and only some of it is the role of Government. A lot of it is the responsibility of each and every person who occupies this land we call Canada.

Reconciliation is going to take real time – well beyond my lifetime and into next generations. It will not be a final goal, but an ongoing process, and so we have to be willing to throw out any concepts, as were expressed by Canadian and Provincial legal teams in land claim cases, of asking Indigenous Nations or individuals to sign onto treaties or agreement processes that include “certainty”....certainty that the conversation will now be over. It will continually evolve. An example of this in personal lives is the insulting Residential School compensation process that tallies up instances and forms of abuse on a scorecard.

We all have to be willing to sit in places of discomfort together and not get defensive, or let issues of guilt make us run away or build walls. Really facing up to the truth of Canadian history and how it effects the present and future of ALL OF US takes a kind of courage. We have to stop saying and thinking it's all something in the past, or involves other people. All of us are dealing with the results of colonialism and the genocide that took place on this stolen land.

Doing that takes, as I've said above, educating ourselves (and by that I mean the non-Indigenous sector) and stopping asking Indigenous communities to do the work of educating us. Of course collaborations need to happen, and of course we need to be open to be guided by Indigenous truths and ways, but we also need to take responsibility for educating ourselves.

If Reconciliation goes hand in hand with Indigenous consent on Indigenous land, (and I, along with many, believe it must) then we need to take that seriously, not only when Government or Corporations deem it convenient or politically expedient. Writing this from Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Territory (Vancouver) I think it is important to say, as was articulated at almost every performance, the local Nations have been clear about there being no consent for the Kinder Morgan Pipeline.

There is no Reconciliation without both reconciling with the land, water and air (translate this into real environmental stewardship), but also a return of land. Of course this scares Canada because it goes beyond the notion that we should just 'get along better'.

Of course Government has a major role to play in issues of Reconciliation with Indigenous Nations. But there are some things that cannot be legislated. If Reconciliation is going to be real, we must go through a very profound cultural shift in Canada. Each of us must ask ourselves what we can do, in the places in which we live and work, to make this transition real.

Naturally, there are issues that **šxʷ?amət (home)** wasn't created to focus on. No one thing can serve everything and when we try to do that we end up serving nothing well. There are issues of access to education, access to medicine, drinking water, etc. etc. The Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action are a powerful document and need to be followed up on. Some are in process. Many are not

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=890>

There were many requests for **šxʷ?amət (home)** to continue. The funding for the tour ending and also the cast going off to other projects and their lives of course makes that impossible, as does the decision to devolve the Company. However, the closing night global webcast is available for viewing here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNvOF8sb3-A>.

And, if you are interested in a smaller, local project in your community, please contact me at david@theatreforliving.com.

The Longer Report

Some project context (from the original production final report)

To say that Canada has a hidden and complex 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 have 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 took place. 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 and 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 without their consent is a betrayal of monumental proportion.

And so my reasons for doing **šxʷ?amət (home)** are grounded in wanting to live in a healthier Canada; to be a responsible Canadian. As a non-Indigenous Canadian I also feel I have a responsibility to lead in a Reconciliation process and not continue to do what has been happening, which is to assume Reconciliation is the work of Indigenous people. It is the work that the rest of us must do. Indigenous People have been working on reconciliation issues (recovering from colonialism, residential schools, etc.) for hundreds of years. Canada and Canadians are in our baby steps. We are very far behind. I am also a theatre artist, of course, and my way to accomplish what I've written about 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 Play¹ 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.

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 for a subsequent project that turned into **šxʷ?amət (home)**.

The initial incarnation of **šxʷ?amət (home)** played to sold out houses at the Firehall Arts Centre in 2017. We started getting invitations to tour while we were still running. The decision to tour, therefore was a no-brainer.

Tour booking

David Ng, Theatre for Living’s Outreach Co-ordinator booked the tour with the help of Cindy Charleyboy later in the process. Dafne Blanco, Office and Production Manager, dealt with venue requirements and hotels. Susan Shank managed payables and receivables, accounting. The tour booking process and also publicity is dealt with in detail in David Ng’s Final report, available here: [http://www.theatreforliving.com/past_work/sxwPamet/sxwPamet\(home\)OutreachFinalReport.pdf](http://www.theatreforliving.com/past_work/sxwPamet/sxwPamet(home)OutreachFinalReport.pdf)

“I’m thrilled to have worked with Theatre for Living as Outreach Assistant for both the 2017 run and the 2017/18 Tour and final showing of šxʷ?amət (home) in Unceded Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver). I learned so much from everyone involved, and especially from all of the audience participation in each play that I was able to watch. So much of the behavior we see on the stage is

¹ 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.

relatable to that which we see and experience in our day-to-day, and in all our relationships. I began to understand how much I have shut out understanding about myself and others in order to "function" in our society today. And how understanding does not necessarily equate to acceptance of the way things are. It is good. It is a good thing! I am grateful for the change this has made in my path and my trajectory on that path. Sechanalyagh (thank you)!"

Cindy M Charleyboy

Rehearsals

Tuesday, January 2, 2018

I was very pleased to have Renae Morriseau, Associate Director for the first incarnation of **šxʷamət (home)** back in rehearsals.

We had a very good and powerful first day. After a check in, **we did a run of the play!** First thing. I've been asking everyone, including the two new cast members², to watch the video of last year's version over and over again, warning them we would do this. I have to say that a LOT of the play was there....in structure, of course, not emotional moments. Also Sam Seward, the new Joe was really 'there'. Joey Lespérance, our new Doug...now named Robert...not so much so, but I also understand as a professional actor why he'd want to start with a cleaner slate. He was not in the original workshop with us (Sam was) and his learning curve, not having been immersed in the issues, is going to be very steep. After the run I started re-grounding the characters in the work we did during the early creation process. This started with asking the actors to go back to a character photo we'd made in the original creation process – I had asked them, early in the process, to sculpt a frozen image of all of the other characters in relation to them. This was very rich last year and was beautifully rich once again. There are hidden gems inside these Images, about all of the characters fears and desires in relation to the central character and also themselves.

We did 3 of the original cast: Vince (Nayden), Siya (Madeline) and Sarah (Meg). We'd spend time investigating the subtexts of the relationships. Then I asked the two new cast members to create, not re-create, one of these Images with themselves at the emotional centre. **THESE IMAGES ARE ABOUT THE CHARACTERS, NOT THE ACTORS.**

² Sam Bob and Tom Scholte could not tour with us. They were replaced by Sam Seward (an original workshop participant) and Joey Lespérance (professional actor who I worked with in Mamu in 1994), respectively.

The first Image is from Robert. What struck everyone about this is that Robert imagined he made an image where everyone had some kind of safety and connection with each other,



but in reality he made an imagine in which all of the characters, himself included, are alone. This opened up a deep conversation with him about Robert's perceptions and how he SEES himself as opposed to how others experience him. This is the challenge for Joey, taking on playing Robert. Robert is a very well-meaning racist, but a racist nonetheless. He puts people in boxes very easily and has a deeply clichéd image of Indigenous people.

Next is Joe. Joe is the only character who weaves through all of the other character's lives.

Sadly (and understandably) the only character who is 'real' for Joe is Siya, his daughter. He has sacrificed so much for her and has really entered the world of the Colonizer in order to protect himself and her from, in his mind, the inevitable realities of the world when one is Indigenous. He has put his Indigeneity aside. Colonization and Residential Schools have taught him this. His friendship with Robert is about work. He's turned his back on Vincent.....and he is driving his daughter away through his desire to protect her.





Next is Siya. She is 'emerging'...looking at the horizon...and at the same time very burdened by the people around her. She and Chase (her friend) believe they are headed somewhere together but in fact are not moving in the same direction. Her Dad's support of her...his hands on her shoulders, are an attempt to keep her from growing as an Indigenous activist, something that frightens him. She often scares or confuses others around her. She wants answers...and people expect her to have the answers.

We had a very emotional time with Reverend Sarah. When we stripped all the other

characters away, I mentioned to Sarah that all that was missing was crossing her ankles and we'd have Christ on the Cross. She burst into tears and we talked through Sarah's fears and all of her actions being based in fear, in a desire to pay for her sins, and the sins she takes responsibility for from others. This isn't some vague idea, or something that feels hysterical from her...it can be calm and methodical. Unfortunately, these actions that are fear and guilt-based, (like the adoption of the 5 day old Indigenous Lucas) are not solutions to the issues she sees. They end up contributing more deeply to the problem.





And then there is Vincent. He is alone in this world. Even Joe, who is behind him and almost embracing him....isn't. When we dig into this, Joe is afraid to embrace Vincent because he is worried that Vince will drag him back down into his own addiction and Vince is afraid to truly be embraced....what does he do with all the anger and self-hate?

There was much more than this in all of the Images....I just can't explain it all here. People were very happy with the work we did today. A good launch.

Wednesday, January 3, 2018

What a huge day, but I guess every day will be like this. We finished the Images of Lucas (Asivak) and Chase (Mutya):



Lucas is the boy becoming a man who wants to fly and continually feels constrained...who is at the precipice of something, and is filled with wonder and fear.

Chase's Image led to a very emotional uncovering of Chase's loneliness. She feels invisible even though for some of

the people in her world, she is not. It is, in part, a self-imposed invisibility, which makes Chase try so hard that it alienates people. This was a good discovery and will, I think, deepen Chase's character.



We worked our way through about half of the play today. Some of it was very hard slogging, particularly of course, the scenes with one or both of the new actors.

Each is facing different issues: Of course Robert wants a script. This is the way he is used to working, and of course I won't give him one, and he understands why. If he gets one everyone gets one and that would kill, kill, kill the play. The thing about this is the play itself is 30 minutes, but the event is 2.5 hours. Most of the work is underneath the play. If we spend the time grounding the characters in their realities, they will always know what to say. The 30 minute play will be word perfect every night (it has to be, there are about 100 light, video and sound cues). It will be perfect not because it's been memorized, but because it is embedded, in an embodied way, in the consciousness of the characters.

Once Robert is secure with his lines, he is very capable of sitting in a complex emotional reality. I know he trusts me – he's just nervous.

Joe came in really knowledgeable about Joe's lines from absorbing the video over and over again. He is very resistant, though...self-protective, about sitting in a deep emotional reality. He and I talked about this very openly when we met about casting him and he really wants to do what is necessary for the play to work at an emotional level. Renae and I both see this and are working together to help him find his soft vulnerability....something he's spent many years, I think, trying to harden, as a way to recover from Residential School. His courage about this is inspiring for everyone in the cast.

In other ways, scenes are deepening. It's always nice to revisit a play one has worked on – there are new angles, new layers of understanding about what we made. If everything goes according to plan we will finish the play tomorrow and do a full run again. Then start chewing through scene by scene again. I became aware today, though, that time is going to pass very fast.

I was grateful today for both Renae and Harriet (Harriet Prince is our Support Person). Renae was great in terms of contextualizing some things....also working through with me pinpointing layers that seemed to be missing. Harriet stepped up a couple of times today....brushing cast members with cedar after exceptionally emotional work. It is only day 2 and the strength of the team is emerging.

Thursday, January 4, 2018

We finished chewing through all the scenes of the play today. Really a monumental thing we've done – the cast have been great. We are just at the end of day 3 – of course there are also things that are going to be rough....it is the case that the areas of concern are appearing.

Joe is working very hard. We had a long conversation about how Joe's anger in the play is a 'gift' to the audience. Renae is trying to help him access the emotional truths of the scenes from a cultural place. I know he wants to go there.

Robert is making his way....struggling a bit with there not being a script to go home and learn, but also very happy with what's happening. He'll be fine. The rest of the cast know where we are going and are fine. Directorially, its important they don't peak too soon.

Friday, January 5, 2018

We did a lot of very detailed work today on the first half of the play again, and are making some very good headway. What I mean by this is the moments are deepening, becoming more real and scenes are starting to flow. We did a run at the end of the day and it was very apparent what scene's we worked today and which ones we did not. That's OK, we will work the other half tomorrow.

I had an interesting chat with Renae today about my own very 'different' style of directing – being one that really works with and nurtures the psyche of the characters. I forget sometimes that not everyone does this. Of course blocking and lines are important. But if the characters don't know what they are thinking, feeling, wanting, afraid of, etc., in each moment, then what they are saying, where they are moving, has no meaning. The MOST important thing for me is the relationships....to one's self and the other characters. Everything else flows from there.

Harriet is seeing this and loving the process we are in. She's found it amazing, how we are working....coaxing real people to emerge inside the story – not caricatures, not cardboard cut-outs, but in depth characters with deep histories.

It's quite gratifying hearing this and also very sad for me. I am pretty sure, having decided to devolve the Company (for very good reasons) this is the last time I am going to get to direct in this way. Doing the workshops and making Power Plays is not the same. I know the theatre community does not see me as a real Director....because for many of them what TfL is, is not 'real theatre'.

Saturday, January 6, 2018

Another VERY heavy day. Lots of great work today, but only some of it was retained.

We started with the scene where Lucas gets the pouch back and learns his real name. While Robert has been having an issue not having a script, he's also being really good to work with regarding motivation and being flexible. He took huge steps today to understanding and embrace the racist, ignorant eyes through which Robert sees the world. The relationship with his son and wife really deepened today. This happened I think for all three of them.

One of the big moments was what it means to Lucas that he hears his father say he was against the adoption, and what it means to Robert that he knows Lucas heard.

We did some great work on the Residential school scene between Siya and Joe and after painstakingly working Joe through the steps into the depths of the story and the transitions from the hanging, to the priest's cover up, to dumping it on Siya – Joe DID the scene for the first time. Really did it. Both Renae and Harriet are trying to help him open up to the vulnerability that is required and staying safe personally at the same time...and also a sense of getting comfortable with the discomfort of being very angry and expressing it, and being cracked open with grief, sadness. This asks a lot of him, I know. We will get there.

We are all tired. The day tomorrow was supposed to be 9 – 5 but, in agreement with Dorothy and Renae, I've changed it to 12:30 (runs start at 1:00) to 5:00. I think an 8 hour day tomorrow will be counterproductive.

Sunday, January 7, 2018

Writing the next day (day off...slept in this morning) so this may be a bit sketchy.

We had the best run yet when we returned for 1:00PM. This was for a few reasons:

Vincent's first scene at Crab Park, throwing stones, was the best it's ever been. He's finding the authenticity. Unfortunately, he also eliminated the build-up through the racist firing, then into the confrontation with Joe. When he leaves the stage we really do need to believe he is either going to harm himself or someone else. Vincent's pendulum swung too far into a relaxed place...but I believe we can now build the steps from A to B to C.

Joe had a HUGE breakthrough in the Residential School scene. I've realized that one of the keys for him is helping him understand the mechanical, physical, embodied aspects of the transitions. Joe finishes the story about the hanging and escapes that by getting off the sofa....but lands into the cover-up by the priests (behind the sofa) and tries to leave that by moving to the edge of the sofa, but then explodes into why Siya pushed him into this today. Then he takes it out on her. The physical transitions help him stay grounded in the deeply emotional moments.

We also, in the second run – after working some bits – got closer to Lucas finding his end of the play again. He's been approaching this very cautiously....he's terrific onstage, really a joy to watch because he has this innocence about him and things just flow through him. It's also a challenge for him to get to the angry, disillusioned, broken-hearted place Lucas lands at the end of the play. Standing on a precipice.

I should also say that Robert has made terrific progress over the week....he has a real challenge here as he's come in with very little real experience in the issues, and didn't

have the benefit of the Community Workshop. He did the reading and viewing I asked him to do, but nothing replaces flesh and blood living. He told me yesterday that this last week has been one of the most profound rehearsal experiences of his life....and not just because he's had to learn lines without a script (!) Renae has been great and I've watched the actor just drink what she has to give. There is also the work we've done to get down underneath each moment of the play. It's nice to get back to this piece because it IS actually very, very rich in it's layers of subtext.

I've often done a simple technique with people in rehearsal of saying something quite opposite to what their line is...or different at least. With Lucas, for instance, when he needs to yell "She is not my mother!"...he couldn't find it again. I asked him to play the scene and replace that with "I HATE both of you!!" ...and mean it. The "I hate" is more basic and direct. He can find that easier. Once that works, he THINKS I hate, but says his real line. The actor thinks this is a kind of magic ;)

Everyone is making progress. Siya and Chase have both told me they are loving being back in rehearsal, and they are both making daily progress. I find I don't write so much about Chase (or give her that many notes)...the character is very grounded. I think this is a bit frustrating or maybe scary/lonely for the actor - I need to pay closer attention.

We should be getting the stage early this week. This will add a new layer to all the entrances and exits. We are ready for that now. A BIG thing coming is starting to rehearse Forum, especially for Robert and Joe. Neither of them have DONE Forum before and Robert in particular is nervous about this. We need to spend some time helping him in particular. We will be in technical rehearsals with light, sound and video before we know it.

Tuesday, January 9, 2018

We worked some problem moments from the run on Sunday and then spent the rest of the morning introducing Robert to accepting interventions in Forum Theatre. He had a lot of technical questions that I tried to answer, acknowledging in the end, there is no real formula. He needs to listen, be present, and respond as truly to the character as he can. He will learn more and more about Robert as we do more and more Forums. He is a very good improviser, though, so I'm not particularly worried.

We did a run and it was not great. It felt like we'd been away from the show for a day and the cast were 'performing' the play, instead of each moment being a discovery. We also lost the dramatic tension of some of the scenes entirely. After the run we went back into both scenes and had to do way too much rebuilding of the moments for this stage of rehearsals.

After the scene work we did another run and it was quite a bit better, but the end of the play (from the Residential School story onward) isn't working yet. The structure is there. The emotional depth is not.

It is possible we are getting to that place where they need an audience.

There is something else....our Technical Director is very behind schedule with the stage and lights. I think the actors won't have the stage until Tech which is later than the original plan. Not healthy for them.

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

We started with a run today and it was pretty good, except for the end of the play. The accusations Joe makes of Robert at the end of the play are sounding like questions. It is about the vocal pattern going up at the end of the sentences....Interestingly, the actor does not talk that way but when he is Joe, he can't seem to stop.

We had a production meeting at noon. Thanks for the great tour books, Dafne³.

We started Forum Theatre in the afternoon stepping in and out of Forum and rehearsal, which was for me as much as it was for the cast. I am remembering how much energy it takes to Joke⁴ this Forum and the complexity involved. The cast were good. We still have some scenes to touch.

One more day of rehearsal and then we are into tech....wishing we had more time. This was always going to be the way – the schedule got 'boxed in' before I knew we had to replace TWO cast members.

We had a conversation about cedar boughs today. We need them to brush audience members coming in. The plan was go get enough to last the tour, but Renae and Harriet pointed out that, 1. They will dry out, and 2. Following Protocol means they need to be gathered from the area in which they are being used. So, Harriet is going to take over gathering them and use her contacts in each place to make sure that happens. Thanks, Harriet.

Saturday, Jan 13, 2018

Its 12:30 in the morning (Sunday) and we finally finished Tech Rehearsals on the play. We started with the cast at 3:00 PM and finished just after 11:00 PM. We were supposed to start at 2:00 but lights were still being focused. The cast used the time to run lines.

³ Dafne Blanco – Office and Production Manager.

⁴ The Joker (a term from Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed that I have kept) is the role I play in the Forum Theatre event. The facilitator. Think wild card in a deck of cards.

Tech took this long, of course, because we didn't do ANY Tech without actors yesterday, so had to work through all the cues with them. Because the lighting set-up is so different than at the Firehall last year, AND because we now have stairs to get onto a stage, many of the cues had to be rebuilt. Timings were different and the "look" had to change because we don't have the same amount of instruments.

While all this was very tiring and stressful, it is also a deeply creative time for me. Something I am likely not going to get to do again, after devolving the Company. I will miss this really, really a lot. It is such a privilege. And I was thinking today about how long it took me to gain the confidence to really OWN the theatre space and DIRECT. That is, insist we not leave a set of cues until I was satisfied, and it felt elegant.

Dorothy (Stage Manager) was great, as usual. This show has really a lot of cues for a 30 minute play...but when it works it is beautiful. The challenge tomorrow is to get two runs in before our invited Preview.

On Monday, the crew will tear down, load the truck, and clean the space. Actors have Monday and Tuesday off. We leave for Chilliwack and opening on Wednesday.

Sunday, Jan 14, 2018

"šxʷamət (home) was stunning, inspirational and so well received. Every person from cast members to audience were engaged and left changed for the better. This theatre is a must see for everyone."
Gayle Hunter

OK!....we had a very strong preview tonight, with about 40 invited people. Feedback after was tremendous.

We started at noon with a run really for Dorothy to integrate all the cues from yesterday and I have to say she was fantastic. There were minor and only a few miscues. I asked the cast to go 'easy' emotionally on this first run. I didn't want to wear them out. The second run, I asked the cast to centre themselves emotionally – to start to 'go for it'. We took some very good steps and yet still had distance to travel. Renae and I agreed....they really needed an audience.

I worked out some business with Joe that I clued into from Renae - that the trauma manifests in his fingers. I asked him to really start tapping his knee with his fingers going into the Residential School story. This really helped ground him and the sequence in the Preview worked much better.

The whole show came into a new level of life with an audience. We are definitely on the right path now. The Forum was tentative from an audience perspective....I forgot what difficult Forum this is, and yet we had more intervention requests than we could handle. I

had to say, no...we need to move on to a few people. Still, the evening was 2 hours, 40 minutes!

Something the cast really liked was at the very last intervention, me suggesting that at a symbolic level Lucas was Indigenous Nations and Robert and Sarah were Canada. The audience seemed to relate to this strongly as well with comments and analysis about how Canada needs to embrace the learning and work through the inevitable pain that is a result of truly acknowledging so many years of deception...and so much more...and then embarking on a path of transformation without knowing where it will lead.

After the event, TfL Staff⁵ presented us with a beautiful cake that we shared with the audience.

Feedback from people was terrific and for me, so many of the Indigenous audience members coming and appreciating the depth and the analysis of the evening...this was very important and affirming for me. One event down....32 to go!!

The cast have 2 days off. The crew will be back at the rehearsal hall tomorrow to tear down and load the truck. Dorothy and I will get the van on Tuesday. Wednesday morning, pickup starts and off to Chilliwack.



Photo: D. Diamond

My invitation to the audience

Every Forum event needs a specific invitation. The one for **šxʷamət (home)** has been developed over the course of the run last year and also this tour. It goes like this:

If you understand the blockages that the characters face (inside the individual, inside friends and family, in the larger structures), the blockages to true and honourable

⁵ Dafne Blanco, David Ng, Cindy Charleyboy, Susan Shank

reconciliation – and you have an idea, about how you can replace the character whose struggle, whose blockage you understand, and you feel you can work through that blockage, yell stop. The action will stop. You'll come out of the audience, onto the stage, replace the character whose struggle, whose blockage you understand, and try your idea. The other actors will improvise with you in character and...we'll see what happens.

Now, I want to be clear about what I'm asking of you. I'm asking you to replace characters whose struggles YOU UNDERSTAND from your own lived experiences – that can happen in many ways – but to really enter the character – not to just change the character into a nicer person, or a more balanced individual, and solve the problem through some “magic”.

Now, what's “magic”? Years ago I did a project on gang violence, created and performed by ex-gang members and their families. Some of the characters in that play carried guns. We had to get permits for these guns – they looked real and had weight. The characters wore the guns here (tucked into the small of their back). If an audience member wanted to replace one of those characters, they had to take the gun! If the audience member didn't want the gun, I would not let them do the intervention. Understand what I mean?

Each of the characters in **šxʷ?amət (home)** has a world view – sees and hears the world through certain eyes and ears – and all of them are different. If you replace a character, enter their world view because you feel you understand something about it. Please, don't come on stage to play a “theatre game” it's not what we are here to do. Come onstage because you have knowledge to share. There is a tremendous amount of knowledge in this room tonight, as there is every night.

January 17, 2018

Chilliwack

Sponsors/Organizers: Skwah First Nation, University of the Fraser Valley, Sto:lo Tribal Council, Coqualeetza First Nation, BC Association of Family Resource Programs

Venue: Tzeachten Community Centre

Capacity: 150

Attendance: 172

115%

The cast, Dorothy, Harriet and I got to the hotel without incident. The cast had about 3 hours after check in to rest, have very early dinner and then leave for the venue. I am afraid I hit the ground running. CBC called for an interview as I was getting out of the elevator going to my room and the office work didn't stop until we left for the venue. Thankfully everything was ready, but the crew got no break, having arrived 2 hours late.

The programs came in from the truck and then went 'missing'. I didn't notice these were not being managed until the end of the evening when it became apparent none of the audience had programs and no one from Chilliwack knew they existed. I've asked that the programs be left at the entry door, and have asked Harriet to make sure they get distributed.

The show went well enough, although a little flat. The cast agree. I need to find a way to energize things every day.

There were, though, some lovely interventions, very authentic things from audience members. I am just too tired now – it is after 1AM. This is another 14 hour day, one of many this last week. I'm hoping things calm down.

I will say though that there were such wonderful thanks from Residential School survivors and people who saw their own lives in this play. We were all flooded with thank yous after a great standing ovation. We leave for the Ferry at 10:30 AM.

January 18, 2018

Travel day to Victoria.

Friday, January 19, 2018

Victoria

"5 stars out of 5!" Not sure I can put into words here what I felt, thought and experienced tonight (at šxw?amət (home) in Victoria). So thankful for the time to share in this event with everyone there tonight. Powerful, memorable and inspiring. Thank you. Melanie Dawn

"šxw?amət (home) is transformative theatre. I'll be processing last night (in Victoria) for some time. Thank you for opening Settler minds and hearts! Hopefully we translate that into allied Action!" Laurie Harding

Something nice for everyone: When Dafne was booking hotels, she ran into a tournament here that had booked ALL the double rooms in Victoria (at decent hotels). The Coast here gave us not a bad deal (we've stayed here before) on 13 singles. This means everyone has their own room for 3 nights. They are very happy...and I've told them NOT to get used to it ;).

Also spent the day sorting out some system things – making tasks clear for Harriet: making sure the programs get given to front of house people...and then back to the crew at the end; the mailing list binder goes to the box office desk and back to the crew after;

checking Territory info (it was more complicated in Chilliwack than we thought); then of course getting me names of the support people and leading brushing on entry...and during show support.

Sponsors/Organizers: Unitarian Church of Victoria, Songhees Wellness Centre, Cadboro Bay United Church, Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Belfry Theatre, Hulitan Family and Community Services Society

Venue: Songhees Wellness Ctr
Capacity: 300 Attendance: 368 123%

We had a great show tonight. There were 300 seats out – and then people filled up the bleachers on the side.

Some of the interventions that stand out for me:

A young guy who I know from a workshop many years ago replaced Vince and went with Joe to confront Robert. Interestingly, the plan was for Joe to navigate getting Robert to see what he'd done. Instead it kind of blew up, although Vince did get his money. The friendship between Joe and Robert started to come apart, earlier in the play than usual. EVERYONE's buttons got pushed, leading to a conversation about being comfortable in the places of discomfort...and holding on in there.

A woman replaced Sarah in the throwing the pouch at Lucas scene and dove in to telling Lucas all about his identity....she started by saying she wanted him to be able to be himself and they (she and Robert) were going to make space for that and not rush him, but after a few minutes, she and Robert were the only voices we had heard, and Lucas was by then deeply traumatized. I pointed this out and got applause from the Indigenous Support People. It did open up some great insights for people though, about making everything about themselves and taking up all the space, even when they are SAYING that's exactly what they don't want to do. In discussion of this the woman realized it....and commented that she herself had been triggered and how hard it was to keep perspective.

A young Indigenous woman replaced Siya with Joe and tried to talk with him about his lack of respect for women and how he is robbing her of her mother. This was a very different approach – not going after his story, but trying to reconnect the family, knowing other things would come from that.

And a young Indigenous man replaced Lucas at the very end, "I am so afraid" and wanted to continue the play – the conversation with Siya, after everyone else is gone. He talked for a long time about his parents being more concerned about their discomfort than his reality and lack of awareness of his culture. It was very powerful and Siya stayed there with him...why? Because, she said, she'd given him the pouch, knew she had started

something. How does Lucas move through his fear, I asked him...by opening his mouth and starting to talk...whatever comes out....it just has to start coming out.

I asked the audience for insights and there were at least 100 hands up...things about listening, about responsibility, about making space...

After the play a guy talked with Siya and then Siya and me. He's a Residential School Survivor and running workshops in Victoria. He told us that what he and his group had spent struggling to do over 3 years, we had done in two hours. He was very, very grateful and insisted on a picture. Lots of other hugs and thanks...also from the young guy who did the last intervention – he reminded me a bit of a young Bracken – who did the video for the show. Young, political...really headed (it seems to me) in a direction.

The detail of this writing is possible because I asked Dorothy to start taking some notes in the Forum and send them to me. THANKS DJ!

Saturday, January 20, 2018

Victoria 2nd show

"šxʷəmət (home) was stunning and so moving (in Victoria). We both wanted to express how impressed we were with your facilitation of the "risky" interaction with the audience, that gave grace to those who may not have caught the vision for reconciliation and helped the rest of us not sit in judgement but realize we are all in situations where we don't do the "right, honest, helpful thing". Thank you for the night... it is still resonating with us both." Liz and James Prette

"You and the cast are walking on holy ground in this very important work, David, and I thank you."
Lynne Crawshaw, Co-organizer of šxʷəmət (home) in Victoria BC

"šxʷəmət (home) was so well done...all the issues, children adopted, searching for their culture, Christianity condemning spirituality of another culture, the intelligence and learning everyone brings to their experience. I thank you for your work last night in Victoria. I was very impressed with how you and the cast held the process together so we could explore our own experience."
Yvonne Roy Burnett

Venue: Songhees Wellness Ctr

Capacity: 300

Attendance: 322

107%

Such a difference a day can make. Tonight was like swimming upstream, against a current in cold water. Really I felt beaten up by the end and the cast agree. It was a very weird, challenging night.

The play went pretty well, but suddenly we have a high pitched electrical whine coming out of the speakers intermittently. By the time the play was over, I was getting a headache, so I am sure audience members were as well. I apologized for it in my intro after the play.

The Forum started weirdly. A woman in the front yelled 'stop' before the scene even started. She wanted to replace Lucas when he gets the pouch. Before Siya had a chance to give it, this Lucas started asking about the cultural significance of it....cried....told a story about knowing she is Indigenous (and had A LOT of information that Lucas does not have). I wondered if Siya was going to give this Lucas the pouch or not...she said she would. I asked the audience member how her version of Lucas could be so curious about the pouch this early in the play – before he's received it. "Well....he's an engineer!"...she said to much laughter. Hmm. I'm not sure being an engineer necessarily makes him culturally curious. There is an element of magic in this transformation of Lucas, but I know you want to go to your parents (she had said this in the intervention) so let's go there.

She then started to explain all kinds of things to her parents that Lucas has no way of knowing. Sarah and Robert played the scene as well as they could, but the audience member had ignored the invitation to enter a character's struggle and work from within that. She was giving us a very empowered and knowledgeable Lucas. When I asked her how this was possible for him, she always answered about herself. I kept asking her about Lucas, and she would not play 'the game' of Forum and enter the character.

I processed this as well as I could. And also said that, with all respect to the woman, this intervention was very 'magical' and please let's understand not to do that.

The next person to yell stop was going to replace Robert in the firing and coming onto the stage said "I just can't let Robert get away with it". I asked...'because I just heard what you said, you understand and want to enter his struggle?'...'well...I don't know....'...she knew why I was saying this. I think I just want to do it differently. Maybe I should not replace him?? Only you know the answer, I said...Do you understand and want to enter his struggle?...she wanted me to decide. I can't. Maybe I shouldn't do this. Do you want to go back to your seat? Yes. OK... thank you very much.

So then a woman yelled stop to replace Robert and kind of abused Vince. She threatened to pay him less and wanted to stand there and watch him work. This was her idea of 'working through blockages to true and honourable Reconciliation'. I questioned this and she commented that she wasn't trying to do that, she was just 'stepping into the character'.

I don't know what went sideways here. Same play as last night, same explanation, different audience – complete different energy and understanding of the invitation.

A woman replaced Joe with Siya and was in the midst of a lovely intervention. She asked Siya to go get the picture of her grandmother so they could look at it together. Siya refused. The woman was really taken aback by this, as was I and the woman yelled at Siya. But it was important to process this somehow and honestly, I'm so drained I can't remember what I did but I think it was insightful. Siya and I talked about this after the event, as I think her response was problematic.

And then, when it came to Joe and Vince at Crab Park...nothing happened. I asked about that and a young man stood up and said...it seems like you are asking us to replace Indigenous characters when we are not. I explained that in the Forum event we have to be generous with each other and ourselves. Yes these are 2 Indigenous men – they are also 2 people caught in a mess. We never know who has life experience that, while not being identical, may overlap in ways that gives us tremendous insight.

This did not go over well. There were a lot of students in the audience and you could cut the 'political correctness' with a knife. I think a lot of them did not like this older white guy saying this.

This is symptomatic of something that is happening in the world today that I find very troubling. The "left" for lack of a better label seems to be fracturing into smaller and smaller isolated factions, each protective of its own 'territory'. We have fewer and fewer ways to understand and work with each other. Our differences are not meant to divide us, they are meant (in nature) to make us stronger together.

A friend of mine just coincidentally wrote about this very thing on Facebook and I want to quote it, because I think it is well explained:

"We used to call it sectarianism and a divided left. Those that went thru 2-3 decades of left failures saw the mistakes of that 'divide and conquer' and many committed to working more collaboratively. Now a new wave of strident activists, convinced their issue trumps all others and so-and-so is bad and so-and-so can't be worked with and so-and-so must be called out is just as sectarian as the 1970s or 80s. Just as dysfunctional as we said Trotskyist, Marxist Leninists, entitled liberals, insurrectionary anarchists, etc etc. Now it's a new set of labels. As the left struggles for relevancy and effect against neoliberal capitalism many have no second thought about tearing itself apart. More complex I know but ...

Contradictions abound, and they will into the future. Stridency and puritanism in social movements is troubling. If one can't work with people who one has 10% disagreement with then we have no movements to defend. Strident beliefs - whatever they are - work against communitarianism and collectivism, and in my opinion, are fueled by the neoliberal promise of individuation and atomization.

We all need to ask ourselves - what am I doing place-based where I live? How much coalition or alliance work am I doing? Do more to break the modern day sectarianism and divisions and bubbles that exist in contemporary political organizing."

A young woman came, though, to replace Joe and went on and on about how she couldn't REALLY be Joe. I explained that in fact no one could exactly be Joe...not even

other Indigenous people in the audience. Many of the Elders (in the front row) were nodding yes. I encouraged her to share the knowledge she was on stage to share.

She actually did a lovely thing. She sat down with Vince and really talked to him and I was able to access impressions from the audience about Reconciliation and we moved on....but not before I made the point that I thought that one of the things that was happening tonight was that it was easy (for me too) to over intellectualize issues and actually stop myself from understanding others because I was not those people. That the over intellectualization is in itself a barrier to true and honourable Reconciliation. It was shortly after this that a number of the young students left.

I am going to skip to the end...I think you can see the evening was challenging, but not as challenging as the final intervention. A very large, white guy with a shaved head replaced Robert in the final argument. He turned to Joe and started...well, taunting him is the way I can best describe it. Asking him why he's never really talked about himself and his past, why its always so vague...are you scared Joe? Are you embarrassed? The tension was mounting, Joe replying that he was not and he thought Robert was a friend, but friends don't talk to each other this way...and then the guy said 'are you embarrassed that you got on your knees and sucked the priest's cock?'...I stopped the intervention and brought them out. In 30+ years of Joking I've never experienced anything like this.

So, I started to try to dissect what just happened. I started by asking the intervener if he had come up to be provocative and/or controversial...no. The invitation was to work through blockages to true and honourable reconciliation. Are you doing that? He said something about "Indians" being vague about the truth and I countered with, well....there was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and I know there was a lot of very difficult truths told by Indigenous people...awful stories but no one from the other side of the story ever had to appear or be accountable. Seems to me there was a lot of truth from one side and not any from the other.

I asked Joe what had happened in the intervention and he said simply "he pissed me off". Yes...was that your intention? Now something started to open up. No. So, let's talk a bit about Reconciliation and approach...because if that was NOT your intention, something went very badly here, because frankly, there was a violence to this. His eyes watered up a bit. I asked the audience...what kind of other approaches could there have been? There were many suggestions involving de-escalation, listening, listening, listening, getting beyond stereotypes, a lot more that I can't remember now.

The man then surprised me. He said it was not his intention...he carries an Indigenous name from....I don't remember where...and apologized to Joe. They shook hands.

After he left I asked the audience how many of them had, with the best of intentions, made something worse. Lots of hands went up. And so it was possible to find value in this and there's a big lesson here of honouring whatever comes onto the stage, regardless how

uncomfortable it might be. Honouring it does not mean agreeing with it – but creating the space for it to unfold. How can we deal with real issues if we are not prepared to do that?

I asked for insights and there were many...and another standing ovation and many people telling me what a wonderful job I did in very difficult circumstances, but really...I felt like a deer caught in headlights that had then been hit by a car.

The local support people were very supportive and insisted on brushing me before I left. They were very caring and gracious. An Indigenous facilitator loved what had happened and how I held people to account. But man....we have 20 more shows on tour and then 9 at home. I hope this was the hardest night.

After the show I sat with Siya and told her I thought the moment mentioned above was “blocking” in an improvisation. This is something we’ve talked about in rehearsals. The actors have to find ways to give audience members the opportunity to try their idea...it’s OK to say “no” to the idea, but not to trying the idea. Siya said she did wonder about that at the time but didn’t know what to do. I said well...you could have gone to get the picture and then anything could have happened in that scene. But you refused to let the audience member try her idea. That’s blocking. I reminded her that in every moment, there must be a POSSIBILITY for Siya to say yes. I asked her if it was OK to talk with the whole cast about this and use it as an example, because while it happened with her tonight, everyone has to deal with it – she just happened to be the first. She agreed.

Sunday, January 21, 2018

Nanaimo

Sponsors/Organizers: Snuneymuxw First Nation, Kw'umut Lelum Child and Family Services, Nanaimo Art Gallery

Venue: Snuneymuxw Recreation & Wellness Centre

Capacity 200 Attendance 250 House 125%

I got the mailing list sign-up sheets from Victoria last night. 46 people signed up for the newsletter. That’s about 15% of the audience! Really? From the show we thought went so badly....?? Fascinating.

Another great turnout tonight and a much better, maybe the best so far, Forum. It was certainly the best run of the play we’ve done.

I had the cast play each other’s parts for warm-up and voice check today. And then talked with them about that feeling they just had of not knowing what they were doing. This is how everything they say and do should feel every night. A discovery. And it comes from

really listening. Something must have sunk in because we had the most 'in the moment' run we've had in a long time.

Here are some stand-out interventions:

A very young Indigenous woman replaced Siya in the scene with Joe. She was very shy, it must have taken so much courage for her to yell stop and come onto the stage. She kind of kept saying the same thing over and over to Joe...that she was going to the demonstration because she cared about the earth...and he kept saying he didn't want her to go because she'd get arrested. It went back and forth. At one point Joe said, well...maybe we could go out for dinner and talk instead? Huh?!? She agreed.

I asked her...did you just agree to go to dinner instead of going up the mountain? Yes, she said. What's going to happen at dinner? I'm going to talk with my Dad. I saw a glint in her eye....a very small smile. Are you going to try to convince him to come up the mountain with you??....she laughed and nodded yes. Joe...imagine...is it possible over dinner she could convince you to come with her and Chase? Anything's possible, I guess....This gave me the opportunity to not only talk about tactics, but what happens when we decide to stop digging our heels in. And having this kind of experience together.

A young man replaced Joe with Vince and sat down with him and said...I need you. For what, asked Vince?...I need you to help me with Robert...he's my friend, I need you to fix what happened. What? Says Vince...You need me to make you look good?? Well, says this Joe, I need you to not make me look bad! Suddenly, we all saw him realize what he'd done and he changed tactic and asked Vince to come for a coffee and talk. Vince told him to fuck off.

Well.....did you get what you want, I asked him? No. Why not? I can't remember what he said now, but it was somehow a rehash of the scene. I turned to the audience and said...I want to really acknowledge that I am speaking as this non-Indigenous White guy right now and pardon me, but I want to ask this question of the non-Indigenous people in the audience. Have you ever found yourself in a conversation that somehow has something to do with reconciliation, and found yourself making the whole thing about you? Be honest. lots of hands went up. We have to stop doing that, right? A lot of the Indigenous audience members started to applaud.

You are not alone in this, I said to the intervener...we see something very true here. Let me ask you...why did you ask Vince to come for coffee at the end? Because I realized how much I messed up. I wonder what would have happened if that was the first thing...how different this might have been. I do think this young man was a little embarrassed...but I dealt with what happened in the most sensitive way I could.

There were other lovely interventions, but I am skipping to the end because it was so unusual. An Indigenous Elder, who'd been to Residential School, replaced Robert in the

final fight scene. She had a hard time starting, but turned to Joe and wanted to stop fighting and yelling and sort things out between them...intimating that Lucas and his issues could wait. Sarah turned to Joe and asked if Joe wanted to do this and Joe answered, we need to deal with Lucas, and so Sarah and Joe refused to do what this new, enlightened Robert, was asking. It went back and forth for a while, Robert trying to be a peace-builder.

I asked the audience, who thought this Robert was correct, that Joe and Robert had to deal with their stuff, before they could help Lucas? About 40%. How many think Lucas comes first? About 60%. I asked Joe and Sarah why they refused Robert's request and they repeated what had happened in the improvisation. The intervener said....well...when does the yelling stop? How can we accomplish anything, if we are angry and yelling?

I talked about this moment with the group later. This was another instance of blocking. They needed to let the intervener try their idea. Joe said...right...yes...I see that. Sarah wanted to know how to not block. I reminded her of our "yes and...yes but" exercise. But I can't answer the question beyond saying 'let the intervener try their idea'. Good things might happen. Terrible things might happen. We don't know if we refuse to let them try.

Monday, January 22, 2018

Day off

January 23, 2018

Parksville/Qualicum

"I attended šx"amət in Parksville. I want to say a heartfelt thank-you to all of you. I found the entire evening to be a profoundly moving experience. I thank-you also David for your mastery at facilitating an emotionally complex and often painful experience for both actors and audience alike. I wish you great success on your journey. Thank-you for helping build my own personal path to Reconciliation . . . Thank-you SO very much."
Kat Derksen

I'm doing a daily juggling act with hotels right now. It's easier when we have a distance to travel, but when the communities are 60 minutes or less apart, and check-out times are normally 11...check-in 2 or 3...where to put people in between? Dafne asked for early check-in everywhere, of course, but it can only be arranged the day before. We can leave here at noon tomorrow, but I won't know about early check-in for Courtenay until 11AM.

Back from a very successful night in Parksville.

Sponsors/Organizers: Qualicum School District (SD69), Qualicum First Nation

Venue: Winchelsea Place

Capacity 170 attendance 170 100%

Organizers here did great, especially considering they came on very late after a cancellation and were not on the printed itinerary! Also, a very high Indigenous turnout which evidently....she told me...surprised the central organizer. She says that is in fact unusual.

A guy wearing a lot of political buttons replaced Chase in the scene where Lucas gets the pouch and accepted that Lucas did not agree about the pipeline...no argument. This also meant there was no reason to give Lucas the pouch. I took the opportunity, clutching at straws at first, to talk about consent and Reconciliation...but this took me to the realization that Lucas didn't get the pouch because there was no conversation about land. I asked Siya about this and of course she said that Reconciliation is attached to the land. Nice connection.

A woman replaced Robert and started asking Vince what was wrong with him – in various ways. What she was saying was well-meaning but it was coming out in a really condescending way. Vince called this Robert on this....for talking down to him. Robert was taken aback and then agreed....and they ended up loading the truck...Vince coming back tomorrow for work. The talking down thing let me ask the audience to think about this in terms of Reconciliation....lots of feedback about that.

An Indigenous Man replaced Joe with Vince and started off very gently...asking Vince to come with him to "get help". As Vince thought it over, the man got more intense until he was kind of demanding and Vince, now in an emotional place, refused. The audience was very, very quiet. We got to talk about how we reach out and when it is sharp or too urgent, the other person can close down. We need patience, in every layer of Reconciliation.

For the first time ever a woman replaced Siya in the Siya/Chase scene. She was a White woman and although well-meaning the intervention was a bit weird....but through the weirdness there were great insights. She asked Chase what it means to her to be an Indigenous Filipina in Canada and Chase talked about isolation...identity. The woman then offered to give Chase a pouch, so she'd feel like they were connected. Even Chase, in a secret thought, wondered if this was right.

And so we talked about the pouch a bit and I asked the audience how many feel it's a good idea for Siya to give Chase the pouch this way? About 30% did and about 70%...many Indigenous, did not. People talked about ceremony and sacredness.

For the first time ever there were no interventions in the Residential School scene. I had to 'break a rule' because I didn't just want to leave it and after asking the audience if they recognized the dynamic here regarding Siya's need to know and Joe's recurring Residential School trauma, if they could just suggest what either Siya or Joe could do to work through the barriers: Joe needs to find compassion/understand his daughter's needs; Siya needs to understand her father's trauma; Joe shouldn't tell her she'd like her mother...many more. This let me talk about Forum and how thinking we know is easy...but when we come up into the world it is more complicated.

An Indigenous woman replaced Joe in the final scene and something remarkable happened. This Joe started talking to Lucas about where he's from...parents...and after a short interruption from Robert, Siya walked over to Lucas and took his hand – standing beside him. that made Joe (I asked and am correct) think to go over to Lucas and from in front of him, do a kind of ceremony...talking to him....to bring him into this 'new awareness' of who he is...or unlock what he'd already known. It was hypnotic and I watched it wash over everyone, including Robert and Sarah, who were really softened by it. Lucas, mind you, seemed to be on overload...happy, but also overwhelmed. What did not happen was a big explosion. This Joe's approach embraced the whole family.

In discussion – of course it isn't Joe's job to heal everyone...or bring Robert and Sarah 'into the light' and yet...in order to truly help Lucas, some of this does need to happen. The intervener got a great, deep applause. She had done something huge.

The response again was really, really wonderful from the audience....from organizers. A woman from Nanaimo came to me and is involved in Reconciliation work....I said we'd just been to Nanaimo and she knew but the whole group had missed it and she was so deeply affected, she wants to bring them all to Vancouver.

The Support Team was very busy tonight.

Wednesday, January 24, 2018

Courtenay/Comox

"šxw?amät (home) brought to K'omoks (Comox BC) a deeper understanding of the issues involved in working towards Reconciliation between Indigenous people and the dominant mainstream society of Canada. It has created interest and movement within the community which has supported a follow-up event for those who attended the play to come together and debrief their experience and to begin to look forward to how best to support Reconciliation. We are also offering a second workshop this coming weekend utilizing Theatre for Living exercises to further explore together. This has been a powerful stepping stone on our path.

Personally, it was a pleasure to organize this play with Theatre for Living folks. Their kindness, helpfulness and creativity made this a thoroughly positive experience. Thank you."

With warmth and respect, Meredith Martin

"My husband and I were in the audience of šxʷamət (home) in Courtenay. What a moving and dynamic and powerful experience it was."
Shirley Wade-Linton

Sponsors/Organizers: K'omoks First Nation, Comox Unitarians, Comox Valley School District (SD71)

Venue		Mark R. Isfeld High School	
Capacity	250	attendance	242
			97%

First let me congratulate our crew – this was a complex get-in, using the venue's stage, hanging lights in their grid, a whole new lighting focus, and they were on time and the show looked great. We didn't have to re-block much, although the actors not being down on the floor, but 'right there' when offstage was a bit distracting.

I need to do real notes soon. Either tomorrow in Campbell River or in Port Hardy....sit at the booth, not the audience and take real notes. The show is in good shape – just lots of moments starting to shift in small ways.

A local Indigenous dance group did a welcome in full regalia. Some of them stayed and came to me and loved the event.

Some interventions that stand out:

The first intervention was very 'precious' in a way. A young white woman yelled stop and replaced Chase when Lucas gets the pouch and started to cry and explain why SHE wanted a pouch....you were going to make me a pouch...I feel rejected. Siya asks her 'why do you need me to feel validated?'

This needs to be space in which we can disagree, I say to the audience.....who understands, agree or disagree, that Chase wants to be recognized by Siya? Lots of hands....and that Chase can't expect Siya to validate her....lots of hands. How many of us are Chase....Many hands in the air....and so we actually got off to a deep start.

A woman replaced Siya with Joe, about Burnaby mountain and moved Joe towards letting her go, with his blessings, first about talking about the land, but then....really, physically putting her hands on his heart. It was a very emotional moment between them.

The first point was about Reconciliation being impossible without recognizing land issues – much applause in the room...some hoots.

I asked her what she had to do in order to accomplish touching her Dad's heart and she had a complex answer about seeing her Dad and his perspective....and I said to her – well...what I saw was, you had to drop the sleeping bag you were holding. There were some gasps in the audience. Audience...If the bag is a symbol of something, what is the

bag? Protection...a shield....her stubbornness....isn't it the case that in order for us to proceed with Reconciliation...in any situation, we have to drop our protection / shield / stubbornness and be vulnerable? I suggested Indigenous communities have been doing this for quite some time, and that the task really is 'ours'...

A woman replaced Joe with Vince. Sat down with him and suggested they share whiskey and a smoke. Just talk. Eventually, she suggested they go for lunch and then to Robert. I felt obliged to ask our Joe how long he'd been sober, acknowledging that was a 'dangerous thing' for Joe to do, and then acknowledging that she never actually took a drink – although Vince did. Under the circumstances, how many think it's OK to have Vince finish what's left of the bottle? About 80% of the house.

This led to a conversation about meeting people where they ARE and not in some fantasy land. Vince appreciated this.....no self-harm or harming others tonight....Reconciliation takes work.

A woman replaced Sarah and this led to an improvisation, with Lucas, in which Robert, out of his discomfort, made the whole issue about him. I seized on this opportunity....you know what I mean.

A long standing ovation tonight and once again, Residential School survivors came to me and held my hands and were so grateful for the evening, as did and many, many others. We did good tonight and the organizers were very happy.

Thursday, January 25, 2018

Campbell River

People are coming to me after almost every show and saying/asking, 'are you really not going to do this anymore?' I am explaining to people that I am retiring from fundraising, meaning no more large shows. 'Are you still doing training workshops??' Yes....and responding to community requests. Just no more large productions, meaning the company will devolve. It's kind of 'nice' how concerned (and even distressed) they are....a sign that it is important to them.

"Amazing Cast! Brilliant Director. Thank-you for keeping it all real and together on and off stage in šxʷʔamət (home)."
Deborah David

"My reflection is about watching people as they left the play, šxʷʔamət (home), after it was all over (in Campbell River). This is a difficult subject and the play brought out many emotions for many of us, for different reasons and in different ways. For me, the moment that Lucas' mom through his sage bundle at him was heartbreaking, and tears sprang to my eyes. I can only imagine what other scenes meant to other people with different experiences. But the really powerful moment for me was watching the joy that some people seemed to be experiencing as they left. I'm sure it was not everyone, but I did have the sense that for some people, the play was a release, and a relief of many emotions and a chance to personally explore our

feelings about the difficult topic of reconciliation in a way that was not overwhelming or negative. The joy, laughter, and connection that I witnessed as people were leaving gave me hope that we can continue to work on these issues in a way that will bring healing, health and joy to our nations as we move forward, in a good way.”

Mary Catherine Williams

Sponsors/Organizers: Laichwiltach Family Life Society, Wei Wai Kum First Nation, Wei Wai Kai First Nation, John Howard Society Campbell River

Venue: Thunderbird Hall

Capacity 250 attendance 197 79%

Tonight went well, but it was hard. It started with audience trickling in at about 6:20 PM. We don't open doors until 7:00 because we have sound checks and scenes to do. There was nowhere for them to be though, the Lobby is non-existent and so even sound checks happened with people talking. I let go of our ritual of running some scenes. THIS meant the cast had really a lot of time to sit around in the cafeteria room before the show....hard to keep energy up.

There was a large Indigenous turnout for this show. I had a conversation after with a man who introduced himself this way: You did a show up in Hazelton years ago, yes? That's right. Well, my wife's daughter was an actress back then....oh – would that be Sylvia?? yes!!....wow. Sylvia-Anne George was in No` Xya` (Out Footprints) from 1987 – 90.

Some interventions that stand out:

The first intervention tonight was quite similar to one a couple of shows ago. This is going to start to happen I guess. A young woman replaced Chase and tried to talk more clearly with Lucas about the environment and Kinder Morgan. This leads me, with Siya, into how Reconciliation and Land issues are inseparable..

Doing a run of Forum Theatre – a long run – is challenging because of course you start to get similar interventions. Part of the task for the cast and me is to forget, forget, forget. First time every time.

A woman replaced Sarah and when Lucas asked for the medicine pouch back, she just gave it to him with an open heart and said she wanted him to discover who he is. Nice, but “magic” for Sarah. It's just not that easy. But we got to talk about how Sarah might break through her fear.

An man replaced Joe with Vince and they went to see Robert. Vince got his \$\$ but the man lost track of the rest of what was going on.....he mentioned this himself. Robert owed Vince a true apology and behaviour change for the racism. The money did not fix that. It became possible for me to make the connection to Reconciliation and payouts....an Elder came after the show and mentioned how important it was I said that out loud.

An Indigenous woman, a Residential School survivor, replaced Joe with Siya on the couch. This Joe explained to his daughter that he was ashamed...he didn't know his language, and he could not teach it, and it was too painful to talk about it – the language had been beat and shamed out of him....it was a very honest exchange, with Siya asking for Aunts or Uncles but this Joe offering Ancestors – something Siya didn't find helpful. And yet – they did have an honest exchange. Siya didn't think she got anything from this Joe, but I also asked the audience and so many of them thought she did. A quick conversation about the complexity of Joe and Siya, of the need for knowledge and the need to not traumatize.

This is a good example of what I mean when I say “this needs to be a space in which it is OK for us to disagree”. While I honoured and respected Siya's experience of feeling like she didn't get anything, many in the audience are also Siya in this moment – and they get other things. The experience in the theatre, this creative space in which we share insight, is a space in which many things can exist in the same moment.

We have an early day tomorrow. It's after midnight now and we have to leave the hotel at 11:00...drive to Port Hardy (about 2 ½ hours) and do a show. We are all very tired. I knew 4 shows in a row like this would be hard....thankfully we have a ferry cruise after Port Hardy.

Friday, January 26, 2018

Port Hardy

Sponsors/Organizers: Port Hardy City Hall, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw School

Venue		Port Hardy Civic Centre	
Capacity	140	attendance	93
			66%

There was a death in the community yesterday and so I've been told a very large number of the Indigenous audience who would have come were at ceremony tonight. We still had about a 40% Indigenous turnout.

At 7:15 there were about 20 people in the audience. Panic. They all arrived at the last minute. I knew the evening would be slow and quiet, and I was right. It was very hard work tonight. There was a reporter at the event (she never came and introduced herself) who took a flash photo in the middle of the play. Both rude and unprofessional of her. When the Forum started I asked her to please not do that again. She left half way through the Forum.

The play went well tonight...and there was DEAD SILENCE after it ended, instead of the usual applause. I know some of the cast were freaked out after. I talked with them. It was a good/intense thing.

An Indigenous woman replaced Joe in the Residential School scene and really navigated giving Siya some knowledge....about Joe feeling so vulnerable and traumatized, without going into detail about story, and she agreed that if Siya would be satisfied with very small steps, Joe might open up, if he felt safe. She talked about her journey with her own father.

A woman replaced Lucas in the final scene and this Lucas calmed the whole family down...many things got touched upon: Robert and Sarah making it all about them; Is it Lucas' job to take care of everyone in this moment? Siya is leaving disgusted with Sarah and Robert...but is abandoning Lucas along with that...

I know I've written about this before, but I am struck by the number of older Indigenous people, often women, who are coming to me. One tonight took my hands...said thank you many times in her language (she explained) kissed me on the cheek, and said there are so few White people in her world who understand what non-Indigenous people don't understand. She was very grateful for this work, and sad that the Company was going to end.

This tour is turning into a very quiet goodbye in a way.....I knew it was the last tour, but I didn't anticipate this.

We are all very tired and looking forward to a few days of no shows. We have to leave the hotel at noon tomorrow. The Ferry leaves at 6:00PM – we need to be at the terminal at 4:00. Leave at 3:30. People will have 3 hours or so to wander around town.

Sunday, January 28, 2018

Hello from the ferry. Weird to be disconnected – no Wi-Fi for 22 hours. I will send this from Terrace.

Today is Theatre for Living's (formerly Headlines Theatre) 37th birthday. Kind of strange – I realized it this morning, to have that pop up while we are doing the final tour, the final project of the theatre company. I have very mixed feelings.

Yesterday I called a Company meeting for just after we got on the ferry – nothing wrong, just a check-in because it's a healthy thing to do all together and we are almost 2 weeks in. We went around the circle....people are very happy, really liking the group, the generosity in the group, and know we are doing something very important and transformational for communities. Joey spoke at some length about how this is much deeper than he imagined when he signed on – that it is in fact changing him as a person

because there is so much he didn't know about Canada and Indigenous Nations and is so grateful to be here.

I've arranged with Hal (my Gitksan adoptive brother), to visit the Blackwaters in Kispiox for lunch on the 31st, our travel day to Hazelton. Bill senior (the Chief who named me) is very excited we are coming and they are having a full family meeting today evidently to make arrangements. We'll leave Terrace at 11 so we can get into the Hazelton hotel in time. I've also asked our sponsors there if the Gitanmaax Band can open K'san for us.

Difficult drive into Terrace – very windy, the van really catches the wind, but here we are in Terrace. We got on a boat in West Coast weather and got off into winter, although it is only -3°C.

Monday, January 29, 2018

I am going to try to make this brief. It has technically been a day off, but a lot has happened:

I called the organizer in Kitimaat Village, just to let them know we are here. Adrian asked if Eric had called me.....no....(never good). There was a death in the community. They've decided to continue with the show anyway, attendance might be way down, but are also concerned that a storm warning is out. There might be a lot of snow getting there.

In the meantime, yesterday email came from the organizer in Hazelton. There was a death of an Elder there (!!) and we've lost our performance hall! They are trying to either put the show in the Hazelton Secondary (where we've performed before) or the Hagwilget Hall that I was at a Feast in years ago but don't remember well. Again, this is going to affect attendance.

AND a week or more ago there was a death in Vanderhoof (our next stop after Hazelton). This should not affect us, I think, although a Facebook notice came from a friend there today, saying it could be -26°C the night we are there!....and this could affect attendance.

I am hoping this is all worry.....but after such a high on the Island, we could be in for very small houses = also difficult events.

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

3:30 PM A day today of emails and texts with cast members. Also a pre-interview with CBC Radio for the North. The interview will happen at 10:45 AM on Wednesday. There is A LOT of snow...Dorothy and Joey went out and did the van. The truck has made it to Kitimaat Village already and didn't really have an issue.



Off for early dinner.....we will be back here very late tonight. The pic is of Dorothy and Joey getting snow off the van before leaving.

Midnite Just back from a challenging but good night.

Kitimaat Village

Sponsors/Organizers:	Haisla Health Centre, Kitimat Museum and Archives		
Venue	Haisla Rec Ctr		
Capacity	120	attendance	61
			51%

As I mentioned there was a death a few days ago in the community. The funeral was yesterday. When this happens, generally everything stops. The mourning family gave their permission for the play to go on. The mourning, though, really reduced the potential audience. So 61 isn't bad. It is also the case that tonight, the entire audience except for two people were Indigenous. Let's remember this is a project on Reconciliation issues and having the non-Indigenous audience in the room is important in the same way as having the Indigenous community there is important. One of the support people is married to our central organizer, the man who wanted us to come. Except HE didn't show up, saying the weather was not great....!?!?! Except WE GOT THERE! His staff-people were terrific and loved what happened.

I was worried about interventions. Last time we were here (with Meth) I stopped the Forum and went into discussion. And last time there were a lot more people in the room. I should also say that at least 30% of the 61 people were youth and very small children.

We started almost 30 minutes late. First waiting for people to arrive (there were about 20 people there at 7:30) and then a woman doing a welcome arrived at about 7:50 and I had to talk with her...get information straight. I knew I had to make up time.

I tried some new tactics tonight, partly because we started so late. I let the pouch scene run all the way through from Lucas getting the pouch to going home with it without asking for interventions. At the very end of the home scene, just when I was going to pause and ask questions, a woman yelled stop. She replaced Sarah and handed over the pouch,

saying that for 18 years they have loved Lucas and its time they told him everything. She didn't though, offer much information other than putting the pouch on him. Still, this broke the ice and offered an opportunity to discuss Sarah's fear and Lucas' need to know. It also meant we moved on, not doing an intervention when Lucas gets the pouch.

A man replaced Vince and stood up to Robert, saying 'you can't talk to me that way'....and then, when Robert went on about him smelling of booze admitted he had a problem, because of Residential school, and asked if he could get help. This led to Robert calling Joe and this new Vince going in for treatment. A bit "magic" for our Vince – I acknowledged that – but what gives Vince the strength to stand up to Robert that way and then, to ask for help? The man talked at some length about his Residential School experience teaching him he had no voice, no worth...then alcohol...and that the youth in the community needed to take their own responsibility. Remember, there were a lot of youth in the room.

A woman replaced Chase with Siya and gave us a very grounded Chase who was able to talk about her struggle as a refugee and then with a sense of belonging but also recognize and acknowledge the places that she and Siya overlap. This gave Siya the opportunity to be much less defensive...more open. We talked about how so many people have tried different forms of this, but it's often gone badly – the woman talked about her own strength in who she is and not needing Siya to validate her.

A woman replaced Lucas and was very forceful with Sarah and Robert. 'If you loved me you would have told me who I was when I was gifted to you'...she rejected their attempts to explain, to reach out...it was all too late. Robert kept trying to explain it away. Finally Sarah told him to stop talking and listen. Lucas needed to talk. This created the opportunity to talk about 'our' need to listen....except there were none of 'us' in the room. And Lucas' need to take his place...to insist on speaking...

The final intervention was very challenging. The same Residential School survivor who replaced Vince replaced Robert in the final scene. I asked...you want to replace Robert? Are you sure? Yes. But then he gave us a Robert who was an Indigenous Residential School survivor who was an unwilling victim of Christianity. I let the intervention go on for a while, I didn't want to be rude, and Sarah tried to deal with this new, very weird husband....but none of it made any sense. I stopped the intervention and made my way through by asking not Robert, but the actor Joey what challenges he faced, what learning he's done, as he's been working on this project. I had to find some way in. Joey talked about learning the truth about things he never questioned and how its changed his perspective and him as a person.

There was certainly appreciation of the project when we were done. It was a very different event in which the Haisla community used the play to look at internal issues. This is, of course also powerful and necessary.

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Hazelton

A very full day today – glad to be in my room and nothing to do tonight.

I should say at about 5PM yesterday email came that a new venue had been secured for the Hazelton show (tomorrow night). There was a death of an Elder here and the Gitanmaax Hall (our venue) is going to be in use by the family. We are going to be in the Hazelton Secondary School Gym. This will certainly, as was the case in Kitimaat Village, affect our numbers.

Did a CBC interview that went quite well, (managed to plug the venue change for the show here tomorrow) and then, zoom, into the van to Hazelton. Roads were mostly good. We got here and 45 minutes later, I drove us all to Kispiox where the Blackwaters (my adoptive family) had prepared a feast – seafood chowder, salmon, salad and pasta salad. After a little bit of ceremony – Bill talked, Hal talked, I talked...we ate a lot of food. I got a chance to visit with Hal, Bill and Gloria a bit. Then we went to visit the Kispiox Totem Poles and K'San, which the group loved.

Thursday, February 1, 2018

Sponsors/Organizers: Gitxan Health Centre, Hazelton School District/HATS

Venue		Hazelton Secondary School Gym	
Capacity	140	attendance	152 109%

In the end, we had a great show tonight. There were 140 seats out, and were worried they would not fill. We had to bring more out. Merle (central organizer) figures that even so, the Memorial at the Gitanmaax Hall kept 80 to 100 people away.

There were all kinds of unusual interventions tonight. Gitxan Territory, a second home for me. Also great to see old friends....

Some of the interventions that stand out:

A young guy replaced Lucas when he went home with the pouch and explained more about what he remembered Siya said. Sarah still took the pouch and when he wanted it back, both parents still said no. No one had tried this exactly....and he did it with great dignity. What it exposed, and this affected the evening, is that Robert and Sarah are not telling the truth even then. It is all part of the ongoing lie. THIS opened up, very early on, the symbolism of the ongoing deceit of Canada.

A man replaced Joe with Vince and in such an informed way (having been deep in addiction himself – he explained), stood with Vince, KNEW him...saw him, and instead of what our Joe does, which is deal with the surface symptoms and try to 'fix' it, treated Vince like a human, and was there for the long haul. There was the human moment but the audience also saw the symbolism...the paternalism and colonial mechanism of our Joe's approach to the much more human approach of the audience member.

A woman replaced Chase with Siya and made the case for this also being her home...while also explaining to Siya that she'd stand with her acknowledging that Siya is unsafe in Canada being an Indigenous woman. The blow-up between the two friends did not happen, and I took the opportunity to talk about roots and depth of roots and that that has meaning. The woman was very grateful...this concept challenged her, as I think it did for many in the audience.

We were once again short on time, having started at about 7:45, with a double welcome...and so I skipped over the scene where Sarah throws the pouch. I HAVE to find a way to shorten the event, it is running pretty consistently at 3 hours if we consider the audience starts at 7:30. I realized something doing this that for some reason has never occurred to me. The 2 pouch scenes deal with very similar material, although at VERY different points in the journey. It is true that the interventions are often similar. I need to be vigilant if the intervention in the earlier scene.

It is very late now. There were very powerful interventions in the Residential School scene and the final scene – I'm too tired to write about them. Merle, Ardythe and lots of people were very, very happy with the night.

Saturday, February 3, 2018

Vanderhoof

Sponsors/organizers: Sai'kuz First Nation, Good Neighbours Project, Nechako Community Collective

Venue		Saik'uz First Nation Multiplex	
Capacity	110	attendance	90
			82%

We had a very good Forum with a lot of interesting things. Some interventions that stand out:

A woman (who really understood) replaced Vince with Joe and called Joe on how "top down" he was being...paternalistic. She wanted the whiskey bottle back because she knew that without it today, bad things would happen. Half the audience agreed with her –

half did not. This reflected into Reconciliation in a number of ways....it IS, at the moment, paternalistic (on Canadian terms) and also, it cannot be forced.

An Indigenous woman replaced Chase and was so centered in explaining to Siya that while she knew her and Siya's Indigeneity were different, that as people they were the same. They were both oppressed, in danger...many things. This brought the two together in a lovely way. When I froze them...she was looking at me, not Siya and (as I often do) I reminded her to look at Siya and not me. She said, 'well, what am I supposed to do when you are so good looking!'...!!!! This brought the house down in laughter, and we played with it for a bit....it was pretty funny.

An older, rough looking Indigenous man, yelled stop. He had made some comments during the evening and I tried to understand him, sometimes with more success than others. Anyway...the audience was silent, and HE yelled stop in the pouch throwing scene. As he was coming to the stage I realized this was going to be different somehow. He wanted to replace Robert. I asked him if he understood Robert's struggle and he started to talk, sometimes incoherently, about being a residential school survivor and currently homeless cried and said he has nowhere to go. It wasn't until this moment that I realized he was homeless in the winter in Vanderhoof – and this is why he looked so rough.

I let him talk and then asked the audience, 'who knows this man'? and about a dozen hands went up. I wanted to ask, 'why the hell is he homeless in this small a community, in -17°...but controlled myself – this felt to confrontational. I mentioned how I know that people leave the North and come to Vancouver because they think there is opportunity and end up in our Downtown East Side...in a kind of hell. How many know? So many hands. I looked over at Lisa (an old friend and the support person with Harriet) and she indicated 'yes' and I said that Lisa will talk with and help you, is that OK? He agreed...she took him and I mentioned that part of Reconciliation had to be the end of this kind of poverty, of homelessness...the room was very quiet. And we moved on.

I have to say I lost track of him at the end of the evening, in the chaos that always happens when we finish. I know Lisa and Harriet spent some time with him but don't know what happened after.

A young woman yelled stop and replaced Lucas in the final scene. She really challenged her parents and explained she simply could not trust them now. They really pushed in on her and this prompted Siya to ask if Lucas wanted to come stay with her and Joe....yes, said this Lucas. This led to a weird belief that Lucas was Leaving home...but we followed Lucas to Siya's and Joe's...they talked, sang songs...lived culture.

We talked about Canada/the family transforming and how scary that is/will be....and we have to not only deal with it, but embrace it and help it happen. Standing ovation tonight.

Sunday, February 4, 2018

Houston, we have a problem. We have a 3.5 hour drive to Chetwynd (303 k) with a show that night, after our day off in PG....I OK'd that, because it was the only way to make it work, but a 1 hour 20 minute drive took almost 2 hours today because of the weather....AND I JUST realized, Chetwynd is in the next time zone!, meaning a 1:30 set up is really 12:30 for us...meaning the truck might need to leave as early as 7AM to be sure to get there on time (and finish at 12:30 AM....and the van, as early as 9AM. None of us in the office caught this – it would have made a difference, a possible 3.5 hour drive being a 5+ hour drive with snow and the time change.

I am wondering if, for the sake of the Tech Team, we should move get-in to 2:30. I am going to ask them tonight....the crew wants to leave it at 1:30 Mountain Time and just leave that much earlier.

Prince George

"šxʷamət (home) in Prince George was such a powerful, riveting and interactive performance! It was a brilliant and innovative way of sharing our stories. I believe that it is making a difference and creating change while building community."

Kym Gouchie

Sponsors/Organizers: Global Neighbourhood Network, Aboriginal Housing Society Prince George, Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, Carrier Sekani Family Services, BC Northern Health Authority, UNBC

Venue		Connaught Youth Ctr	
Capacity	170	attendance	164
			96%

We knew snow would need to be cleared so the truck could get to the venue, unfortunately that started at 1:30, which meant get-in started about an hour late. Still the Tech team were ready almost on time. Congratulations.

It was freezing in the hall - again. This is happening because the load-in is directly from outside and regardless of how warm the hall might be, when it is -17°C outside....and then the crew is working hard and I think don't notice the cold. We need to get them to crank the heat as soon as the doors close again, even if they get quite warm working. The audience kept their coats on the whole time. We had the cast wear theirs when they were offstage.

We had a very good, mixed turnout and a deep level of engagement. Lots of nice things tonight.

I did take notes because the play is drifting a bit. We got to a place where almost everything doing was a discovery, but it feels like we've done enough shows now that

actions are sometimes being done by memory. The difference is subtle, but it really matters.

A woman replaced Joe with Vince and tried to navigate a conversation between Vince and Robert, but it really blew up. The thing was, she was trying to fix everything all at the same time, and quickly. How many of us wish this for the Reconciliation issue? Many. How many of us know it has to be slow, and detailed?...a lot.

An Indigenous woman replaced Siya with Joe and, like many, didn't push him into a corner, but gently asked enough questions so Joe explained why he was so reluctant. Movement in a good direction.

An Indigenous woman replaced Siya in the final scene and wanted to start after all the parents had left – just her and Lucas. She offered to help him, to take him into a sweat lodge. He agreed. I brought Sarah in and the new Siya continued to build bridges, also being very generous with Sarah and, after Lucas had learned some things, suggesting Sarah also come. When I froze the improvisation, the new Siya was in between the two, supporting both of them. Of course its lovely in a way....and how many people can she do this for? What does it mean symbolically? The intervener was clear with herself that this IS the role she wants to play. Is it sustainable? Even appropriate? Maybe it is for her....what about others?

When I was asking for insights a woman said, 'this may be controversial – the thing I saw was that all of the interventions were by women and that this is a truth – that the way forward will be the women.' Not so controversial...a well observed fact, certainly about tonight, anyway.

The Executive Director of the Friendship Centre was SO happy – she was great. Big hugs.

We have a much needed day off tomorrow.

Monday, February 5, 2018

Forgot to mention – last night, we'd been trying to heat the place up and I thought the heat had been turned off for the show (it was VERY loud). I did my intro, lights please...dark...Siya enters and says, "Listen" and....ROOOAAARRRR the heat comes on. I ran to the thermostat and thankfully the guy who knows how it works is sitting there and I say...'we have to turn that off'. Siya is onstage.....listening....and JUST before she says "What do you mean when you say there was nothing here"...the fans go off. Sounded like it was part of the sound cue....industrialization in the middle of birds calling, I suppose.

Tuesday, February 6, 2018

Chetwynd

The crew arrived at the venue at 1:30 to 3 volunteers, not 6. I understand that as of 3:30 there were 5 volunteers. This will mean, I think, having to ask for volunteers after the show tonight.

Sponsors/Organizers: Northern Lights College - Aboriginal department, Chetwynd Healthy Communities, Saulneau First Nation

Venue		Chetwynd Secondary School Gym	
Capacity	100	attendance	38
			38%

Well...shortly after we arrived in Chetwynd it started to snow, and then by the time we were at the venue, it was a blizzard. They had 150 seats out. I suggested taking 50 away and in the end, 38 brave souls came out.

The run went pretty well – I gave notes before the run and some moments cleared up – but we have a distance to travel to get back to where we were when we opened.

I could feel the chill in the audience when I came back and explained what we would do – and had anticipated this, because of the small number of people. So...I explained fully and told them I had no desire to trap them. How many can imagine doing this tonight? Two hands went up. I decided to make it through the warm up and another explanation and ask again. 5 hands now. Scary....but let's try.

The first two interventions: A woman replaced Sarah immediately giving Lucas back the pouch, and a man replaced Robert and was very supportive of Vince and loaded the truck with him (but in a really questionable, racist way...acknowledging he (Robert) has an image in him of 'lazy Indians' and...is Vince one? And then asking him to come to a gathering with his buddies and explain that not 'all Indians are lazy'...the first intervention was magic and the second reinforced Robert's racism.

Then we hit a wall and one of the organizers jumped in and replaced Joe with Siya and basically just wanted an assurance from Siya that she'd be careful up the mountain....and then there was silence on the scene Joe with Vince, and silence on Chase and Siya....and so I stopped the Forum.

I brought the cast out onto the stage, all of us sitting at the edge and I asked the audience about the silence. In the end (according to our Sponsors) people who never speak got a chance to speak and be heard. One woman talked about the deep complexity in the community and 3 different Indigenous women spoke deeply on the extraction and

devastation here...to the land, the culture etc. The education system was discussed as was how to move forward with any hope.

Stopping the Forum was the right thing to do. The organizers were happy. 'People who never speak got to speak' they said. Still – this is hard for the Producer in me. Each event, if they had to pay for themselves, costs over \$11,000 and a LOT of work for 38 people attending and a discussion after the play.

Having started at 7:40 we ended at about 9:30. Dorothy had texted the crew, they were there and it all started to come down with 5 volunteers.

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Travel to Peace River

Met with one of the organizers to get the cheque for the show last night. She told me she could not get volunteers for the show in Chetwynd. The Indigenous Studies class refused...the Phys Ed class refused. She had to bring some people in from out of town and put them in a hotel!! This is an indicator of the feelings around Reconciliation there....we witnessed it, felt it in the show last night.

Long drive. We are all complaining about cold feet in the van. Nothing to be done – if the heat goes to the floor, the windshield frosts up! Going to soak in a tub of hot water and get to bed early.

Thursday, February 8, 2018

Peace River

"Five stars out of five! šx*?amət (home)...What an excellent way to start the dialogue about reconciliation in Peace River! David Diamond you were an excellent host it was amazing to see the interaction between audience and actors."
Wendy Goulet

Sponsors/Organizers: Sagitawa Friendship Centre, WJS Canada (Corrections)

Venue: T. A. Norris Middle School Gym
Capacity 100 attendance 85 85%

It was a little nerve-wracking...at about 7:20 there were maybe 30 people in the audience. We held until 7:40 and the rest arrived at the last minute.

Although there was a reluctance in the audience, we also had quite a good Forum. Lots of knowledge in the room. I am having a hard time remembering many things but some of the moments that stand out:

A woman replaced Sarah in the first pouch scene when Lucas comes home and gave the pouch back on the condition the family could sit down tomorrow and discuss it. It was as if, though, she never said that and I watched her try to say things but Robert would not stop talking...she'd open her mouth to speak and he'd interrupt her. We need to have a conversation about not dominating audience members and letting them try their idea. I stopped the intervention and asked Robert and Lucas if they had heard what she'd said. 'Yes'....I am asking because there is being no response to it. I asked her if she really wanted to talk tomorrow. 'Yes'.....OK – it is tomorrow. Try your idea. The intervention moved towards Sarah moving through her own guilt and fear and making space for ALL of them to explore the truth of Lucas' origins.

I also took a couple of double interventions tonight. Hard to explain when it is that that feels like the right thing to do, but it did tonight – meaning, two audience members on the stage at once for one scene and two different people making separate interventions on the final scene.

Tracy from the Friendship Centre and also Victoria – the two key organizers, were ecstatic about the evening. They both think that the event will stimulate lots of new conversations for a long time to come.

One of the moments that I am remembering....We had got to a place where, out of the intervention, I'd mentioned about roots and the difference of a couple of generations and 20,000+ years of roots in a place...and longing, and not being able to have that. It must have been the Chase/Siya scene. How many of us recognize the longing in ourselves? lots of hands. How many of us feel very uncomfortable facing that? Still lots of hands. If Reconciliation is going to be real...we need to confront that discomfort inside ourselves and do the work to come to terms with it....

Oh – some great things in insights at the end. An Indigenous woman talked about realizing tonight it is not her job to teach all non-Indigenous people. In fact one of the interveners, a non-Indigenous woman who works at the Friendship Centre spoke from the stage and said she gets exhausted explaining things to people, she can only imagine what her Indigenous friends and colleagues face.there were other things...I just can't remember.

Need to sleep. We have over a 6 hour drive tomorrow to get to St. Paul.

Friday, February 9, 2018

I am tired and very grumpy, although we had some beautiful things on the drive today, it was long.

Nelson is in a crisis with so much infighting regarding Territory acknowledgement. David Ng and Cindy Charleyboy have been navigating this from the office and it is FAR too complicated for me to explain here – but suffice to say that David tells me they have been spending at least 2 hours every day dealing with Nelson – this is just unacceptable.

They are arguing about who should do the Territory acknowledgement (and what that is) and the two women who have been suggested can't be in the same room together.....

They are, evidently having a meeting very soon to try to sort things out. David doesn't think it will be successful. If that's the case, my impulse is to get on the phone with all of them myself and explain that I won't have this play about Reconciliation issues used as a battleground and unless they can come to an accommodation, I will cancel us going to Nelson.

Hoping for a good house here in St. Paul tomorrow. We need that good medicine.

Saturday, February 10, 2018

St. Paul

Sponsors/organizers: University nuhelot'ine thaiyots'ï nistameyimâkanak (Blue Quills), Family and Community Social Services St. Paul, Mannawanis Native Friendship Centre, Reconciliation St. Paul and others.

Venue:		Ukrainian Cultural Centre	
Capacity	140	attendance	202
			144%

A terrific show tonight. 202 people came, which was a 144% capacity and very diverse house - people sitting on the sides, standing in the back...great courageous and insightful interventions, prolonged standing ovation. Really good organizing work and, along with their fundraising, they made a profit of \$1,130 meaning we had our first profit share of \$565 each!

Of course the Boushie murder was very present today:

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/enough-colten-boushie-s-mom-speaks-out-at-rally-1.3798132>

A man was supposed to come and speak before the show, but he didn't make it on time. A group of the Elders asked me if I would lead a minute of silence and interestingly, they did

not want me to say the Boushie family's name or reference the incident, simply to say, "I have been asked by the community, in the spirit of Reconciliation, to lead a moment of silence before we start." I did.

Some interventions that stand out:

A young woman replaced Chase when Lucas is getting the pouch and simply asked questions about it...wanting it, but calming herself down. Interestingly, this opened up a space for Lucas to learn more about it, why Siya wanted to give it to him and changed the way he'd go home with it. This approach also did not start the argument between Siya and Chase.

A woman replaced Sarah and, from a very Christian place worked in a beautiful way, following, she said, the true Spirit of God, opened herself to the fear she feels about the pouch and was honest about it and why with her son. From there, they could explore it together. It was very courageously honest...and gave me the opportunity to ask how many in this room are or know this Sarah? So many. Sarah's faith does not need to be exclusive and superior...how do we accomplish that?

An Indigenous man replaced Joe with Siya and after some questions about safety up the mountain, said he was going with her. Siya thought that was weird and told him he had to get his own equipment...much laughter. It turned out he was the man who was supposed to speak at the beginning and he took the opportunity to say that his own brother was killed by a white man who was never prosecuted...and he had to drive by this man's house every day and yet he loved what we were doing...this profound gathering of people working Reconciliation out together, courageously.

A young Indigenous woman replaced Siya with Chase and agreed that Chase is Indigenous....we are all Indigenous...and this started a great conversation with our Siya, who disagrees. Chase also spoke about her struggles with this issue. I love and appreciate what the audience member was saying and asked if I could ask her a controversial question...does what you are saying include me? This White guy? It depends....and she talked about ally-ship and that lead us to depth of roots and standing together in an equality while also recognizing depth of roots...these two things do not have to be in competition with each other.

At the end this young man replaced Robert in the final fight and went down such a challenging path. "What do you want from us?" he asked Joe. 'We try to help you (Native) people and it is never appreciated, you just make me feel guilty for things that I actually didn't do...'...all the characters turned on him in various ways – nothing brutal, appropriate in character...What to do with this??

How many of us have met Robert? So many hands. Let's be honest, here at the end of the evening...how many of us have felt or even said some of these things. Enough hands for

me to tell him (he is 16) that he is not alone. I could see he was shaking a bit. Various characters talked about their reactions to hearing these things.he mentioned that a few of his family members work in Social Work and the stories he hears are not pretty...it is very hard work. I talked about Colonial structures, Indigenous kids in care, various things. I asked the audience who thought the uncomfortable conversation we were having was vitally important – almost every hand in the air. I thanked him for his courage, because the conversation is impossible in this way without him coming onto the stage...this has been a good thing...and so much applause for this young guy. (I do think he had his head turned around a bit – but in a gentle way) and of course, those of us who have been or are Robert – this IS some of the work we have to do.

It was a very good night. Sponsors were very happy as were the Elders who asked me to lead the silence. Lots and lots of thanks.

Sunday, February 11, 2018

Walked 5 minutes to the Tim Horton's for breakfast this morning in -25°C and nearly froze my face off. Grew up in this in Winnipeg but forgot what it is like...

Edmonton

Sponsors/Organizers: U of Alberta Office of the Provost and Vice President, Office of Education, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (Humanities Dept.) John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights; Canadian Native Friendship Centre; Boyle Street Community Services (Four Directions Program); University of Alberta Aboriginal Student Services; Amiskwaciy Cultural Society; RISE (Reconciliation in Solidarity Edmonton)

Venue:	Boyle Street Community League		
Capacity	150	attendance	158
			105%

"šxʷamət (home) was fantastic last evening (in Edmonton)". Theresa Zip

"I saw šxʷamət (home) in Edmonton. A brilliant concept effectively realized." Fabian Jennings

Following is anonymous feedback gathered by the U of A Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry Humanities Department after the Edmonton shows of šxʷamət (home):

Feedback from February 11th

"Absolutely fantastic. I recommend this for all Canadians. Have had a life in both worlds, so totally appreciate the struggles."

"šxʷamət (home)" reminded me of the importance to slow down, listen, and examine what true reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities looks like in everyday life.

David is excellent at what he does. I would love to see more people trained in these theatre techniques, so that it can be used in community work to facilitate healing.”

“My first interactive play was an enriching experience. From an Indigenous background, I found the play's content moving and promoted self-reflection. Thank you for all of your hard work.”

“I was in awe of the entire cast. I found myself watching the edge of where you ended as a character and where you began as an empathetic human being navigating through such enormous complexity. A deep bow to you all. You've helped loosen the resistance and invited so much possibility to engage.”

We had a very good night, but really, I am so exhausted I don't want to write. Very animated house, a mix of interventions, HUGE standing ovation at the end.

The show on the 15th is only 50% sold right now so I encouraged audience to really network and help fill the house.

There are other issues: We paid for the parking pass for the 5 ton truck, but there are no plug ins for it...it is very cold outside – its winter. A diesel vehicle will freeze and not be able to start at all, and so the Crew are having to go start the truck every 5 or 6 hours in order to keep it safe. If it freezes, it will need to be towed to a place we can plug it in for 5 hours and thaw it out. Impark doesn't seem to care. I tried to call the # we have on our receipt, but it is in Vancouver and closed until Tuesday.

Pam (from Faculty of Medicine), is trying to find something at U of A...across the river from here.

It is the same with the hotel. There is nowhere to put the van because it is an oversize vehicle. Like...nowhere to park it at all that isn't a parking meter...never mind plugging it in. It is -23°C right now.

Monday, February 12, 2018

Sorted out where to plug the truck in with the help of Pam from FoMD. It is at the Victoria School for the Arts where I did a workshop last year. I had a long talk with the Manager at the hotel and he called Manager at ImPark (the boss of the guy Dafne dealt with...but there is nowhere inside big enough to put the 5 ton and NONE of the outside lots have plugs. (This is crazy).

Some of the Company is going to Karaoke. Going to have dinner and settle into a quiet time in my room. Maybe watch a movie.

Edmonton 2nd show

Capacity	150	attendance	140	93%
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Following is anonymous feedback gathered by the U of A Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry Humanities Department after the Edmonton shows of *šxʷamət* (home):

Feedback from February 13th

“This was a very impactful experience. I was aware of many of the concepts around barriers to reconciliation and the challenges of discourse relating to this. I found this play and the discussion and role playing extremely effective ways to unpack the complexity of these challenges, and the impacts on people. I wish everyone could be exposed to this experience. The director did a fantastic job of setting the stage and creating a safe space for people to participate as audience members, both passively and actively. This kind of transformative experience is necessary for us as a culture to shift towards true inclusion and respect amongst all peoples. What a wonderful opportunity to be exposed to! Thank you!”

“I thought this forum theatre production was marvellous. It helped me to consider my personal responsibility for promoting reconciliation. The process starts with me, not with a government edict. Congratulations to all involved in producing ‘home.’ I would love to see your organization host a workshop with David Diamond. Thanks.”

“Thank you for supporting this production. I found the audience dialogue both intense and useful, and I appreciated what audience members also brought to the production. I'm so glad I went.”

“The intro to the play started inauspiciously because of the interruptions of someone not willing to trust the process; something not in itself wrong on that person's part, but it did risk derailing the evening. Mr. Diamond to the rescue! He kept his composure in a difficult situation and handled things with compassion and skill. It turned out to be a rich theatrical experience for everyone including the individual who initially caused a bit of a ruckus.”

“This production has given me a lot to think about. The facilitator was very good, and I especially found the technique of stopping the actors and volunteers mid-scene and asking what they were thinking at that moment was very telling. I did feel somewhat upset afterwards from the actor's (and one of the audience participant's) comments that they are "tired of explaining to white people" about aspects of the culture/beliefs, like the medicine bag. I work with a lot of immigrants and talking about objects and practices always seems to be something that is mutually enjoyed, and you will always learn more about a culture by personal contact than doing a Google search. However, now I feel very uncertain whether it's a good idea to ask an Indigenous person about their culture as the play has given me the impression that it's viewed as a tiresome intrusion. However, perhaps the point was the actor took the questions as judgement and that was tiresome? See, still thinking :-)”

“We had a strong meaningful experience, attending this show. It was powerful and incredibly well presented. While we already know a great deal about Reconciliation - we learned a lot from the presentation style. It was a valuable project for the University to sponsor.”

I did notes with the cast before the show...trying to bring a sense of discovery back and we had a great “in the moment” run. Then, when I came back out for the Forum after the play, something that has never happened, happened. An Indigenous woman in the front row started yelling at me about putting a “drunk Indian on the stage” and “are all Indians drunk Indians”? and many other things...and she would not stop. An Indigenous woman sitting next to her who is familiar with the play also tried to explain about the Forum to her, but to no avail. And this started other people needing to make comments, some

supporting her and others asking why she had to make trouble everywhere she went...I tried to explain that Renae and I (along with the actor playing Vince) thought long and hard about putting the Vince character on the stage and decided he needed to be part of the story because it is upsetting...pointed out that Robert also has a drinking problem...and asked a few times if we could get to what we were there to do – the Forum Theatre, because it would lead to discussions of these issues, and she hadn't let me even explain what we were going to do.

Then when I started explaining the Forum, another woman complained about the word “blockages” because the word triggers her. I know I seemed impatient about this, but I tried to find a different word to use throughout the evening...I noticed she never did go to the support people who were there if people got triggered.

Finally, enough people asked if we could continue that I felt safe moving on. I should say a lot of people who came to the first show, came back for the second. They got a very different night.

Some interventions that stand out: A woman replaced Sarah in the pouch scene and acknowledged that the pouch challenged her faith and that she needed to know more for her son.

A woman replaced Joe with Siya going up the mountain and started yelling at her...“Do you know how many people would kill to have the opportunities you do??” and berated Siya for wanting to take a week off school and only having an 83% average. Well, I thought...what to do with this?? I was feeling pretty off balance. How many of us understand Joe's stance, I asked? Many hands in the air....I asked Siya to talk about why she needs to go. She talked about the land. (I was struggling with knowing what to do right now...kind of grasping.) I mentioned Reconciliation, Trudeau and Indigenous consent, and there being no consent. Then (finally), I thought of asking the woman, ‘are you getting what you want for Joe’? And THIS led to her explaining about her Joe measuring his success through his daughter because he was some kind of failure. Oh. I asked our Joe – do you see yourself as a failure? Absolutely not, he said. This seemed to surprise the woman, which led me to be able to talk about seeing the world through Colonial eyes. How many of us recognize that these are also our eyes? Many hands in the air....

This intervention is a good example for me of someone coming onto the stage and doing something that, without intending to, shows us a truth of Canadian Society. It is very uncomfortable, but where the real learning and transformation possibilities are. We see ourselves in a way that might be objective and if it upsets us and we make the connections, movement is possible.

The woman who was yelling at me...and I should also say, she said she was just expressing her emotion and it felt like she was yelling at me – she was obviously triggered by the play...replaced Joe with Vince and instead of doing a very top/down thing, wanted

him to come for breakfast. Vince was very suspicious and when we chatted, Vince commented that this felt like a trick. This Joe said that he was not going to berate Vince over breakfast...it was about getting some food in him. At the same time, we understood Vince's suspicions. The audience gave feedback about their own dealings with people in their own lives who are like our Vince...and some of us agreed Vince was going to be "work" if we really wanted to help. Reconciliation is also work.

A man of Asian descent (this is important) replaced Chase with Siya and did a lovely intervention about his own disconnection from his 5,000 year old ancestors and how scary it is to tell Siya that because while he thinks he shares this with her, it is also different...his vulnerability was amazing. This of course led to a conversation about roots and the truths we need to embrace about the realities of 3 or 5 or more generations of roots in Canada and 20,000+ years of roots. I could feel the good discomfort in the audience.

I want to say at this point that I could see the demeanor of the woman who had been complaining off the top about the content changing...softening...laughing...

She said stop again and replaced Joe in the final scene and did something very surprising. She told Siya she was being disrespectful saying Sarah's God disgusts her...that's not how Joe raised her, and she built a bridge between herself and Sarah and Robert, by explaining about being sodomized as a child by the priests, punished for speaking Joe's language...many things through tears. This 'destroyed' Robert and Sarah's defensiveness...particularly Sarah...it also though pissed Siya off – her Dad won't share his stories with her, but will with Sarah and Robert? It also really overwhelmed Lucas.

In discussion, I asked her about Joe's generosity in this moment and we agreed it can't be his job to constantly do this....and yet...I asked if I could take her hand – yes...and I took her to the edge of the stage and said...you stood at this precipice with the family, yes? She agreed. And no one knows what is there...and that is what we need to do if Reconciliation is going to be real. She really squeezed my hand. She said she wanted to explain something....and I said...'really – I am shocked' and everyone, including her, laughed because she had interrupted often during the event and said a lot, and she put her head on my shoulder and said...'I know, I know'...she talked about trauma as someone who truly understands trauma, and shared more of her story.

A long standing ovation. The other Indigenous woman who had also spoken a lot at the beginning came and hugged me...she said – 'what a night. I wanted to torch the play at first, but this was great. Thank you.' ... and in a way THIS was the journey of the evening.

Monday, February 14, 2018

Had a very full day Day Off. Madeline and I did a good interview for CBC Calgary this morning. Then I had a very nice visit with Daryl Cloran, the new Artistic Director at the Citadel Theatre. He was very sad to hear of my decision to devolve the Company, but also very understanding.

I also did a not great interview for 660 news radio in Calgary...very rushed by the interviewer...AM Radio. I also posted that we are donating our touring stage to a company that wants it on FB and it appears someone has already surfaced who does.

Friday, February 16, 2018

Medicine Hat

Sponsors/Organizers: InterAct Theatre Society, Medicine Hat College (Indigenous Support Department); Metis Nation

Venue:	École Connaught School Gym		
Capacity	100	attendance	93%

"I woke up at 4:00 a.m. on Saturday morning after your play (šxʷamət (home)) on Friday night in Medicine Hat with the terrible realization that I am a paternalistic, bleeding-heart, liberal who was willing to impose my sense of propriety and decorum on a character that I could never completely understand. The introspection was needful, but the realizations...painful for a pompous old man. I will try to listen more and work on loving and relating. Thanks for the therapy!"

Les (last name removed for confidentiality)

"David Diamond, I was truly blessed by attending a Blanket Ceremony this morning! People were definitely talking about how last night's performance of šxʷamət (home) in Medicine Hat impacted them! Thanks to you and to everyone who work so hard to bring awareness to our small planet."

Kandee Corbett

We had a good, diverse house. There is a Reconciliation Conference on in Medicine Hat right now and so the timing was perfect.

Of interest, a young man replaced Robert with Vince and kept suggesting Vince work harder...then offered to pay him for the whole day, just to "make him happy" and have him back the next day. His attitude, though, really pissed Vince off. Another man wanted to replace Robert and I imagined he'd do something different, but it was essentially the same – work harder!

I was able to process this with the audience and Vince. Vince commented that it pissed him off because he felt he was both being labelled and condescended to. How many of us are encouraged to "work harder" – whose 'image of success' is this? And who does that

benefit? Especially when we are working appropriately hard? Let's consider where this instruction comes from and what it implies and 'wants', and what it means when we talk about Reconciliation. Are we 'reconciled' when Indigenous people are contributing more to the same economy that continues to destroy their land?

In talking with people later, they mentioned that the cliché of the "Lazy Indian" is really prevalent here...my hope is that through the processing of the interventions and also Vince's responses that this image was challenged in people.

For the first time in a long time there were no interventions with Joe and Vince. They were just too scared to enter into the dynamics in this scene of addiction issue. In fact a young man at the back said "I want to...but I don't have the balls!".

There was a lovely intervention though – a woman replaced Chase with Siya. This Chase acknowledged they want different things AND that she wants to understand more about the Indigenous land issue. She confessed that she sees Indigenous Nations split politically and doesn't know who to really listen to and Siya responded that she tends to trust the women. This got some applause. There was a real graciousness about this Chase and we chatted a bit about her learning curve and that there were times when she fell on her face and was embarrassed, but that people were generous with her because they could see she was doing her own work to figure things out. Of course this isn't always the case...but it does happen. It felt so important for people to see, hear and feel this.

A woman replaced Siya in the final scene and turned to Robert and, taking a breath, told him he didn't know what her father had been through and if he asked him, if he was actually interested, maybe he could understand more....and this opened up a beautiful space for Sarah to talk with her husband and in the end, something I don't see from Robert, he apologized to Joe. What also happened, though, was Lucas got left out of all of it – he just sat there stewing and when Sarah asked him what they could do, all he could say was for them to stop talking. We chatted about Siya's ability (or anyone's) to get everyone to take a breath, but also, how Youth tend to be left out.

A long standing ovation and great feedback after.

Saturday, February 17, 2018

Calgary

Sponsors/Organizers: University of Calgary (Social Work program), Scarboro United Church, Iniskim Centre, Elbow River Healing Lodge, Mahmawi-atoskiwin, Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee, John Howard Society Calgary, Unitarian Church of

Venue: MacEwan Conference and Event Centre

Capacity 120 attendance 115 96%

"I am so grateful. Being at šxʷʔamət (home) on Sunday night, here in Calgary. I was torn apart but empowered; ripped open but relieved, crushed but inspired. This is art at its best, in my opinion...serving humanity, facilitating healing and doing so in ways accessible to all. May you be blessed, and helped by many."
Nicole Hartley Bradford

"As my first experience in the interactive theatre forum, šxʷʔamət (home) in Calgary was wildly meaningful and thought/feel provoking for me. Being on stage during that final scene was and will continue to be a transformational moment in how I consider my practice within reconciliation."
Jesse Hunter

"Five stars out of five! I always go to theatre feeling hesitant that I might be bored out of my mind. I LOVED this (šxʷʔamət (home) in Calgary) tonight. Creating theatre stories, conversation and the potential for real healing with the audience!"
Corinna Peters Totino

First of two shows: I am very frustrated and troubled by tonight. All the things we thought would be issues were not (which is good)...the get-in up a flight of stairs went OK, set-up in the room...and thankfully, there was zero sound bleed from the heavy metal band that ended up next door.

Why frustrated? The tour was both imagined and 'sold' to funders as collaborations in every community between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, and while the list above is real - it was all knitted together by David Ng in our office - I don't think that collaboration happened in a good way in this case.

It started with me asking about a Territory Acknowledgement and there's this long paragraph with eight Nations mentioned and other Indigenous place names and it was a lot for me to have to struggle through onstage with no pronunciation guidance or rehearsal. I asked if there was someone from the local Indigenous Community to do a Welcome - this has happened in almost all the communities - but not here, even though there are Indigenous organizations in the list above. I was told the Dean would do it. I asked about all the organizations I assumed were involved and was told that they existed, but 'no one did anything' - only the School of Social Work. Something went wrong here, but I had to get onstage and didn't have time for the larger conversation.

In speaking with David Ng about this he feels that the central organizer never reached out in real ways to the other members of the community.

However - this really affected the event...there were a handful of Indigenous audience members and this meant that all but one of the interventions were very specifically by White people and it just got very weird. Some of the Indigenous audience members started complaining that it was Settler perspectives on the stage, and I wanted to say - 'well...make an intervention!', but the air was so heavy for the whole event it seemed impossible.

Dorothy asked me if I felt like I was being attacked or challenged personally for it – not personally, no. And I can't drag people who don't want to come, onto the stage. It was a very quiet night, I was begging out there, something I don't like to do, and I do believe if there were Indigenous organizations sharing in the work, the chemistry of the evening would have been very different.

I am too tired to write about interventions right now. Really exhausted.

Sunday, February 18, 2018

Calgary 2nd show

Capacity	120	attendance	127	105%
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It took me a while to understand what was going on last night. I've written about it in the report for the second show, below.

The two nights were like night and day, but let me explain a bit about last night. It took me a while to figure out what had bothered me so much and I came to a conclusion...then when I talked with the central organizer today at the venue, he confirmed it. He saw it too:

Because all the organizing was done through the School of Social work, almost the whole audience last night were social workers. No disrespect to social workers intended, but they developed a pattern of replacing all the Indigenous characters. I believe firmly that this happening occasionally, if the audience member has real parallel knowledge can be really valuable, but this was almost every intervention. It turned into the white social workers replacing Indigenous "clients" and showing them "what to do". It felt awful.

The central organizer said himself, he saw a terrible side of the social work psyche and I added, yes and a refusal to look at one's own issues. It took me most of the day today to get it into perspective, and I believe it is a result, as David Ng suggested, of the main sponsor not reaching out beyond its own borders.

Knowing what happened, I felt better about today about challenging it if I needed to. I talked with the cast about this and they agreed. Having said this, the central organizer also said that on his social media, people raved about last night. The cast also did not have a rough time, although it DID feel weird for them. The person who had the most trouble with it appears to have been me, although I did have this exchange on FB about last night:

“Hello Theatre for Living, I made it out to šxw?amət last night at the U of C and give my thanks for what was an incredibly thought/emotion provoking night. There was a troubling component, however, that I am hoping for some clarity around. When an Indigenous woman in my row began to express critical perspectives of how the form was excluding Indigenous voices, they were silenced without even being allowed to finish the thought. I understand director Diamond had a very specific vision of how he wanted people to participate, but in the process some of the most excluded and important voices in Canada were erased from the conversation about reconciliation. I experienced this as profoundly dissonant, and wonder why it happened. Thank you, Jesse Hunter”

“Hello Jesse, This is David Diamond - thanks for your message. The woman you mention is actually an old friend and I do not believe I interrupted her mid-thought. My request of her was that if she had an idea, for it to happen on the stage and not from her seat. I made that request of everyone. If one person can make suggestions from the audience, then everyone must be able to, and then the interactive theatre Forum turns into people throwing suggestions out without being able to see what really happens in the theatrical reality of the story on the stage as a result of those ideas. I think people witnessed last night the power of the difference. While I of course will not drag anyone onto the stage, I also feel it is essential to the event (and out of respect to the cast who have put so much into the story on the stage), that the evening is contained in the interactive THEATRE format and not a free-form discussion. I asked her if she wanted to try her idea onstage, and she did not, and I made the point that I've just made above. From my interaction with her and her family after the event, (her daughter's boyfriend LOVED it) I do believe she understood why. I hope this addresses your concern. All the best, David”

“Thank you for the thoughtful personal response. That you conversed with the family afterwards is crucial, and I rejoice in it. I can see the profound power of needing to embody response in the live narrative, and for a first experience in the interactive theatre forum, it was wildly meaningful and thought/feel provoking for me. Being on stage during that final scene was and will continue to be a transformational moment in how I consider my practice within reconciliation. Please accept and pass on my gratitude for all the doors that opened in the community created last night, and through the entirety of this production. Jesse”

Tonight, an Indigenous man did the welcome and that felt so much better to start. The house was oversold...interestingly there were a lot of tickets sold today – that was either people from last night telling friends, or the media stories. At any rate, (and again, I mean Social Workers no disrespect) the whole audience were not social workers.

There were some beautiful interventions tonight, but two in particular that interested me. I made an experiment tonight, thinking about how the audience is reluctant to confront Robert's racism. The reason is that the scene with Vince has been getting turned into something about breaks. I have talked with Robert and Vince about fixing this and we might have. But tonight, I created a very intentional “bubble” so we could take interventions on the scene between Sarah and Robert, when he says “if only they were all like Joe” and someone did yell stop and replaced Robert and gave us a very enlightened Robert, which was a bit odd, but it did however give me the chance to ask the audience about moving through our own racism etc. I think I will keep playing with this.

A man replaced Joe in the final scene and insisted that while his daughter had the right to say whatever she wanted, Robert needed to stop being insulting because he had no idea what it meant to be raped by priests, tortured, starved as a child, not once but many times...Robert really dug his heels in and when Sarah asked him to breath and listen, he insisted he was doing both....but then Sarah shifted the focus to Lucas (she explained later because she didn't know what to do with her husband)...leaving the conversation with Joe hanging altogether.

I asked the audience if they had watched Robert breathing and listening. Two raised their hands. The rest...not. And out of her discomfort, what did Sarah do? She changed the subject. This led into how Indigenous communities have been asking Canada to listen for, well...hundreds of years and when it gets uncomfortable...just like tonight, we change the subject. A lot more got processed...it was very rich.

There was another very long standing ovation tonight and two different people came asking if we could bring this to their communities. Of course that is not possible.

Anyway...last night I felt really defeated by the Forum and tonight, I feel like we did good.

February 20, 2018

Second day off. No entry.

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

Nelson

Hello from Nelson. We left Calgary at 10:30 MST and got here at 8:30 PST (9:30 MST). That's 11 hours later. People were in pretty good spirits, although it got VERY quiet in the van for the last hour or so.

It was some pretty driving today and we made a 1 hour detour to Lake Louise, because some had never been there and being there in winter is special.

David Ng has written about Nelson in his [Outreach and Publicity Report](#). I am nervous about tomorrow because of all the tension here regarding Territory and the complexity all of us have faced organizing the show here. I gather they are sold out – a testament to the work that the Capitol Theatre has done. I hope it goes smoothly tomorrow.

Thursday, February 22, 2018

3:15 PM

Lauren (Crew member) found out today at around 11AM that the 220V power they have in the venue is in fact 40W and not 50W as we tell everyone we need, and, chatting with the electrician, he decided to stick around until our TD arrived at 1:00PM so we can plug directly into their electrical panel. Good save, Lauren.

Sponsors/Organizers: Capitol Theatre, LV Rogers Secondary School, Selkirk College, Circle of Indigenous Nations Society, Unitarian Fellowship in Nelson

Venue: LV Rogers Secondary School Gym
Capacity 300 attendance 304 101%

"I participated in your Nelson presentation of šxʷamət (home). It felt like an historic moment in our community. The play and the unfolding of the interactive part reached into people, allowing them to feel what they felt and offered them tools and encouragement to move forward from that point. We, like many communities, have been mired in denial, guilt and wanting to make nice-nice in the face of a particularly devastating history – that of the extinction (aka bureaucratic genocide) of the Sinixt Nation. Your play revealed the underbelly of this beast of racism and fear in the most supportive way. Congratulations."
K.L. Kivi

"5 out of 5 stars. (šxʷamət (home) (in Nelson) was) an amazing experience. My viewpoints have been changed yet again which is the mark of excellent work. Thank you all for your hard work and to everyone who shows up and tells their friends about what they have seen as well. This is awareness and knowledge with such power behind it. The audience interaction brings to light so many of our seemingly harmless yet ignorant and often hurtful responses to others' point of view, racism, intolerance. Yet the space is safe and calm, a perfect space to allow one to move through prejudices and reactions."
Mairi Miller

"I saw šxʷamət (home) in Nelson and it was an amazing heart, mind and spirit opening evening. Thank you!"
Pam Mansveld

The play was a little loose today – not bad, but a bit out of gear. We hadn't done it in 3 days. It just wasn't sharp.

After ALL the trauma of organizing here, tonight went great. We did have a very lively Forum.

Every time this audience had an opportunity to address the racism in the play, they avoided it. The scene with Vince became about taking a break and getting paid. The scene with Joe and Vince went to talk to Robert....and was about money – Vince commenting 'same old shit, different day'. The scene between Meg and Robert was ignored. I took the opportunity to point this out and set it as a challenge.

A woman who was in Squeegie in 1999 (A project I did with street kids in Vancouver) replaced Chase with Siya and talked about her own displacement, her struggle with colonization in her home and leaving it, becoming a Settler here in Nelson and now not knowing 'how to be' – how to be a good ally. Siya responded to this Chase's vulnerable honesty very positively and I was able to make the connections with the audience about roots and depth.

A young man replaced Lucas and was very gentle with his parents, asking questions about his past...no anger, no frustration, lots of love. It was beautiful and also really a lot to ask of Lucas.

A woman replaced Joe with Siya who obviously understood trauma. She started by smashing the table a few times...taking her frustration, her pain, out on the table, not her daughter. She told Siya she loved her many times throughout the intervention and also told her she could not give her the information she wanted. She also talked about how frightened she was "they" would take Siya away. This opened up a conversation about Indigenous men and women and incarceration and how prevalent and dangerous it is...a conversation we've never had during this production.

And a woman replaced Lucas at the end and, for the first time ever, challenged Sarah and Robert about 'no one in the community being able to take care of Lucas'. No one?? Sarah and Robert responded with our back story of the mother being 15 and her parents asking them to take Lucas. This allowed me to ask the audience, if we understood the birth parents, being surrounded by social workers, coming to this decision. And would no one being capable of caring for Lucas have been true? Then stuff about Residential School, foster care, incarceration.

We had a very long standing ovation tonight and the cast were swamped after. Asivak commented in the van....'we are rock stars'.

Saturday, February 24, 2018

Penticton

Sponsors/Organizers: Okanagan Nation Alliance, Penticton Arts Council, Many Hats Theatre

Venue: The Shatford Centre
Capacity 120 attendance 132 110%

"5 out of 5 stars - I experienced šxʷ?amət (home) twice this month. First in Penticton, BC and then last night on the livestream. I wish every Canadian could have this opportunity. What a brilliant craftsman David

Diamond is. I'm sorry I'm only discovering his amazing work, as I can tell I've missed out on some incredible theatre and learning.”
Victoria Lane

“I had the opportunity to see šxʷamàt (home) in Penticton. I am still recovering from the emotional challenge of this performance. And let me tell you I have been in several meetings about Reconciliation and Residential Schools, and attended one Blanket Exercise, but this one was something else. Allow me to congratulate and thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for your great effort of touring Alberta and BC with this so important play. It was a deeply moving, intense, awakening [for many], experience.

For its significance, timely, well-done, superb acting and directing, and most of all, the way you got all the audience's attention and involvement in the 3 hours performance, let me say over and over, **BRAVO!**

I believe events like this one should get much more attention and recognition, since the road to Reconciliation is a very long, difficult, almost insurmountable one. It needs acknowledgement, understanding and action from every single person in Canada, from politicians, to adults, children, Indigenous and non-indigenous people.”
Norberto Rodriguez

This ended up great, but started from a very challenging place.

First...did notes again with the cast and that paid off...the play was very tight.

After the play I started to work with the audience and an Elder in the front row started to talk, and talked for at least 15 minutes non-stop about Residential Schools and that the play is only about one side of the Residential School story. Then her daughter talked about what a great Mom her mother was, and once it started, I, of course, could not interrupt.

It turns out this woman, in her 80's, does that at every gathering she goes to. When the organizers from Okanagan Nation Alliance saw her come in, they meant to go talk with her and ask her not to...and forgot – they told me later. I asked her, in pauses, for permission for us to start the second part of the evening, and each time she said yes, and then launched into something new. So, we started the Forum about 20 minutes behind schedule – and the evening is already long.

One of the things I've learned on this tour is that Reconciliation means, among other things, making space and breathing in moments like this, even when, especially when, it makes one uncomfortable or goes against an agenda one might have. This woman was brutally silenced for most of her childhood and, who knows, perhaps her adulthood as well. Her insistence on speaking now is courageous.

My concern in these moments is that if one person can “take the floor” why can't everyone? If that happens, the Forum Theatre is dead. So for me, it is a matter of gauging the moment and the room. There is no set rule. Just instinct. In this case, she may have set a ‘container’ for the event.

The audience response was terrific and there were some great interventions.

A man replaced Lucas and told Sarah she raised him and did a great job, but 'I've always known there was something missing. When Siya gave me that pouch I suddenly realized it was very important to me. If you want to know more about it we can find out together but it's really important that it stays with me.' Robert was inspired by this to ask Sarah to give Lucas the pouch (!)...I was able to ask about the pouch...wonder if it is Lucas' role to help his parents with their fear, as lovely as the outcome was.

An Indigenous man replaced Joe and really played with Siya, asking if she was ready for jail...had she rehearsed being in a small space?...but in the end, said he'd help her pack. It was very playful and yet very serious. This opened up comments about how prisons are not kind to Indigenous men and women.the PM and Reconciliation and his (now seemingly false) statements about how Reconciliation = Indigenous consent for activities on their Territories.

A woman replaced Siya with Joe and in a lovely way used the bicycle metaphor in the play...."I'm the guy who taught you to ride a bike" and turned it around. She fell off the bike then, she said, and Joe kept helping her. She said she knew her Dad would fall, but he would never be alone. This opened Joe up in a beautiful and gentle way, that also did not demand anything from him.

A woman replaced Sarah in the final scene and breathed deep, a lot, it was very emotional, many times...and moved through Sarah's fear...and in doing so stayed connected to her son. Something unusual happened in the scene. Joe offered to help Lucas and then he and Siya left the house and waited outside (stage left) so the family could talk. It struck me...Joe and Siya, the Indigenous family, had left THEIR HOME, so this family could sort out its trauma. We talked about how that's happened throughout history....and today...

When I asked about insights people had had about their own blockages to Reconciliation, 90% of the hands in the room went up. Long, long standing ovation and presentations of gifts to us. So many people wanted to talk, saying this is what we need to be doing - this hard work in a creative way.

I asked them to help us fill Kamloops tomorrow, which may be in some trouble. One last show on the tour.

Sunday, February 25, 2018

Kamloops

Sponsors/Organizers: United Church in Kamloops (Aboriginal Relations), Thompson Rivers University, Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc First Nation, Western Canada Theatre

Venue: TRU Grand Hall

Capacity 180 attendance 210 117%

"I wish to say how honored I feel to have attended šxʷamàt (home), and with my relatives altogether in Kamloops. I felt honored to witness history in the making as you presented a different way to see and think and hope. Bless you. As my late grandfather Tommy Nez who was a traditional Navajo roadman for the NAC would say... I'll say, "May You Always Walk In Beauty." Carolyn Tylor

Very difficult drive here today....unexpected bad weather.

The organizers were surprised at the turnout. We arrived to 180 chairs and reduced that to 140 because they thought the weather would keep people away...then brought out A LOT more chairs. They just kept coming.

I forgot to introduce the support team before the play and did right after the play and Harriet and I both think it was a way better placement. Interesting, because this is what I've done with all plays before, but changed for this project. It is the way I will introduce them in Vancouver.

The thing about this is I've always felt that introducing the Support Team before the play gives a message to the audience that what they are about to see is really heavy and they'll need counselling after it. I think it changes the way people experience it. Some interventions: Young man replaced Joe with Vince and was gentle and persistent, and he spoke from a place of obvious knowledge. He created a great deal of space...spoke softly...'Don't be a product of your environment. Don't give up on yourself. Taking a step in the right direction is the best thing you can do.' And he said, and meant it...that he would not leave. While it made Vince very uncomfortable, it also, according to Vince, saved his life that night.

A Residential School survivor replaced Joe in the final scene and took Robert to school....'Look, Mr. Average Citizen....' And she went on for a while about what is taught in schools and how he and Sarah stole a child and didn't teach him who he is, and as it went on, Robert had fewer arguments...when I froze it and asked them to take a step in the direction of getting what they want, she reached out to embrace him! The audience gasped. When I took them all forward to chat...her intervention (well, she) got a standing ovation from the audience.

One thing about what happened in all the positive things in this intervention, was that Lucas was traumatized and what became apparent was that there are two different conversations that need to happen....one with Robert/Sarah/Canada...and the other with Lucas about identity and learning who he is, and that these are not necessarily the same conversation.

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

Vancouver Run

Thursday, March 1, 2018

Getting into the theatre in Vancouver and Technical Rehearsals, which became unnecessarily long and complicated.

Friday, March 2, 2018

CONGRATULATIONS to Theatre for Living Office Staff – the Vancouver run at the Firehall Arts Centre is selling out entirely.

“šxʷamət (home) was amazing! It was rich and unsettling in that way that means I'm learning to go somewhere new and important. I took a lot away from the show that I'll continue to digest, ponder, and most importantly, act upon.”
Nicolas McKay

“šxʷamət (home) is a play like no other. David Diamond's skills transform a respectful play, that skillfully weaves very sensitive issues into a solid platform where dialogue and insights can begin. The play helps to draw out the real issues and encourages the actors and the audience to take many new perspectives. David's skill at keeping this process safe and appropriately contained is amazing. The skills and courage of all of the actors in this play is remarkable. In daily life most people do not know what to do, even if they recognize the barriers and are prepared for the discomfort involved in the reconciliation process. Theatre for Living goes an extra step in helping to define whose responsibility it is to tackle many of the complex issues that need to be resolved.”
Judy Dunn

“I attended the powerful and poignant transformative theater piece, šxʷamət (home). Thank you so much for all of the devotion and energy that went into the creation and offering of this potent experience.”
Rebecca Ruth

“Your play šxʷamət (home) was a rare and real demonstration of transformative education. The whole process of the play was brilliant in allowing the audience to first observe, and then truly engage in what we could truly learn from each character. I was moved, and found insight into my own blockages around reconciliation and my own relationship with those who were the first people of this country. Much appreciation for the thoughtfulness and consideration you bring to your work.”
Cassie Doyle

“šxʷam̓ət (home) was very powerful. It has me thinking today: what does true and honourable reconciliation mean to me? What can I do today to decolonize my life, rituals, attitude. How can I educate those around me without my passion turning into abrasion that scares all my friends, all of you, away? Who's responsibility is this, really?”
Kat Gaudry

“What a great play!!! I've never been to an interactive play before. Everyone should go see šxʷam̓ət (home)!!! Really captivating and motivational! I hope others who see it will take away some positive change for reconciliation!”
Tal Lee

Opening Night (March 2, 2018)

Capacity: 136 Attendance: 120 88%

We had complimentary tickets and some of our vouchered tickets (networked for people living in real poverty) did not show up. Frustrating, as Opening has been sold out for weeks.

The run of the play was great. Really grounded, focused, committed to the moments. When I got back out, and had explained Forum, a back and forth started with a woman from the Yukon (she self-identified) who started by declaring that I was ‘afraid of her’ and that ‘none of the actors could handle anything she’d bring onto the stage’. She also questioned The Support People’s ability to take care of the audience....I listened...tried to be generous (although was freaking out inside) and when it seemed like she was done, asked to continue. These things always rattle me.

The Forum started a little slowly but once we got going, it was very lively. Some interventions that stand out:

A man replaced Sarah in the first pouch scene with Lucas and asked Lucas why he didn’t find out more from Siya. This Sarah really explored her fear of losing Lucas, without putting the pouch in her pocket. In the same way as “Joes” sometimes share their pain about talking about Residential School without telling actual stories, this Sarah talked about her fear with her husband and son. This opened up a very safe space...and we got to talk about how we ALL have to confront our fear.

The woman from the Yukon yelled stop and while I was helping her down the stairs, she was saying things like....‘I guess I’ll have to listen to when you tell me what to do now....it’s your show....you are the Director’. She replaced Vince with Joe and attacked Joe. When Joe said he wanted to help, this Vince said ‘Bullshit – when did YOU last have a problem? You are one of those educated Indians’...she insisted he sit down with her - Joe/Sam could not because he has had a hip replacement (in real life) and she insisted we get a ‘milk crate’...turned into a chair....so they sat together and this Vince confronted Joe with disappearing...they were in Kuiper Residential together (not part of our play, but ok) and he promised to take care of Vince (her) but then didn’t. ‘You say you care....act like

it!...you were my friend Joe....you used to play with me at Kuiper you motherfucker!' And she was really crying by now. Joe stayed and stayed....listened and listened. The audience was riveted, I have to say.

It was hard to know what to do with this because there were ways that she completely changed the character although the context was similar. I wasn't sure what to do and landed on the 'milk crate' that made it possible for Joe to sit with Vince and for them to be human together. What is the milk crate? I asked the audience. There were many things about equality, level playing field, compassion....Isn't this what needs to be created if Reconciliation is going to be real?

The woman was sitting on our sofa now and started talking again. I can't remember what now, some of it was generous, some felt like attacking. I took a breath and said 'I want you to know something – I am not afraid of you'. I felt this was important as it was one of the first things she said off the top of the Forum. And then she shocked me with this:

She said she'd been 'following me longer than I know' and always wanted a project on Residential School issues and no one would do it, but I did, many years ago, (this was, in fact, "Reclaiming our Spirits"⁶ in 1996), and that it was a privilege to be on the stage with me. This was SO contrary to most of the 'energy' that had come from her. I thanked her, helped her up of the sofa and then back to her seat.

There were other highlights in the evening. Renae (Associate Director) was there and replaced Siya in what I believe is Renae's favourite scene. We both know that was a little weird because Renae knows the play so well, but it was opening night, and she was great and Chase really rose to the occasion emotionally – Chase doesn't get a chance to do that often in this scene, and we got to talk about roots and longing and whose role education is.

There were other strong interventions but I'm really tired. Huge standing ovation and lots of requests to continue the project, which is of course, not going to happen.

Saturday, March 3

Capacity: 136 Attendance: 136 100%

A REAL full house tonight...no empty seats. This, because the Firehall agreed to break their rule and let us fill seats that were bought but the people didn't show up. David Ng tells me that at opening, the 16 empty seats included the office purposefully overbooking by about 20 seats and that means 36 no-shows out of 136 possible seats. Infuriating. People are so disrespectful, especially when others were clamouring for tickets.

⁶ http://www.theatreforliving.com/past_work/reclaiming_our_spirits.htm

We had a great show. The play was tight and the Forum both fluid and solid. A woman replaced Siya with Joe and 'extended' the character, but realistically, into a young woman who had arranged with her University Professor to write a paper about her experiences protesting Kinder Morgan and when Joe brought up getting arrested, she countered with him being around in the '60's and that a University Degree today must include getting arrested and he got arrested and is a respected professional. She really challenged the conservative place he has landed and "sat" in the fiery place Siya sits. This allowed me to open up how/why Joe had landed in this place that is disconnected from the passion his daughter has inside her to fight for Indigenous rights.

A very well meaning young man replaced Vince and did exactly what I ask the audience not to do. He gave us a Vince that suggested to Joe that Joe pour the whiskey out...acknowledged Vince was in deep trouble...that he's ashamed that he keeps messing up....it was full of magic.

I asked our Vince how easy or difficult this was for Vince and then HE explained that in his mind it was impossible. The intervener acknowledged that he didn't have experience of Vince....he had a vision for Vince. So...I spent some time working through it and finding the insights in our desire to help from a place of not really knowing. Did the best I could.

A woman replaced Sarah when Robert is talking about 'if only they were all like Joe' and she first tried to reason with Robert and then started screaming at him. She yelled, 'We have a son!' No....I don't want to sit down! You don't like these people, you think of them as less than human...but we have a son!' and she crushed his beer can, (much to our Stage Manager's chagrin). I brought Lucas into the fight and they didn't notice him for a long time. Of course when they did, and he had heard all of it, it was very bad.

This allowed a conversation with the audience about how many of us "know" Robert – have Robert in our inner circle and how hard, but necessary it is to DO this work with him and not just let it go. AND (speaking to the non-Indigenous audience members) how the conversation that needs to happen with Lucas (with our Indigenous friends, colleagues, strangers) is separate from the challenging we need to do with each other about racism.

A woman replaced Lucas in the final scene and through tears told her parents that she is not a charity...she isn't a baby they 'found' like an "orphaned racoon". Her openness and vulnerability melted Robert and Sarah's fear and also involved Joe. It was important to question, in the midst of that, if this was really Lucas' 'job' in the moment...if it wasn't a lot to ask of him and she agreed, but also that he needed to. She and I agreed that Lucas and his family stand at the precipice and can't know and can't try to pre-determine, into what the family will transform.

The audience leapt to its feet after. Seven more shows to go and then done. Finishing is getting even more weird for me.

Sunday, March 4

Capacity: 155 Attendance: 119 77%

We brought in another row of seats, moving the front row closer to the playing area. It's too soon for the public to know this, though.

The play tonight was a bit flat. The difference between moments being discovered, and performed. The lighting issues that got abandoned during our Tech are also really bothering me, and I'd like to fix them – certainly before we do the webcast, which will be the recorded version of the project.

I've had email from Alan (lighting designer) who came to see opening and he's given very detailed notes about how to fix some of the lighting issues. For instance, the scene with Joe and Vince is very harshly lit, as is the prayer scene...both of them far downstage. There is a terrible dark hole just stage left of the sofa that Siya lands in during the buildup into the Residential School scene, and the stage left screen is very washed out about 50% from the bottom up, and does not need to be. In other words, the light is a mess.

Some interventions:

A woman replaced Siya in the scene where Lucas gets the pouch and told Chase 'You don't ASK for a pouch. It's inappropriate. I gifted that to him because he's a 'brother'. The pouch is sacred. I hope you find a way to find your ancestors...and then said to Lucas, 'I love you'. This was complicated. Lucas got a lot more information about the pouch through what this Siya said to Chase, a lot of it true and valid, but Chase was also shamed in front of Lucas - the audience member agreed - meaning Lucas' learning happened at Chase's expense.

A woman replaced Chase with Siya and told Siya she was assuming that because she's a settler she doesn't understand about ancestors. She said, 'I want you to know what I come from. What happened in my country. My parents experienced trauma – that's why they came here. Let's talk about this, don't push me away.' Siya asked her, 'Where do I go when I experience trauma in this country that wants me dead? Nowhere. I have to stay here!'

This scene became very uncomfortable but in a wonderfully revealing way. I thanked the woman for her courage bringing it to us and then we spent some time dissecting it....depth of roots, the truth of the country in which we live...how many struggle with exactly what this Chase is saying...? Many. The woman obviously felt very exposed and said that what she wanted to do on stage was very different than what came out of her

once she got there and we managed to talk about that and how that's also what happens....the work we need to do.

I loved this intervention in terms of what it exposed in the psyche of the non-Indigenous community. Many people in the audience tonight related to it and left, I hope, thinking about their own connections to it. Our own histories are of course true and valid, but if Reconciliation is going to be true and honourable on this stolen land, we can't use them as validation for the theft or to say 'I understand'. This isn't to demonize anyone. MY great-grandparents settled in Winnipeg and I am pretty sure didn't imagine they were moving onto stolen land....and yet they did, and never bothered to find out, as far as I know, and I've benefited from that all my life.

A young man replaced Sarah with Robert and tried to get Robert to confront his racism. 'Do you know what you sound like? You're the common denominator. You're the one who keeps firing them. I don't agree with your dismissal of this as "just another native guy". Robert resisted....and when I brought Lucas in, this Sarah shifted...not wanting now to hand over the pouch, fearing Lucas would become "one of them"!!

How many of us find it easier to ask people to confront THEIR racism than to confront our own? The young guy was very generous about this and I could see, was confronting things in himself, along with many audience members.

Another standing ovation and the cast were swamped after, as was I, but I also had a very disappointing conversation with a woman after the play who came to me and said she hadn't raised her hand any time I asked a question, because she did not agree with a basic premise of mine and that is that people are racist. The STATE she said, creates racism, not people. I told her I thought the State certainly had many racist structures, but that I didn't know ANYONE who didn't have racism inside them, including myself. I know many people who don't, she said.....and I told her I'd had a long night and we'd just have to agree to disagree.

Monday, March 5

Day off

Tuesday, March 6

Capacity: 155 Attendance: 153 99%

The Firehall TD and I met at the theatre at 5PM and did some light refocusing and moving, taking the lights off of the screens – the images are way more visible, filling a dark hole centre stage and changing lighting angles downstage left.

The run went well. The audience was quieter than the last few shows but still very appreciative.

A man replaced Chase when Lucas gets the pouch and asked Lucas about his Engineering Professor talking about the evils of forcing the pipeline through illegally. He created a Chase who was a very informed ally who could articulate not just the environmental issues, but the Indigenous Rights issues. Siya loved this Chase.

A young woman replaced Siya with Joe and said, 'Dad, listen, education should be more than in the classroom.' This got applause and led to the two of them going for tea and coffee to talk more about Kinder Morgan. Joe did not relent...just kept saying he didn't want her to go. But the education Siya will get up the mountain seemed important.

A woman replaced Joe and took Vince to see Robert and the whole thing really blew up in her face – she trying to somehow get Vince to chill out, not be upset, get the money he needs. Underneath it all, without saying it, it 'forced' Vince to be subservient to Robert. When Vince refused, it all blew up with Robert, as it likely would have. This led us into the territory of Vince experiencing this on a daily basis and why are we asking him to 'swallow' being disrespected in order to make things better? Isn't this what happens over and over again and what does this mean to Reconciliation?

A woman I know from the Professional Theatre community replaced Sarah in the final scene. She turned to Lucas and told him how much she and Robert loved him etc....and Lucas countered with 'then why have you been lying all along?' This led to Joe asking if he could help and this led to the intervener asking Siya and Joe (I guess because they are also Indigenous) if they knew Lucas' mother..."why would we know his mother – you think we know all the Indians?!?" from Siya to much laughter and applause from the audience and it got more complicated from there. Robert got very defensive. Lucas became so angry that when this Sarah asked him what he wanted he said. "I'm going to keep that a secret". The issue here...and the woman articulated it herself, was that she thought if she just 'showed love' that everything would be fine and that she was really surprised by people's anger. She talked about the Indigenous people she knows being really forgiving, generous, polite....I was taking a deep breath at this point.

I talked about people needing the space to express whatever they are feeling/thinking in this issue and that 'we' need to get comfortable with it being uncomfortable. Siya made the point that whenever she speaks her mind, people label her as the "angry young Indigenous woman".

A thing for me was being reminded that this intervention IS actually an indicator of where the mainstream professional theatre community is on these issues. I forget.

Another standing ovation and lots of thanks. We have two shows tomorrow.

Wednesday, March 7

1:00PM Matinee

Capacity: 155 Attendance: 153 99%

I went into the show this afternoon feeling weird...and I'll also say, the energy in the audience was very different than usual. Matinees can be like that. The play went very well. After, when I asked how many people recognized blockages to Reconciliation, about 40% of the full house hands went up. It's always been at least 80-90% for every show, so, this was an indicator of something.

What we had today, perhaps because of school bookings (?) was an audience that to a large degree, wanted to be educated and came, it felt like, expecting to receive information, but not have any kind of conversation...and certainly not express any opinions. This wasn't everyone, but many. Also, somehow, a teacher with 40+ students from Mission got the impression (she was adamant she'd been told this, although Tfl Staff say she was not) that the event started at 1:00PM and ended at 3:00PM. It's never been only 2 hours long. At 3:00PM sharp all of them got up and left to get on a bus.

Dorothy has, as always, sent me great intervention notes, but I'm realizing that after two shows today, I'm way too tired to process them. Also, this afternoon seems like a really long time ago. I'm going to sign off and write about tonight tomorrow when I have a more clear head.

Evening show

Capacity: 155 Attendance: 154 99%

A much warmer sense walking out onto the stage for the evening. It's interesting to me how immediately I have a sense of the energy in the room and am often (not always) right.

The play was very strong last night. The Forum started off in a VERY different way. A "Stop" came fairly quickly in the first scene with the pouch. It's hard for me to see the top two rows in the theatre – there's no light up there. I knew the person who yelled stop was young, but when she started coming down the stairs...maybe she was six? Maybe less? I've had amazing interventions from children in Forum events. I asked her who she wanted to replace and she shook her head, 'no' and I realized she didn't fully understand. I knelt down and asked her what her name was – Natasha. OK, Natasha...I'm asking people to replace characters and try an idea....do you want to do that? (shake head, no). Do you have an idea? (shake head yes). OK....can you whisper to me what the idea is? 'Those two need to find a way to stop fighting'. Which two? (Chase and Lucas). Which one do you think would be the best at doing that? 'HER!'...(Chase). Do you want to

replace her and try your idea? (shake head no). OK. So, I asked the audience how they think Chase might do that, in a sentence or two....some answers....I thanked Natasha and asked if there was anything she wanted to say (shake head no) and, to much applause she went back to her seat. I also asked the audience not to take what just happened as a precedent. I really did want them to replace characters ;)

A young man replaced Robert with Vince and told Vince to get on with loading the truck. 'I have other things to do, said Robert. This is the only chance I have to check on you and I find you taking a break. I want you to show up, well dressed and do the work.' Vince didn't take this well, was very angry and defensive. Robert then said 'I want you to show me respect.'

Well..... I asked the audience member if he was entering Robert's struggle to break through a blockage to true and honourable Reconciliation. We danced around the issue of Robert's racism for a bit but then I asked the audience if they saw it, and so many hands went up, including the audience member's. Oh – so you know that at the heart of the scene is Robert's racism....yes. Are you avoiding the topic in what you bring us and focusing on Vince working the way you want him to for a reason? 'Well, I know he's not doing well and I just want him to get the work done.' Ok, but you've succeeded in really pissing him off, so...what going wrong? And then he said: 'it's weird, because if I was Vince, I would have responded really well to my approach.' Ahhhh! Here's the opening. Isn't this what we do when we approach the issue of Reconciliation? Make the invitation one to assimilate? Vince, be like me and everything will be fine? We do this as individuals and we do it as Canada. Much applause from the audience and a very big lightbulb went on for the audience member. He then talked about how he does this himself.

This is another good example for me of how when interventions go sideways, there is real learning possible, IF we are prepared to sit in the very uncomfortable places. How do we create a safe enough space for us to be uncomfortable together?

A young guy replaced Vince with Joe and made the simple but eloquent point that he was not going to apologize to Robert when Robert had been racist with him. He also sent Joe away, assuring him he was OK and wanted to just sit and figure things out. The audience was split (I polled them) about Joe leaving Vince alone, many feeling that Vince would do himself or someone else harm tonight.

We had a double intervention in the same scene (I will allow this occasionally if I feel we have the time AND the first intervention seems 'thin'). A woman replaced Robert with Sarah and then a man took Sarah's place when Sarah tries to confront Robert's racism...and they BOTH avoided the topic altogether and turned it into Robert firing people....any people. Of course this created an opportunity to ask the audience about how we avoid the difficult conversations, especially with people in our inner circles.

Two very elderly Tseil-Waututh people (a husband and wife, I think) came to me after the show and were very, very grateful for the work. He said something that struck me. He thanked me for risking doing what I am doing, because when THEY say the things I am saying about Canada, people get very angry at them.

Thursday, March 8

Capacity: 155 Attendance: 154 99%

In the scene with Siya and Joe, for many nights now, people have come up and tried various tactics to 'soften' Joe and it is impossible. The young woman today started pleading...saying (rightly so) that he really wasn't listening to her, because he was giving the same answer – 'I don't want you to go' – to anything and everything she said. She suggested they just go up the mountain and have a look together....no one would know he had a record....they'd stay far away. No. I went so far ask him if he could imagine Joe saying 'yes' to anything regarding this and he said "no". So, we have a problem because we are asking the audience to work on the issue and if they cannot have any success, then we are lying to them and shouldn't do Forum on the scene at all.

This is a challenge for anyone doing Forum Theatre, but especially in a long run. The actors, out of fatigue, can start to dig their heels in. I had a talk with Joe about this after the show. We talked about fatigue and staying centred and listening. I DO think Forum Theatre is one of the most challenging of all forms of theatre, in that it demands of the actors this kind of 'being in the moment' – not just with each other in a rehearsed world, but with the audience in a world in which anything can happen.

A beautifully played intervention – a man replaced Joe with Vince and gave Vince back the bottle and wanted to talk....Vince tried to leave....the man was just very gently with him and Vince curled up at the opposite end of the stage, clearly wanting to go and not wanting to go. It was very moving and allowed us to talk about accepting Vince where he is and not saying 'get over it, and let's go apologize to Robert.'

A woman replaced Siya with Joe and chose to start when Joe is screaming at her. This proved to be very effective because Joe was already opened up and vulnerable.

A woman replaced Lucas and controlled the situation. She asked Joe for help, this led to Lucas and Siya going out for a walk...and the often talked about family/Canada transforming.

Again a lot of insights in the room...80 – 85% of the hands and great feedback from audience members. We have two more shows. The TV/webcast crew and equipment arrive tomorrow to use Friday night as a rehearsal and Saturday is closing and the webcast.

Friday, March 9

Capacity: 155 Attendance: 149 % of house 96%

Another full house with a few empty seats. This is happening because the Firehall has a policy of not letting seats be sold again (or filled even) if a person who has bought tickets doesn't show up. This is really problematic when there are group bookings and, say, 12 tickets are reserved but only 10 come. Why not be able to fill those seats? We are turning people away....and have empty seats.

The show was a little flat tonight. We are all tired....need to chat with the cast about gathering energy and focus for the webcast.

I started off very nervous tonight. Kind of expected it. The webcast does this to me, but also, tomorrow is my final large Forum like this. So, so, so strange. Surreal.

A man replaced Siya in the scene where Lucas gets the pouch. He told Chase, 'These pouches are very special to me & when I make a pouch they go to people when they're ready.' And to Lucas, 'When your pouch is ready to go, give it to someone else.' Lucas ended up asking questions and got way more information that would mean, he said, he would simply not relinquish the pouch at home. This Siya asked Chase, 'Did that bother you?' and through tears Chase explained about her own struggles with belonging.

The intervention was so clear, it had such clear boundaries, and because of that opened up terrific transformational space. We also talked about this Siya being further on in her discovery of herself than our Siya (who agreed).

The same man replaced Joe when he finds Vince - 'I've been there. Let's go eat.' He said and gave the bottle back to Vince...and walked away. Vince would not follow him. This Joe said he was giving Vince the chance to be treated with dignity the way he (the intervener) wasn't, when he was in that position. But our Vince disagreed. It felt to him like it was the same old same old....someone saying they'd been there...and wanted to help...but then walked away. I think I missed an analysis opportunity on this....found the intervention very confusing.

A man replaced Robert with Sarah, before Lucas enters. He started to say, 'I had to fire another Native, and stopped himself, and started crushing the beer can....slowly. Sarah started to call him on his racism, pointing out that they had a Native son, but then never followed through. She avoided the real conversation.

Then, Lucas entered and Sarah and this Robert danced around telling Lucas the truth, until, when it all started to come out, we were in a very similar place as our play. There

was a lot here. I asked Sarah, why didn't you really pursue the racism conversation, having started it?...He was so fragile, she said, I didn't want to hurt him. Isn't this what we do? We don't want to be inside the discomfort and so we just don't go there, even when the door opens? A back and forth with the audience about this.

A very heart felt intervention from a woman replacing Sarah in the final scene, that got a thumbs up from Siya, because of the woman's honesty and honouring of Joe and Siya. What did Sarah have to move through to do this? Her certainty about Christian values, said the woman.

There was some interesting pushback from audience members tonight about who I meant when I said "we"...and "Canada", all of it from white people (important to be clear about this). It strikes me that this was about being very uncomfortable with a sense that there is in fact a built in inequality in Canada and that we need to take responsibility for it, today. All of us. It's not enough to just say 'we are all humans and therefore equal', as one audience member suggested.

Saturday, March 10

"šxʷamət (home) is absolutely, the most amazing Forum Theatre show ever seen in history."

Antonio Graziano, Teatro della Tenerezza

"I hope šxʷamət (home) can be rebroadcast for the whole world to see. What a rich and glorious happening. I am very grateful to the cast and all who worked to make this happen."

Karla Ryan

"[šxʷamət (home) was] a lovely, powerful, poignant forum . Hats off to David and the actors and everyone associated with TFL. Truly a fabulous journey!!"

Ravi Ramaswamy, Bangalore India

"I finally got to see šxʷamət (home) via the webcast and I am just amazed at the work and the impact this theatre has on people. The production was inspiring."

Win Woodward

It is actually March 12 now – taken a few days to get to this. Thankfully I have Dorothy's nightly notes.

The Webcast

Well, closing was always going to be a huge night. Interestingly, because we were in webcast crisis until moments before we started, not knowing if we were actually going to broadcast, when I got onstage I was very relieved instead of nervous ;).

This did, however mean that although we told people the streaming would start at 7:15 PM PST, it did not start until 7:35 PM and I am certain people gave up – especially those far away – 20 minutes is a long time to be clicking on something that doesn't work at 2 or 3 in the morning. I know this happened to a friend in Portugal and if he gave up (being an old friend) many others did, too.

As a result, we had 330 unique IP addresses (computers) logged in – this is small compared to what we were expecting. However, some of these computers I know had large groups of 20 or more people attached to them on big screens. We know from feedback that many people watch with at least one other person, so, we are estimating an average of $330 * 2 = 660$ Web Viewers. We also had a relay into the Bell Network via [CACTUS](#) (Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations), and while they could only view, not enter our chat, the CACTUS organizer says estimating 7,000 viewers is conservative. **This brings the webcast viewers to an estimated 7,660.**

Here is where we know people logged in from, although India was not on the list I was given, even though Radha contacted me from Bangalore to say how much she enjoyed the webcast. If we couldn't 'see' India, I wonder where else we could not see.

Canada:

British Columbia: Vancouver, Prince Rupert, Salmon Arm, Nelson, New Westminster, Nanaimo, Campbell River, Richmond, Armstrong, Victoria, Courtenay, Burnaby, Kamloops, North Vancouver, Surrey, Penticton, Gibsons, Vernon, Abbotsford, Coquitlam, Parksville, Maple Ridge, Ministry of Education, UBC;

Alberta: Airdrie, Edmonton, Calgary, Grande Prairie, Peace River, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, St. Lina, Saddle Lake, University of Alberta;

Saskatchewan: Saskatoon, Prince Albert;

Ontario: Brampton, Toronto, Ottawa;

New Brunswick: St. Andrews – this was the Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations (CACTUS) portal;

United States: Apache Junction, AZ; Los Angeles and UCLA, CA; Prairieville and New Orleans, LA; South Portland, Waterville and Belgrade, ME; Lowell, MA; Portland, OR; Plattsburgh, NY; Lewisburg and Glenshaw, PA; Seattle, Port Townsend and Bellingham, WA;

International: Tokyo, Japan; Australian Capital Territory and Victoria, Australia; Auckland, New Zealand; Bangkok and Phuket, Thailand; Hanover and Hamburg, Germany; Ghent and Flanders, Belgium; Unknown in Italy; Unknown in Ukraine; Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canary Islands and Navarre, Spain; Casablanca, Morocco; University of Ghana, Ghana; Bengaluru, India; Google Proxies* in China, Sweden and Switzerland. *this could be related to using Google Chrome on a cellphone.

Capacity: 155 Attendance: 155 100%

The play was really hot closing night. The cast and I had had a chat about the flatness of the play the previous night, they knew it, really stepped up to the plate for this final show. Here are some noteworthy interventions:

In a webcast, I have a group of what I call “web-actors” on computers just offstage. As people watch on the internet, if they have an idea for an intervention, they can click on a web-actor who will enter chat space with them, ask them some probing questions, and then go into the theatre, yell stop, and do the intervention on their behalf. I started doing this as live interactive TV with Mike Keeping when he was at Rogers Community TV in 1989. We did our first webcast in 2000. When Rogers became SHAW, Mike moved over and our relationship continued. This last one happened without SHAW, as they discontinued their Community Access mandate, but Mike took it on, on his own.

A man in Portland made an intervention replacing Sarah, when Lucas goes home with the pouch. Sarah became very emotional and told her son, ‘I’m going to keep this just for now. I’m afraid. You’re growing up, becoming a man, and I recognize you are not like us’. Complicated. This comment from Sarah made Robert worried his family was splitting, and this inspired him to ask Sarah for the pouch and he gave it back to Lucas. Sarah truthfully expressing her fear opened a door, as uncomfortable a door as that was, for movement. Reconciliation won’t be comfortable. If we think it can or will be, we are in denial.

A Residential School Survivor replaced Sarah in the final scene and said, ‘hold on everybody. I’ve had an epiphany, a revelation. We need to tell the truth. Take a look at our journey. We landed on this land and, because they (Indigenous people) didn’t believe in our God, we took their children. The intervener kept switching back and forth in between trying to be Sarah and simply talking directly to the audience. ‘Aboriginal people have to stop living in poverty. You will understand in time. Lucas will find the truth.’ She went on for some time, the cast not knowing what to do until Lucas finally said, ‘Mom....WHO are you talking to? You are scaring me!’ Siya chimed in with, ‘Is this was Church is like every Sunday?’ Robert started asking his wife, who had become a completely different person, what was wrong, was she OK?...and everyone started moving away from her – creating distance. The further away they moved, the more urgent and firm this Sarah became in her insistence that they listen to her, and agree with her.

I think the cast reacted brilliantly, simply by treating what was happening as real. When we finished, I asked the audience member if her intention had been to drive her son and the others away – Lucas was now on his way to Joe and Siya’s house. No, I want them to understand the truth....to see the truth.

I asked the audience how many of us had had ‘an epiphany’ and seen things suddenly very clearly and, in our enthusiasm and passion, driven the very people with whom we wanted to communicate away? Many hands in the air.

I recognize the truth of the content of what this Sarah you bring us is saying, and yet...people are creating such distance from you. This happens from any sector of an issue – while the shrill voices might make the media happy, they don't succeed in building reconciling bridges. Having said that, and considering the need for accepting discomfort as touched on above, sometimes we also just need to accept and sit in it.

As I was winding up the evening, the President of TfL's Board yelled "Stop" and various speeches and slide/videos started paying tribute to the Company's work (and to me)...This took me by complete surprise.

I finished off by bringing things back to this cast, production team and crew. Another long standing ovation....lots of applause and great feedback on the evening.

Production shots

(all photos by David Cooper)



David Diamond introducing Harriet Prince
(Support Person and Ceremony Consultant)



Madeline Terbasket as Siya.
"What do you mean when you
say there was nothing here?"

Left to right: Asivak Koostachin as Lucas, Madeline Terbasket as Siya, Mutya Macatumpag as Chase. "Giving Lucas the pouch"



Left to right: Sam Seward as Joe, Joey Lespérance as Robert, Nayden Palosaari as Vince. "Robert fires Vince."

Left to right: Mutya Macatumpag as Chase, Madeline Terbasket as Siya. "Siya and Chase prepare to protest the Kinder Morgan pipeline."





Left to right: Asivak Koostachin as Lucas, Rev. Margaret Roberts as Sarah, Joey Lespérance as Robert. "Sarah throws the pouch (and his identity) and Lucas."

Asivak Koostachin as Lucas. "Lucas alone, pondering who he really is."





Left to right: Asivak Koostachin as Lucas, Joey Lespérance as Robert, Rev. Margaret Roberts as Sarah, Madeline Terbasket as Siya, Sam Seward as Joe. "The two families confront many blockages to true and honourable Reconciliation."

Closing night at the Firehall Arts Centre and Global Webcast. Cast, some crew, Webcast people, Staff, Board of Directors, some workshop participants.

Photographer: unknown

