



engage · educate · empower

Mixed News - Winter 2009

WELCOME TO OUR 25TH YEAR!

Time does fly! Mixed Company Theatre was officially founded on December 12, 1983. From our first show, *Life on the Line*, written by two co-founders Steven Bush and Allen Booth, to our newest production, *Mixed Messages*, we continue to engage, educate and empower the community.

We are continuing to bring arts to the community, working with local youth who have experienced homelessness, and we will be working in North Etobicoke, developing a script on the issue of harassment. Provincially, our tours are expanding; we will be touring to Hamilton this Spring. On the international front, we presented *Mixed Messages* at **Performing the World** in New York City.

The glowing testimonials we receive support our mandate that theatre is an effective tool for social change. I am proud to say our efforts have been recognized with the 2008 City of Toronto Mayor's Community Safety Award.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped the organization. It has been an honour for me to be part of the growth of Mixed Company's *Breaking the Cycle of Violence* series. Our Fall 2008 Tour has been extremely successful - our best ever! We are looking forward to *What If...?* this spring with great anticipation.

We are planning our **25th Anniversary Gala** in November, and further ahead, we are preparing for the Spring 2010 **Forum Theatre Practitioner's Symposium**.

This newsletter is our forum for sharing. It details the work that Mixed Company Theatre performs in schools and the community, and applauds the efforts of our clients and donors. In addition, we provide supplementary resource links that will be of interest to you.

In this issue you'll learn about the unique ways Mixed Company has used Forum Theatre at **conferences** across Ontario and **internationally**. You'll hear from **Lykke Jørgensen**, an actress from **Denmark** who spent three weeks with us and is now bringing Forum Theatre to Denmark. You'll also read about our **Breaking the Cycle of Violence Project**, recently awarded a **Mayor's Community Safety Award**. **Engage, Educate, Empower - and Enjoy!**



Simon Malbogot
Artistic Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

2009 Spring School Tour!

[What if...?](#)

Tackling drugs, alcohol, and peer pressure

For Grades 9-12.

Mar 23 - Apr 21

To ensure the quality of facilitation, there is a maximum of 200 audience members

25 FOR 25

Some of our granting bodies, like the **Ontario Arts Council**, ask us to describe projects in under **25 words**. In honour of our **25th Anniversary**, we're presenting this challenge to some of our **staff, associate artists and you!** Check out **25 for 25** throughout this newsletter! Send yours to info@mixedcompanytheatre.com

COMMON GROUND FOUND! SPRING 2009

Touring to **schools** this Spring, *What If...?* tackles **drugs, alcohol, and peer pressure**. Be one of the **first** to book the show teachers call **“engaging!”**

Mixed Company Theatre's presentations help students face challenges head-on, bringing **issues** such as **substance abuse, peer pressure, and risky choices** to the forefront.

WHAT IF...?

Tackling alcohol, drugs, and peer pressure
Key principles: *Courage, integrity, respect*

Grades 9-12

March 23 - April 21, 2009

To ensure the quality of facilitation, there is a maximum of 200 audience members

Ryan is forced to choose between his best friend, Chris, and his girlfriend, Melissa. When the three of them attend a party, they must choose how much to drink and whether or not to take drugs. At the end of the evening they debate who is sober enough to drive home. In an effort to please both of them, Ryan makes a decision that proves disastrous to all.

[What if...?](#) explores alcohol and drugs from a youth perspective, asking students to discuss realistic strategies and alternatives for dealing with peer pressure and substance abuse.

[What if...](#) Ryan, Chris, and Melissa made different choices?

[What if...](#) their story didn't have to end in tragedy?

[Book your show today!](#)

FALL TOUR REPORT - BEST YET!

Preventing Bullying and Sexual Assault across Ontario

“Wow! I was so impressed by the material and even more by the actors’ ability to remain in character and test our own abilities to defuse negative and demoralizing situations...I think all of use realized that it is a slippery slope to negative, bullying or passive and enabling behaviour...I thought it was an excellent opportunity for children to see strong dramatic performance in action - Excellent arts enrichment!”

Parent, Cosburn Middle School,

RE: Showdown

We are thrilled to be **starting our 25th year** launching from our **Best Fall Season yet**, with **11** performances of **Mixed Messages**, our sexual assault prevention show, and **60** performances of **Showdown**, our anti-bullying show. This Fall, we performed at **40 schools**, reaching **more than 16 000 students**.



“WHAT IF...?” TOUR 09

[What if...?](#) tours to Ontario schools from March 23-April 21, 2009.

[Book your show today!](#)

Some [tips](#) for youth on how to avoid drug use.

25 FOR 25

“What If...? engaged our students and the interactive portion enabled them to think about their options. We have received so much positive feedback!”

Student Services Teacher
Downsview SS, Toronto



25 FOR 25

“It is a great opportunity and the reward is immediate - you can see a change taking place in these kids right in front of you.”

-Michael Luckett, Actor in
Showdown and Mixed Messages

MY DAYS WITH MIXED COMPANY THEATRE

A letter from Lykke Jennet Jørgensen

At my University of Education in Denmark I have the opportunity to take one subject outside the country. I am doing a Master Degree in Philosophy of Education and my interest is in democracy and citizenship. It brought me to the conference at OISE “Learning Democracy by Doing”. So I looked up the possibility of getting in contact with a theatre company working with “Forum Theatre” as a tool. This research brought me luckily to Mixed Company Theatre. In Denmark I have been working as an actress using different methods such as forum theatre.

It was with a feeling of curiosity and uncertainty that I met with Simone Malbogot and the staff at Mixed Company Theatre on the 20th of October 2008. What could I expect? And would we get along?

Well all my worries disappeared the moment I met this competent and dedicated group of people. I was invited into the group with an openhearted and warm mind. It has been three weeks of exciting challenges, of joy, with lots of interesting dialogues and a lot of inspiring work.

In any society it is invaluable to have people dedicated to the idea of social change, the need for accomplishing something and not only talking and analysing. Mixed Company Theatre works not only for short term gain but are also tackling serious, tough issues, where no easy solution exists.

So what did I get from my experience? A lot of insight about how to make a theatre company run; about how to connect the values and beliefs of social change; how difficult it is to stick to the values during difficult moments when the money issue takes a lot of energy to manage.

I also experienced and learned the importance of the spirit of teamwork and respect, of energy and dedication. I found that Mixed Theatre Company has the potential to develop a Centre of research for this work in terms of how art can have a deeper impact on democracy and social change.

My contact with actors connected to Mixed Company Theatre made me aware of how we share the same fears, the same challenges, the same desires to change our perception (and societies’ perception) of theatre and actors to reach a deeper level of what art/theatre can bring to the world. It has been a life experience for me, an experience I couldn’t get at my University and which sharpened my focus on my future work. So it is with a lot of energy and inspiration, that I go back to my University in Denmark to write my project and to try to create something similar in my community.

I want to deeply and sincerely thank The Mixed Company Theatre and their associated artists for offering me this opportunity.

Lykke

P.S. At the time of printing this Newsletter, Lykke had secured funding to start a forum theatre group for young people in the “ghetto” and they will be performing this Spring.



Lykke Jørgensen, Daniel Booth (General Manager), and Simon Malbogot at the Mixed Company Office



Lykke and Simon



Lykke and Bridget van Voorden, past MXCO employee

25 FOR 25

“I am very inspired from how you organized people around the theatre, and I will think of making connections to larger groups from this inspiration”

- Lykke Jennet Jørgensen


BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE


The **Mayor's Community Safety Awards** were created by the Community Safety Secretariat to recognize the contributions of people and groups who work to make their community a safer place to live. Each year, five recipients are recognized for their contribution to improving the safety of Toronto residents. The awards **celebrate** projects that **promote** the **safety of neighborhoods and communities**, projects that **respond to violence and victimization**, projects that have the capacity to reduce violence within at-risk communities, and those which have been initiated, implemented and supported by the corporate/business sector and that promote safety and/or **violence prevention**.


Mixed Company is **honoured** to receive this award. Entitled **Breaking the Cycle of Violence**, Mixed Company's project showcased our anti-bullying play **Showdown**, and our presentation on sexual assault prevention **Mixed Messages**, from our Fall 2007 & 2008 tours. We celebrated this honour at **Toronto City Hall**, with other recipients on November 24.


PERFORMING THE WORLD


Mixed Company continues to find innovative and unique ways to use Forum Theatre. The result? Invitations to:

 Perform our Cobblestone Youth Show **Street Song** at the **Girls are Different Conference** for the **Ministry of Children and Youth Services**. The presentation went so well we have been invited to do the show in Hamilton at the **Aboriginal Health Centre**. As well, we have been invited by the Ministry to do a training for youth service providers and front-line workers with high-risk youth.

 The **Empowering Student Conferences** in both the east and west end of Toronto in September. This was our third time at this conference, and every year it gets better! More teachers and counselors call us to book our shows.

 The **Safe School Conference** at **OISE**, where Artistic Director Simon Malbogot did the forum theatre "Masks of Manipulation" for prospective teachers and educators. We met our new **volunteer**, Kendra Marr, at this conference.

 In October, Mixed Company was invited to **Performing the World Conference** in New York City, on October 4, presenting **Mixed Messages** at the **Youth All Star Theatre on 42nd Street** in NYC.

 In November, the **Ontario Hospital Association** and the **Ontario Medical Association** asked us to create a Forum Theatre piece dealing with physicians' behaviour entitled **Follow the Leader**. The presentation catalyzed a tremendous amount of discussion and fulfilled its objectives magnificently.



Simon Malbogot with other Mayor's Community Safety Award recipients



A panel speaker at Performing the World



Audience members enjoying performances from around the world



MXCO cast performing *Follow the Leader* for physicians and nurses

TRAINING WORKSHOPS - SUMMER 2009

Mixed Company Theatre offers annual training for those who want to learn about Forum Theatre, or have already been working with [Forum Theatre](#) and want to learn more about its practical applications.

These popular summer workshops are always well-attended, so book your space early!

Please note that all workshops are held at our head office at 157 Carlton Street in Toronto, and each session is limited to 25 participants.

Workshop #1 Introduction to Forum Theatre

June 15-18, 2009

August 10-13, 2009

Fee: \$400

Who should attend:

Educators, social workers, community leaders, theatre professionals

What You'll Learn:

- Forum Theatre language and techniques designed to investigate all sides of hard-to-talk about issues
- Alternative theatre methodologies to help you develop open communication
- A fresh perspective on improvisation
- New insight into Character Development
- Practical strategies for:
 - Dealing with workplace challenges
 - Encouraging trust and team building
 - Recovering from burnout
 - Undertaking creative goal-setting in a team environment
 - Increasing cultural capacity
 - Fostering consensus
 - Lobbying for change

Workshop #2 Joker Master Class

June 22-25, 2009

Fee: \$450

Who should attend:

Individuals with prior Forum Theatre training who want to learn how to play and advance their Joker role. (Please note that admittance to this workshop is not guaranteed; interested participants should send their resume, citing previous Forum Theatre experience, for review prior to registration.)

What you'll learn:

The fine art of "joking"—asking questions, making connections, and bringing to light the intelligence and expertise of Forum Theatre participants. Workshop participants will create original Forum Theatre scenes, and will have the opportunity to act as Joker.



25 FOR 25

“Not only is there a skill-set and knowledge of Forum Theatre, but there is deep understanding of the manipulation that individuals use to gain power.”

- Duncan McCallum,
Associate Artist



HOW TO REGISTER

Registration deadline for our Summer 2009 training workshops is **June 10, 2009**.

To register, please call us at **416.515.8080** or email **info@mixedcompanytheatre.com**

We will happily send you a registration form to fill out and return, along with a cheque for the \$100 registration fee*, to the address below:

Mixed Company Theatre
Re: Training workshops
157 Carlton Street, Suite 201
Toronto, ON M5A 2K3

*Registration fee of \$100 is non-refundable, and will be deducted from the \$400 fee for the workshop.

IT'S OFF TO WORK WE GO...

Mixed Company Theatre is excited to be developing a new branch of our organizations, and expanding our version of forum theatre to cater to the workplace in creating a strong, viable and sustainable element for the company.

Mixed Company now provides performances and workshops in workplace environments designed to address issues including power dynamics, discrimination, harassment, and communication barriers.

Some successes so far:



In the summer of 2005, Mixed Company was contracted by **OPSEU** and **Toronto Hydro** to create a number of scenes around the issue of discrimination against women in the workplace. The scenes were presented to **1,500 employees** and were **so successful** that an in-house **video was made by Toronto Hydro to be used in training sessions.**



A working relationship has been created over the past two years between Mixed Company, the **University of Toronto's Inter-Professional Program** and the **U of T's Standardized Patient Program** to provide on-going Forum Theatre workshops and presentations within the **university and medical communities.**



In 2006 Mixed Company created a show for the **Ministry of Community and Correctional Services** written by Luciano Iogna, which examined the **treatment of female prisoners** in our correctional system. It was successfully presented at a conference entitled *In Her Shoes*.



Our June 2006 workshop with **TD Bank** led to a series of **ten workshops** with the company in January 2007. Mixed Company created a script for this series that addressed **manager/employee dynamics** in the workplace. The Mixed Company presentation was rated by over **90% of the participants** as **"very effective"**.



25 FOR 25

"MXCO's Forum Theatre is a valuable tool in the field of consciousness raising and social change...I strongly endorse the work of Mixed Company."

- Catherine Maunsell, Manager of Female Offender Programs

THE ACTOR'S TOOLKIT: MASKS OF MANIPULATION

A set of **masks**, developed by Simon Malbogat with associate artist Peter Jarvis, called the **Masks of Manipulation** aid **MXCO actors, directors and writers** to experiment with the masks to help them **connect with the specific type of manipulators.** The masks act as **touchstones for the creators** and are invaluable tools in the **character and conflict building processes.** Manipulations and oppressions are named and defined by the Joker, for example:

- The **Sly, Cunning, Devious** behavior of **con artists, politicians, salespeople, gigolos and flirts** etc. These revealed manipulators are easily recognized by every community, and audience member.
- The **Irritating, Bothersome, Exasperating** energy will seek to **emotionally attack** the protagonist by **procuring doubt.** Understanding this behaviour helps the actors **prepare for the interventions.**

Forum Theatre **redefines theatre practice by resituating the audience as participants in creation.** When we see **different people playing the same role,** we are thrown into a creative world of **multiple outcomes, possibilities** and perspectives.



LETTER FROM TURKEY

Turkey got acquainted with the Forum theatre in 1998 via the play called “The Family” which your company had performed during the International Istanbul Festival of Children’s Theatre. Our children had the pleasure to solve their own problems by being a part of the stage thanks to you. I was among the lucky spectators who watched that play.

The children, as you know well, want to get rid of a boring environment by instantly showing that they are bored. They can never act, they criticise harshly, and they show that they are bored. Although the play you performed was a long play, the zealous participation of the children, their searching for the solution to the problems, their attentive interest in the play - from the very start till the very end - impressed me deeply. And I decided to work on this field. The Canadian playwright and director Luciano Iogna and me, we prepared a little handbook on Forum theatre. During my studies at the university I wrote articles on this subject, I made presentations in various conferences. I attended some workshops conducted by you in your country. In the light of your works, by utilizing the Forum theatre among the high school students, among the women attending to the writing and reading courses in the public education centres, and among the workers of various factories I tried to do my best in order to make the Forum theatre recognized and be widespread. My studies are going on.

If the world would change through art, if the oppression would be abolished through art, I believe that it would only be possible through Forum Theatre. Forum theatre will be in every stage of my carrier. And Mixed Company will always have its special place in my heart as it was Mixed Company which made me get acquainted with the Forum Theatre.

I cordially congratulate your 25th anniversary, and I wish a peaceful happy world where there is neither any oppressor nor any oppressed, but peace.



Nihal Kuyumcu
Assistant Professor



Nihal at a Mixed Company Workshop (bottom right)

25 FOR 25

“MXCO uses arts to bring about social change. Forum theatre encourages active participation from the audience to combat racism, poverty, homophobia, and violence against women.”

- Angela Barbieri, Secretary of the MXCO Board of Directors

MXCO IN TURKEY

Luciano Iogna, one of Mixed Company’s esteemed **Associate Artists**, will be doing a workshop with the **Ankara State Theatre actors** during their annual **Festival in Turkey this Spring**. The week-long workshop Turkish theatre artists will take them through the **unique Mixed Company process of exploring, creating and presenting** Forum Theatre, as **layered with manipulations**.

Luciano will be spending three months in Turkey again this Spring **woking with schools, NGO's, Creative Drama Associations, university drama departments and professional theatres** - as well as with the **Ankara State Theatre** - teaching Forum Theatre and spreading the word **internationally** about Mixed Company Theatre.

25 FOR 25

“A fascinating exploration! Actors, singers, and street experienced volunteers create a new Threepenny Opera in the streets of 21st Century Toronto during a financial meltdown.”

- Rex Deverell, Associate Artist

RE: **Three Loony Opera**

Cobblestone 2009 Project

Check our website for updates:

www.mixedcompanytheatre.com

THE CAMPAIGN FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

For 25 years Mixed Company Theatre works towards engaging, educating and empowering people in communities by utilizing theatre as a tool for positive social change. This work is made possible by the generous support of YOU the community.

This past year, Mixed Company Theatre has received the Mayor's Community Safety Award from the City of Toronto for its work in helping to make communities in Ontario a safer place to live in. In the coming year, we hope to branch out and further spread our heartfelt message of hope to more audiences in creating positive solutions to real and often complex problems in their everyday lives.

We're asking you to take a stand for positive change by making a donation to this worthwhile charity. Your donation will directly affect the people; the young child that is being bullied at school, the homeless person needing to be heard, and the employee that wants to make the right choices for his family. Together, we can make real-time strategies for dealing with these social and personal issues.

Support Mixed Company Theatre by filling out and submitting the sheet below with your donation.

Thank you,
Mixed Company Theatre



Yes, I would like to make a charitable donation to **Mixed Company Theatre**.

 \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100

Other \$ _____

PAYMENT OPTIONS Cheque enclosed for \$ _____

To make a donation online using VISA / MC / AMEX please visit (our CanadaHelps.org address).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Yes, I would like to be acknowledged on the Mixed Company Theatre's website.

Your donation will guarantee you **MEMBERSHIP** privileges within the company! Please call our office for more information on this great opportunity.

Mixed Company Theatre | 201-157 Carlton Street, Toronto, ON M5A 2K3 | Charitable Tax Reg. No. 11903 1870 RR0001

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