The Virtual Truth

Spring 2009 — the new **real** newsletter of The Virtual Stage Arts Society

Watching Big Brother



Zinaid Memisevic as Big Brother. Jamie Griffiths photo.

New Interpretation of Orwell's Classic Novel "1984" in Development

Big brother is soon going to be watched very closely, as The Virtual Stage descends into the Vancouver East Culture Centre's new Culture Lab theatre facility on April 20th for a week-long workshop on a new adaptation of George Orwell's classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The new adaptation, written by Artistic and Managing Director Andy Thompson (*SPANK!*), with the assistance of his dramaturg, playwright Kevin Kerr (Governor General Award winner, *Unity 1918*), will be directed Ron Jenkins (multi-award winning director of November Theatre's *The Black Rider*). The workshop will have a free public presentation at the Culture Lab (1895 Venables Street, Vancouver) on Saturday April 25th at 1:00PM.

Invasive technological devices, such as the all-seeing "telescreen" that Big Brother installs in every home, are central to Orwell's cautionary tale. In the workshop, we will be testing various design elements, including a prototype of our version of the Orwellian telescreen that will eventually be used in the full production in the 2010/11 theatre season. The goal is for the telescreen to essentially function as a character in the play. Our team will be investigating how to give the projection a sense of motion, which would allow it to stalk, lurk, intimidate and oppress the characters of Winston Smith and Julia as they attempt to hide their forbidden love affair from the Thought Police of Oceania.

Great artists are key collaborators in every play The Virtual Stage produces. This workshop is no exception, featuring performers Alex Ferguson (director, *The Birth of Freedom*), Allan Gray and Sarah Hayward. As well, a dream team of top designers has also been assembled for the production. Projections and Visual Media Design is by Jamie Griffiths (*SPANK!*). Choreography by Tara Cheyenne Friedenberg. Sound design by Victoria's Brian Linds (*No Exit*). Set design is by Rumble Productions' Artistic Producer Craig Hall (director of The Virtual Stage's 2004 production of *Valparaiso*).

the Virtual stage

Nineteen Eighty-Four workshop presentation & talk-back
Saturday April 25, 2009 at 1:00PM
at the Culture Lab (1895 Venables Street)
co-presented by the Vancouver East Cultural Centre
www.thevirtualstage.org



Andy Thompson, Lucia Frangione, Laara Sadiq and Jonathon Young in *No Exit*. Tim Matheson photo.

Live-Cinematic Interpretation of *No Exit* a Hit

They say the bigger the risk, the bigger the potential payoff. Our recent 'live-cinematic' production of Jean-Paul Sartre's existential classic play confirmed that. After opening weekend, every show sold out. Great word-of-mouth and unanimous critical acclaim sent audiences to the Centre for Digital Media in droves. Dozens of people had to be turned away at the door nightly. Needless to say, our production, which was made possible by tremendous community support, was a wild success!

"Another benchmark of brilliance… So filled with innovation… A jaw-dropping reminder that Vancouver's site specific theatre scene remains a world leader."
- Peter Birnie, The Vancouver Sun

"Director Kim Collier is a visionary... A riveting theatrical event... It's fantastic... This production is so exciting…"
- Colin Thomas, Georgia Straight

"Sartre play dazzles with contemporary dimensions... So freakishly potent… Kudos to the entire production team…"
- Jerry Wasserman, The Province

"The best play of the year thus far… Nothing short of brilliant… A thrilling masterpiece… This is a show that deserves to be seen by as many people as possible."
- Steven Schelling, Westender

"The bravest theatrical ride I've been on this year..."
- Michael Harris, The Globe and Mail



Jonathon Young as The Valet in *No Exit*. Tim Matheson photo.

NO EXIT

on tour

We are very pleased to announce that *No Exit* is touring Canada in 2009/10. This is The Virtual Stage's first tour and we're very excited! Here's what we have booked as of press time:

Kamloops October 22 - 31, 2009
(Sagebrush Theatre, WCTC)

Toronto November 12 - 22, 2009
(Groundswell Festival, Nightwood Theatre)

Calgary January 27 - 31, 2010
(High Performance Rodeo,
One Yellow Rabbit & Theatre Calgary)



Andy Thompson & Jonathon Young in *No Exit*. Tim Matheson photo.



Laara Sadiq, Lucia Frangione and Andy Thompson in *No Exit*. Tim Matheson photo.

COMING UP

April 25, 2009:	*1984* workshop presentation
Summer 2009:	*The Thing in the Bedroom* workshop
Fall-Winter 2009:	*No Exit* Canadian tour
Spring 2010:	*1984* workshop #2
May 2, 2010:	The Virtual Stage turns 10!
2010/11 Season:	*1984* world premiere



2009 Board of Directors

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Andy Thompson, Lucia Frangione, Laara Sadiq and Jonathon Young in *No Exit*. Tim Matheson photo.

Yes I Can!

Yes! I believe! I want to be part of the emerging arts community by helping make things happen for The Virtual Stage! I know it will make me a much more fulfilled person (and that I'll also get a charitable tax receipt...)

Name:

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Donations can also be made via CanadaHelps.Org and our website!

www.thevirtualstage.org

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Thanks to our Supporters

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