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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Toronto Theatre Company Takes On Techno-Bullying

Toronto, ON – Students in the GTA, Hamilton, Peel, Halton, York and Durham are getting the chance to confront cyber-bullying head-on this fall, thanks to a new, interactive theatre production, **Showdown 2.0**, being toured by Toronto educational theatre veterans, **Mixed Company Theatre (MCT)**.

Showdown 2.0 is an interactive, Forum Theatre performance that tackles the issue of bullying in a hyper-connected, ever changing technological landscape. Developed in consultation with high school students, **Showdown 2.0** is a hard-hitting and realistic portrayal of bullying, presenting how technology is influencing the actions and outcomes of violence and harassment.

MCT originally created *Showdown* in 2001 to address the growing problem of bullying in Toronto area schools. In the ten years since, *Showdown* has been seen by over 100,000 students across Ontario. This season's re-development and creation of **Showdown 2.0** is a direct response to feedback from students and educators concerning the rising rates of cyber-bullying.

"In light of all the recent incidents of bullying in the news, we felt a strong sense of urgency to get this message out to students and educate them with intervention strategies when faced with bullying, either from a victim or bystander's perspective," shared MCT's Artistic duo, Artistic Director, Simon Malbogat and Associate A.D., Duncan McCallum. "In a recent study, 34% of intermediate and high school students reported being cyber-bullied, while 20% of students admitted to being the ones doing the bullying. When compounded with traditional forms of bullying, the numbers skyrocket."

The interactive methodology of Forum Theatre - originally created by Brazilian theatre director and politician, Augusto Boal – was developed as a progressive tool to affect social change about sensitive issues. Identified by UNESCO as a tool for social change, Forum Theatre performances involve the audience in creating real-time strategies and solutions for issues and problems they see presented in a "worst-case-scenario" play. This type of active learning engages students in "rehearsing for real life," allowing them to test-drive strategies in a safe space.

Showdown 2.0 is touring Intermediate and Secondary schools from October 24 – December 9.

For **Showdown 2.0** updates and information on all of MCT's programming, visit www.mixedcompanytheatre.com. Join us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/mixedcompanytheatre or follow us on Twitter at **MixedCTheatre**.

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More about Mixed Company Theatre (MCT): MCT produces innovative, socially relevant drama as a tool for positive change. Founded in 1983, MCT uses Forum Theatre and interactive arts to educate, engage and empower audiences in schools, communities and workplace. Forum Theatre is an interactive approach that involves the audience in developing real-time strategies for dealing with social and personal issues. For more information, visit www.mixedcompanytheatre.com.

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