



# electroscope

ELECTRIC COMPANY THEATRE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER . NOVEMBER 2003 . VOL 7 . ISSUE 1

Welcome to the Electric Company's **8**th season!

PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

# Highlights from last season:

- + Restricted, March 1 2003
- + The Fall: April 5 – 27, co-produced with Theatre at UBC

# Activities this season:

- + Produced and participated in Progress Lab 03, May 2003
- + Retooled and produced Brilliant! The Blinding Enlightenment of Nikola Tesla  
Firehall Arts Centre, Vancouver, July 2003  
C Venues, **Edinburgh Festival Fringe, August 2003** ←
- + Western Canada Theatre, Kamloops, September 2003
- + Research at Capacoa Conference, Ottawa, November 2003

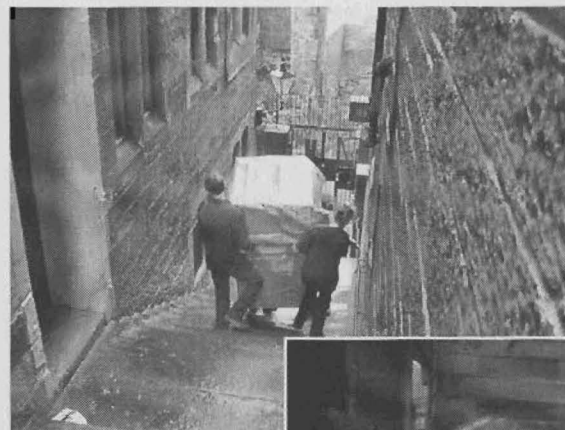


NOT BAD: somehow  
Cindy wangled a private  
audience for the EC with  
the Mayor of Edinburgh!



JET LAG SPECIAL:  
tech time reserved for  
exhausted Canucks, 4 a.m.

EDINBURGH PHOTOS: DAVID HUDGINS



TRUE FESTIVAL  
INITIATION: move your  
entire set down 3 flights  
of stairs in the rain



APRÈS SOIRÉE: the  
gents hit the town,  
partially obscured by  
alcohol



MMMMMMM ... warm  
scotch on a cool Scottish  
eve

# In development:

- + The Score for CBC Opening Night, with producer Screen Siren Pictures Inc.
- + New show! The Palace Grand, part of the Vancouver East Cultural Centre's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, April 13 –17, 2004, 2<sup>nd</sup> of our 4 new works, led by Jonathon Young
- + Storyeum for Historical Xperiences, opening in Gastown, June 1, 2004



# BRILLIANT

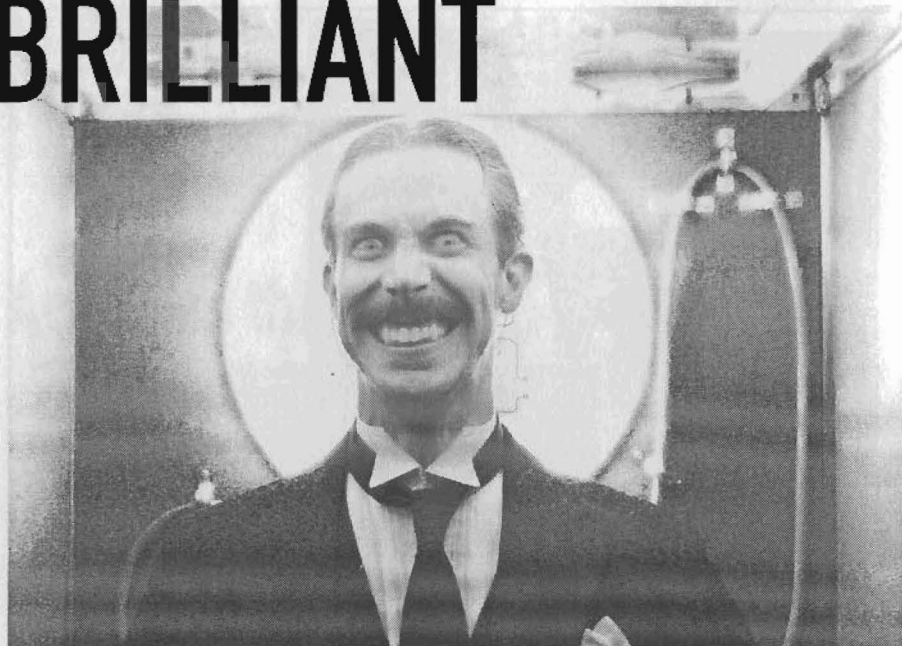


PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

So very few times in theatre (as in life) does one have the chance to revisit an artistic creation with the benefit of several years of perspective, and to experience and observe the way in which that work continues to have an impact on its audiences. Such was the case with this year's touring version of Electric Company's acclaimed play **Brilliant! The Blinding Enlightenment of Nikola Tesla**. The play, which had launched the company in 1996 (as well as the name "Electric Company"), was chosen as an appropriate show to take on our first international tour of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2003. Beginning life as a Fringe show in Vancouver in '96, it had evolved into a feature-length version that swept the '98 Jessie Awards, and then into a shortened touring version in Calgary at the High Performance Rodeo in '99. In 2003, **Brilliant!** was further streamlined from a 5-actor play, into a play that could be per-

formed by the core members of the Electric Company: Kim, Jon, Kevin, and David. The play was met with a flurry of successes, opening for a week run in Vancouver at the Firehall Arts Centre, and then to C Venues at the Edinburgh Festival where it garnered an enthusiastic and downright electric response. After a month away, the return to BC and its fireswept landscape, the tour ended with an invigorating 9 day run at the Sagebrush Theatre in Kamloops.

One goal in touring this production was to break a new barrier by having our works appear on the international stage, boosting the exposure of Electric Company in Europe and abroad. The play did very well in constant competition with over 1,600 other shows at the festival. Heartfelt thanks to our touring team: Jan Hodgson, Adrian Muir, Jamie King and Azra Young. What a time!



PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

## Brilliant tour highlights:

- + Discovering the set won't go down stairs into the theatre
- + Watching Adrian Muir decapitate the set with reciprocating saw
- + Realizing the lighting rental package has gone AWOL
- + Finding a swell American actor in Edinburgh for last minute replacement
- + Drinking in the local culture, literally
- + Savouring the delectable & odiferous offering of the international stage
- + Meeting sexy Serbian fans
- + Travelling Europe with the Brilliant progeny: Jamie & Azra
- + Kicking up the Kamloops dusk with Jan Hodgson at Cactus Jacks
- + Seeing Anthony reprise his geek role that launched the first **Brilliant!**

"...visually stunning, quite literally dazzling its audience with brilliant thunderbolts..."

~ The Scotsman

"With considerable charm and an abundance of invention, the Electric Company's perfectly counterpointed quartet of actors bounce ideas off each other in dizzily abstract fashion."

~ The Herald

"...an electrifying show that blends rich visual and physical imagery."

~ EdinburghGuide.com

"This Canadian company performs with an innovation of which Tesla would have been proud..."

~ The Stage

"...visual spectacle and splendour..."

~ Fest

# RESTRICTED



PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

On March 1, 2003, Electric Company hosted **Restricted**; an industrial-sized soiree of 1930's underground nightlife featuring **The Damsels Un-distressed** and the **Prohibition Jazz Band** and an illicit preview of previously unreleased material by **The Fall** production team. In addition, we created two theatre installations: **Betsy's Boudoir** and **The Peep Show**. These installations created an intimate experience wherein the viewer could get inside the minds of two central characters from **The Fall**. Donning earphones and led into a dark room, audience members entered one at a time, immersed in a strange and sensory world. Visitors to our soiree also gave in to the temptations of blackjack, poker, roulette, witnessed human cockfights (Jonathon Young proved to be the dominant cock), bet on horse races (Kathryn Shaw was the fastest mare), and made short work of a delightful buffet.

Thank you to our horses: Jan Kudelka, Kathryn Shaw, Dawn Petten, and Donald Adams, and our prize hen: Erin Wells.

Thank you to all you great folks who came out to the event en mass and our wonderful board who helped make it happen. Other huge thanks to Celebration 2010, Duncan Low, Theatre at UBC, Robert Gardiner, Marietta Kozak, Mike Ivany, Studio 58, The Damsels Un-Distressed & the Prohibition Jazz Band, Storm Brewing, Les Amis de Fromage, Chris Young Cooks, Lara & Steve Galloway, Mel Kennedy, Richard Mayencourt, Kirsty Munro, Jules & Dirk, Kendra Fanconi, Marita Dachsel, Elaine Conway, Stuart Collier, Kirsten McGhie, Mark Happeney, Richard Bland, Fend Players Society, George Scott.

We are grateful to our auction sponsors including: Fido, Vancouver Playhouse, Glenugie Winery, Domaine de Chaberton, Walnut Grove Travel Agent, Powerex, Microcell, John Nutter & Granville Island Glass, Happy Planet, Steven Galloway, Laisha Rosnau, Nancy Lee, Timothy Taylor, Michael V. Smith, Purdy's Chocolates, Stan Douglas, Michael Turner, Vancouver Playhouse Wine Festival, Arts Club, Peep Show & Betsy's Boudoir: Kevin, Danielle, Francesca, Sarah, Donna, Natalie, Quelemlia, Anita, Una, Robin, Rachel

# THE FALL

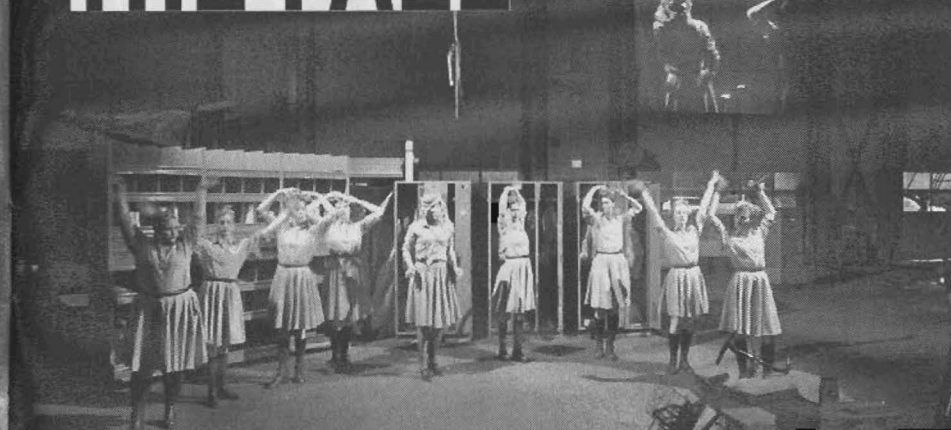


PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

**The Fall**, an Electric Company and Theatre at UBC production, was a large-scale, site-specific creation project that premiered at the new Great Northern Way Campus on the Finning Factory site last April. The audience and critical response to **The Fall** was overwhelming and it played to sold-out crowds. As well, the production christened a new research and development lab for the arts and applied sciences.

Keeping with our desire to explore form, innovative use of space, and non-traditional staging, **The Fall** was staged in a cavernous factory maximizing the theatrical potential it had to offer: massive, storey-high garage doors became moving video screens, actors traveled high above audiences on an overhead steel beam, and five ton cranes swung through space. What emerged was a highly theatrical horror story dealing with the nature of human sacrifice and rivalry with horrific consequences.

In creating it we employed a highly charged creative process: beginning with some

**The Fall received 9 Jessie Nominations and won 6 awards for:**

- + Outstanding Production
- + Critics Choice for Innovation
- + Outstanding Artistic Achievement in Video Design: David Hudgins & Amos Hertzman
- + Outstanding Artistic Achievement in Technical Direction: Harry vander Schee
- + Outstanding Lighting Design: Adrian Muir
- + Outstanding Sound Design: Patrick Pennefather

character ideas and a thematic premise we built the play on location in a condensed time period. Scenes were developed through improvisation, found objects determined dramatic locations and content was drawn from purely physical or visual impulses.

Working with theatre students from both UBC and Studio 58 the project became an exciting educational/professional hybrid



and by challenging each artist involved to work impulsively, the result was a dynamic and vital ensemble. Such an enormous production would not have been possible without this special collaboration.

In the two months that we inhabited the factory it was transformed (by a heady mixture of iron will, brute strength and elbow grease) from a chaotic mess of abandoned matter, into a happening theatre venue. Thank you to the talented cast and crew who worked on *The Fall* with a special thanks to Mr. Robert Gardiner for his vision and leadership. To our volunteers: heartfelt thanks for the tireless effort.

From our Audience Feedback Box:  
**"... all in all—great show. Maybe next time it might be worth working on a longer time—six weeks obviously was not enough to think some things through."**

**"Constant Goosebumps... Parallels to current affairs... Horror... Well Done!"**

**"Incredibly exciting, very dangerous (edgy) the best thing I have seen in years!, fabulous use of space"**

**"Genius – Deep, Dark, surreal, lucid and tactile truth. Thank you for enveloping me in the best theatre I've ever experienced"**

**"Brilliant! I have not been so well entertained in a long time. I look forward to future productions."**

**"...loved the Greek chorus turned girl guide lynch mob!"**

**"I can't wipe the grin all my face. My cheeks hurt! The spectacle is amazing."**

## THE FALL, continued

Critical response:

**"The vitality of the vision makes the event an extraordinary pleasure."**

~ Colin Thomas, Georgia Straight

**"I wish I had the space these people do in order to credit everyone involved in this marvelous machine of creativity."**

**"The Electric Company's vaunted approach to creating theatre in unexpected places is taken to new heights and depths in *The Fall*. The result is a two-act treat that's hip, hilarious and yes, even occasionally outright horrifying."**

~ Peter Birnie, Vancouver Sun

**"The Fall becomes one of those productions that will be talked about for years to come."**

~ Leanne Campbell, The Westender

**"Collier's vision was enormous and I can't imagine it being realized more fully."**

**"...without a doubt, the most cinematic live theatre experience I've ever had."**

~ Penelope Mulligan, Discorder



PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

# PROGRESS LAB '03



PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

it happened thanks to the support of the Canada Council's Flying Squad and the City of Vancouver.

We found genuine excitement toward creating solutions and ideas together. A wealth of information was downloaded in terms of company models and management. Thinking of it again, we are reminded of the density of the experience and the amount of ideas that emerged from the workshops. It only takes one idea from a guest speaker to resonate change, as there are often jewels of knowledge or ideas that seep in and broaden your work in the future. We came away with a broader knowledge and an increased understanding and friendship with our fellow artistic community members creating a momentum towards building a stronger theatre and practice in Vancouver.

The guest speakers: Blake Brooker, Margeret Specht and Jane Marsland, were very exciting and added inspiration and ideas to the group as did the group & individual presentations.

Progress Lab '03 is a good start to building sustainability for creation based theatre in Vancouver and ultimately in all of Canada. It is our sincere hope that this mutually beneficial work becomes a yearly tradition and continues well into the future.

Progress Lab '03 was a 5 day intensive conference that brought together Electric Company with Boca del Lupo, Radix, Newworld Theatre and individual artists Kendra Fanconi, Amiel Gladstone and Maiko Bae Yamamoto.

Progress Lab was initiated with many goals including community building, exchanging ideas, and gaining greater understanding of needs and solutions for creation based companies and artists. And

COMING  
SOON

# THE SCORE

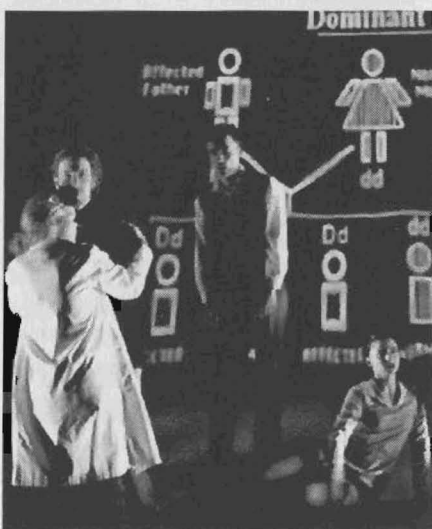
Electric Company "scores" the small screen



We have heard the mermaids singing, each to each... After what Kim Collier described as "the generous courtship of the Screen Sirens", we are honoured to be joining this internationally renowned film production team for the first time. Through their efforts, CBC Television has given us development money this season, with the goal to produce Electric Company's **THE SCORE** for their featured arts program "Opening Night" sometime next year.

We are thrilled to bring **THE SCORE** to the screen for the same reasons we felt passionate about its theatrical release. It is a story for our times: a bold, fresh and human look at an issue of universal importance, the ethics surrounding genetic research and the mapping of the human genome. Its riveting visuals and contrasting elements lend themselves to as an intriguing night of television as it was a night at the theatre.

Electric Company's unique and signature method of creating plays translates well into the world of film. As a team who is used to collaborating with others on their work, we are eager and ready to work alongside the Screen Sirens to create an exciting teleplay version of **THE SCORE**.



PHOTOS: TIM WATHESON

# PALACE GRAND

Premiering April 13-17, 2004

at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre for the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season



**PALACE GRAND** is a visually arresting one-man show conceived and performed by Jonathon Young. Kevin Kerr will direct the production, with additional staging by Kim Collier and video and sound design by David Hudgins.

The play is a brief and beautiful mirage of theatrical imagery. It is conveyed in the form of an intercepted transmission; sent in 1898, the signals reach us from out of the vast and eerie northern wilderness. The words and images we receive create a haunting and remarkable portrait; the story of a man known only as **Walker** whose remains have been discovered in a small wooden shelter miles north of a remote outpost called Lousetown.

The play attempts to uncover how he got there and why. The transmitting device is a tiny vaudeville theatre just large enough for one man to operate it; he is trapped here, doing all he can to reassemble the remains of **Walker's** life into a meaningful story. As the dredges plundered the river bottoms for precious metals, **PALACE GRAND** unearths a unique dramatic landscape in search of evidence of a meaningful existence. Instead of silver and gold, elements possessing theatrical value are mined: iconic objects, evocative language, imagery, and sound. In a remote setting where nature is a constant threat to survival, **PALACE GRAND** will draw parallels between the vast uncharted Canadian wilderness at the turn of the last century and the Canadian dramatic imagination that had also yet to be explored.



## In Memoriam:

### Carol Hudgins (1939 - 2003)

We mourn with David the passing of his mother who died on August 22, 2003 from Ovarian Cancer. Carol's twinkling personality, gentle and centering presence, and hopeful spirit touched all the members of Electric Company deeply. Her wisdom, intellect, and creativity fueled us with inspiration and greatly encouraged our desire to explore, question, and make the best theatre we could imagine and to imagine the best that theatre could be.

Carol was an enthusiastic and generous supporter of Electric Company and as both a scientist and an artist she engaged with our various projects on so many levels as she graced us with her observations, ideas, insights, and impressions. We fondly remember her passion and drive that was inescapably infectious. With a career as both a potter and a dietician as well as a being mother of three, her achievements are many, and her kind, giving, and sagacious presence will be greatly missed. Thank you Carol.

## Tribute:

TRIBUTE TO DUNCAN: after 7 glorious years, we bid a very fond farewell to Duncan Low, Executive Director of the Vancouver East Cultural Centre and wish him well in his new exciting endeavors and hope that he will always be our invaluable Edinburgh (& beyond!) consultant. We are very happy he lives just up the street.

## Birthday:

Sophie Carol Hudgins turns 1!



## Congrats:

Congratulations to Kevin and Marita on their engagement!! Wedding bells will be ringing this July 2004.

Congratulations to newlyweds Kim and Jonathon. The celebration was shared by family and friends in the land of the mid-night sun on the perfect piece of tundra. We all survived.



## Our Board

Karen Berkhout	President
Mitch Anderson	Vice President
Margaret Tom-Wing	Secretary
Teresa Conway	Treasurer
Linda Chinfen	At Large
Rory Gylander	At Large
Margot Venton	At Large

## Our Staff

The Electric Company Theatre Society is:

**Cynthia Reid**, Producing Manager

**Kim Collier**, Co-Artistic and Managing Director

**David Hudgins**, Co-Artistic Director

**Kevin Kerr**, Co-Artistic and Managing Director

**Jonathon Young**, Co-Artistic Director

**Linda Gorrie**, Bookkeeper

## Our Mandate

Rooted in physical and visual imagery the award winning Electric Company is at the forefront of Vancouver's most innovative and exciting theatre. The Electric Company is Kim Collier, David Hudgins, Kevin Kerr, and Jonathon Young who have united to form a truly collective theatre company. The Electric Company is a non-profit theatre company dedicated to the development of new Canadian theatre with an emphasis on physical and visual imagery. We strive to create theatre that is life affirming, inspiring and provocative. We believe in theatre that is accessible: financially and thematically. We wish to challenge the conventions of theatre while preserving a strong sense of story.

Thank you to all our Members & Donors. To members old and new thank you especially for attending our AGM in July.

More photos from *The Fall* ...



PHOTOS: TIM MATHESON



PHOTO: DANNY GUILLAUME

Top, left to right: Jonathon Young, Kim Collier,  
David Hudgins, Kevin Kerr

Left: Cindy Reid



PHOTO: DAVID HUDGINS

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# Thanks to

## Our Funders

Canada Council for the Arts, Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade  
British Columbia Arts Council, City of Vancouver  
Vancouver Foundation  
Melusine Foundation  
Hamber Foundation  
Koerner Foundation  
Celebration 2010  
Imperial Tobacco

## Fuel Cells 2003-04

who helped get *Brilliant!* across the pond this summer for our international debut. Thank you too to the many whose name we didn't get...

### Candle Power \$20-99

Stephen Aberle  
Roberta Beiser  
Camyar Chai  
Linda Gorrie  
Sandra Head  
Martin Kinch  
Stephane Kirkland  
Jennifer Lord  
Kevin Mackie  
Tanya Marchand  
Richard Mayencourt  
Kevin McNulty  
Kisos Obomsawin  
Katherine & Gino Pellizzari  
Daniel Royer  
Naomi Singer  
Jerry Wasserman  
Maiko Bae Yamamoto

### Volt \$100-\$249

Anonymous  
Marcie Flom  
Anthony Ingram & Margaret Tom-Wing  
Jeremiah Kennedy  
Pamela Lockhart  
Steve Prokopenko  
Douglas Reynolds  
Stan & Jean Lubin  
Deborah Williams & Bruce Kennedy

### Spark \$250-\$499

### Forked Lightning \$500 - \$1,999

### Killer Watt \$2,000 - \$4,999

Mr. & Mrs. George & Carol Kerr  
Dr. Todd & Leslie Collier

### Thor: God of Thunder \$5,000 +

Anonymous

## And to

Duncan Low and VECC staff, Green Thumb Theatre, UBC Department of Theatre, Film & Creative Writing, Vancouver Playhouse, Studio 58, Brent Rossington, Marian Bantjes





PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes, I would like to become a:

☐ Member of the Electric Company  
& enclosed is my \$5 membership fee.

☐ Donor to the Electric Company  
I am enclosing the following amount : \$ \_\_\_\_\_

All donors receive opening night invitations.

Donations over \$20 will receive an Official Receipt for Income Tax Purposes.

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