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For Immediate Release

Mixed Company Theatre Wants You to Vote for Change!

Toronto - Coming off the extreme success of our spring 2011 Tour of *DISS* - Mixed Company Theatre is announcing the launch of our **AVIVA Community Fund** campaign.

Mixed Company Theatre's production of *DISS- From the Streets to the Stage* successfully reached at-risk youth in priority neighbourhoods in Toronto during the 2010-2011 tour season, allowing audiences to think about, discuss, and create positive change in their community related to gang violence.

With the help of community member votes on our **AVIVA Community Fund** page between **October 24, 2011 - November 9, 2011**, MCT will move closer to having the ability to bring *DISS* to at-risk youth in Southern Ontario (Mississauga, Brampton, Hamilton). The production will directly reach 6,900 youth in these areas.

In 2009, MCT partnered with the Toronto Police Services to develop this community production that addressed youth gangs in Toronto's priority neighbourhoods, developing the play through collaboration with police, non-for-profit community groups, gang-exit programs, and most of all, youth who had experienced gang involvement. Over three years of amazing response and success, *DISS* has reached over 16,000 students, creating heated dialogue about contentious issues. It has received rave reviews and testimonials from youth and adults and was nominated for **2 Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts Dora Awards in 2011: Outstanding production TYA Division and Outstanding performance TYA Division**.

DISS combines MCT's interactive Forum Theatre technique with hip-hop to create a powerful performance that presents worst-case scenarios of gang violence. After the first performance, the audience is able to intervene in order to change the outcome of the worst-case scenes. *DISS* allows the audience to think about human behaviour, anger management, manipulation, communication, and conflict resolution, while gaining an understanding of effective methods to handle conflict related to bullying and gang violence.

In 2011, the Ontario provincial government increased funding to select areas, including Peel (Mississauga, Brampton) and Hamilton for gang prevention initiatives. MCT feels the best way to raise awareness of any issue is to directly engage the community in creating their own options for social change, so though funding for police is incredibly important, creating, educating, engaging, and empowering dialogue is the first step to allowing community to change themselves.

To vote for *DISS*, click here: <http://www.avivacommunityfund.org/ideas/acf11689>
Everyone who registers can vote once per day for the duration of the campaign.

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*Mixed Company Theatre produces innovative, socially relevant drama
as a tool to educate, engage and empower for positive change.*

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