

electroscope

ELECTRIC COMPANY THEATRE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER . OCTOBER 2004 . VOL 8 . ISSUE 1



9th season

Welcome to the Electric Company's 9th season!

Highlights from last season:

- + The Palace Grand, world premiere at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre as part of their 30th anniversary season
- + The Score, once a work of theatre now becomes a screenplay!
- + Wrote and directed the original version of Storyeum for Historical Xperiences, Gas-town, June 2004

Activities this season:

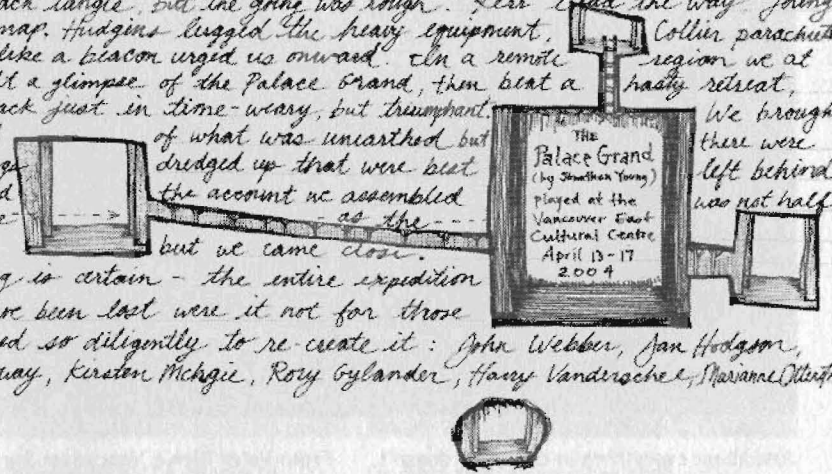
- + June 2004, we headed next door to Edmonton, Alberta with Brilliant! The Blinding Enlightenment of Nikola Tesla for the second annual Magnetic North Theatre Festival
- + The Score, in preproduction with Screen Siren Pictures Inc: shooting begins on November 1
- + Studies in Motion: The Hauntings of Eadweard Muybridge in development with Theatre at UBC
- + Publishing Brilliant! The Blinding Enlightenment of Nikola Tesla with Brindle & Glass: get your signed copy here!
- + Producing Manager, Cindy Reid, will attend Capacoa Conference, Edmonton, & CINARS, Montreal, November 2004



COVER PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

The Palace Grand

Was a departure for the company and yet we found ourselves in familiar terrain... Lost, uncertain, but driven to find a way through. Of course the same rules applied and we followed them out of each tangle, but the going was rough. Kerr lead the way. Young held the map. Hudgins lugged the heavy equipment. Collin parachuted in. Reid like a beacon urged us onward. In a remote region we at last caught a glimpse of the Palace Grand, then beat a hasty retreat, arriving back just in time-weary, but triumphant. We brought back most of what was unearthed but there were left behind. In the end the account we assembled as strange original but we came close. One thing is certain - the entire expedition would have been lost were it not for those who worked so diligently to re-create it: John Webber, Jan Hodgson, Rick Holloway, Kirsten Michie, Roy Gylander, Harry Vanderschuer, Marianne Olufson.



The Palace Grand received 8 Jessie Nominations for:

- + Outstanding Production
 - + Critics' Choice for Innovation
 - + Outstanding Direction: Kevin Kerr
 - + Outstanding Artistic Achievement in Video Design: David Hudgins
 - + Outstanding Sound Design: Kevin Kerr & Electric Company
- And received 3 Jessie Awards for:
- + Outstanding Performance by a lead actor: Jonathon Young
 - + Outstanding Set Design: John Webber & Jonathon Young
 - + Outstanding Lighting Design: John Webber

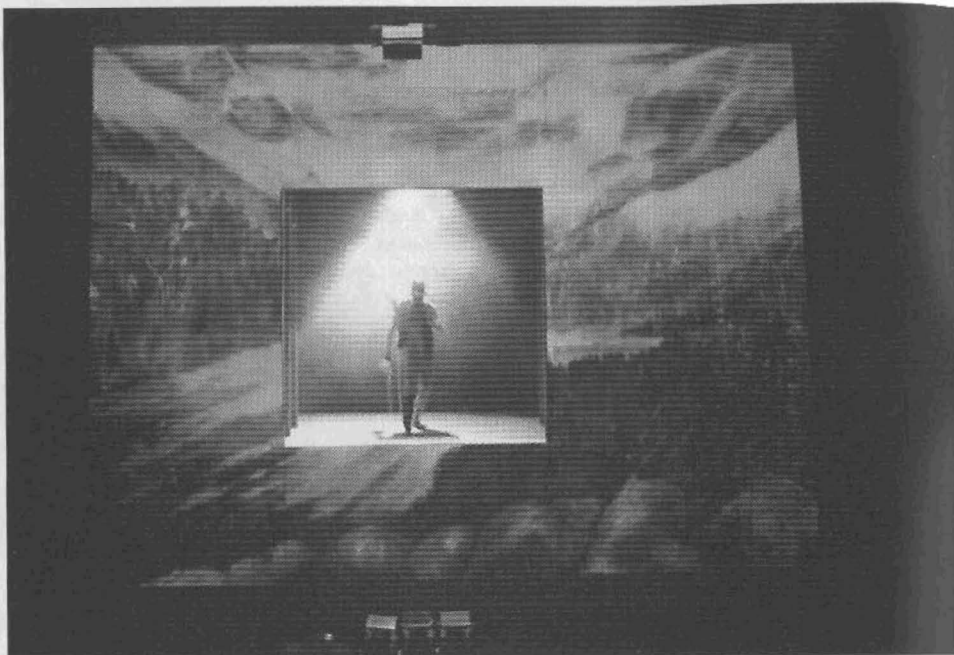
Congratulations to Jonathon & John and to all the dedicated & talented team!

Here are some samples from our Audience Feedback Box:

Very intense. Incredible ideas... wonderful flexibility from actor... great emotion

Absolutely amazed that one man on stage for an hour not saying anything could make me laugh cry and get completely lost in a wonderful story. Use of video was wonderful. Thank you so much!

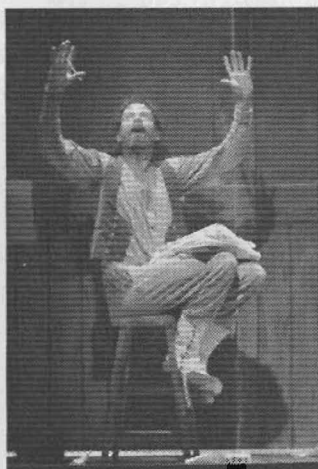
Fantastic! Brilliant! I'd show up to see you guys interpret the phone book. Thank you!



Just about everything in this show doesn't work. Only one image of the writing wrapping around his head was original and interesting. Two minutes out of 65! Terrible, terrible, terrible.

Truly inspiring work — what amazing images and phenomenal physical work. I admire the courage and vision that your company instills in our community.

From Colin Thomas, Georgia Straight:
It's no exaggeration to say that Young moves with the grace and precision of Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton.



From Peter Birnie, Vancouver Sun:
In a fantasy world where new Canadian productions were handed a chance to be reworked, The Palace Grand would evolve into a truly astonishing piece of physical theatre.

From Jo Ledingham, The Vancouver Courier:
It's a simple story, really, but the always-innovative Electric Company finds gold in that thar tundra.

From Alan Hindle, Terminal City:
... I am so inspired by this show I have vowed to create a play myself...

MAGNETIC NORTH BY NORTHWEST **BRILLIANT!** Goes to Edmonton



PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

What an absolute delight. A chance to perform one of our most beloved works for the good people of Edmonton—host to a fresh, new, national festival, teeming with professional artists and producers from across Canada! A chance to travel again with our beloved Cindy Reid, Adrian Muir and Jan Hodgson, to the nether regions of the earth. Thus our auspicious entrance into the **Magnetic North Theatre Festival**, which turned out very well indeed.

Night one. The friendly Edmontonians, including a fleet of incredible volunteers, meet us, greet us, and show us the town. These folks really made our stay wonderfully comfortable and productive. From our exciting opening night at the Citadel to the excellent hospitality of Catalyst, and other theatres, we took pride in representing our region by celebrating our vision with the many we saw, and the many dedicated individuals we met.

On night two, a computer malfunction nearly turned the play **Brilliant!** to **Rather Dark!** when the theatre lighting failed to go on after a scenic blackout. It was at the precise moment when Tesla is supposed to enlighten the laboratory with a demonstration of his high-voltage power. Jonathon covered brilliantly, improvising lines as if Tesla were fumbling in the dark to find the right switch. Minutes later, when the house lights came on, revealing the stage AND AUDIENCE, Tesla walked straight downstage and welcomed everyone into his laboratory. "Mr. Tesla," exclaimed Robert, played by Kevin, "I had no idea this would be a public display." After many more minutes of this, followed by an impromptu intermission, the audience was thrilled to watch the original scene, fuelled by the amazement at the feat of improvising they had seen without knowing anything was amiss! That night we reinforced a long-held theory: audiences love to be voyeurs... and



there's nothing more exciting than a train wreck!

Nights three to seven: As in every other city we've done the show, we encountered engineers, Tesla-philes, and Serbian patrons who cheered out loud whenever Tesla swore in his native tongue.

We were proud to meet many of the great artists of Canada who have stimulated us

with their words and performances, many who attended **Brilliant!** Being at Magnetic North allowed us to see several world-class productions of Canadian works which we shall cherish as some of our all time favourites.

We thank Mary Vingoe and Heather Redfern for their combined initiative to bring us east of the Rockies. Almost a decade after its debut, **Brilliant!** continues to stimulate neurons in brains across the country. Nay, across **THE WORLD!!**

From Liz Nicholls, Edmonton Journal:
Story of forgotten inventor crackles with energy

Brilliant! is.

It's consistently playful and fun to watch. And it's moving, too, to see the tragic dimension of genius, how precarious it is, how isolating, how close to madness, as Tesla comes up against the corporate infrastructure of the young country and finds it unexpectedly immovable.

THE SCORE on film

MEGAN LEITCH AS DR. LYNN MAGNUSSEN
PHOTO: TIM MATHESON



Suddenly we are making a film! It seems to have happened so fast! Last year we began to date Screen Siren Pictures Inc and after a short and sweet courtship, we were invited to work with them to adapt our play **The Score** into a film version for CBC's **Opening Night**.

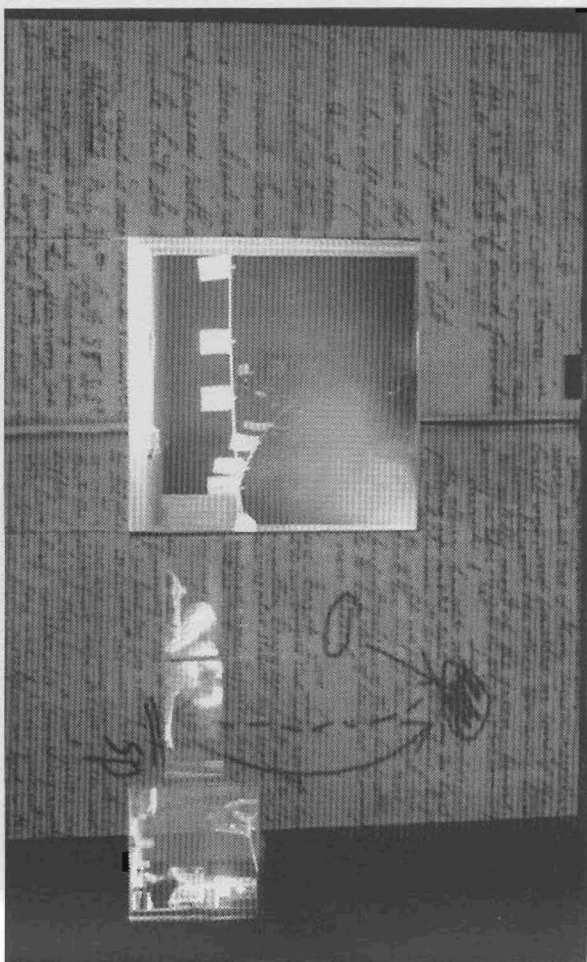
After a crash course in Screen Writing by the amazing Sioux Browning we hauled our play off the shelf and breathed new artistic life into it for this completely different medium. The question we are usually asked is "how much has it changed in the process?" The answer is, "a lot." Revisiting **The Score** has been a fantastic opportunity to build the existing conceptual ideas, narrative and characters into a stronger and more fulfilled story.

It was clear early in the process that we did not want **The Score** to look like the stage play being recorded on film, but that we wanted to take full advantage of working in film creatively. It has been an extremely exciting opportunity to tell the story relying more on visual pictures and less on the spoken word. The project now moves through multiple locations, our favorite being the curling rink!

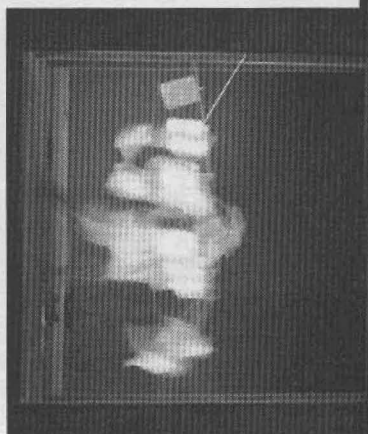
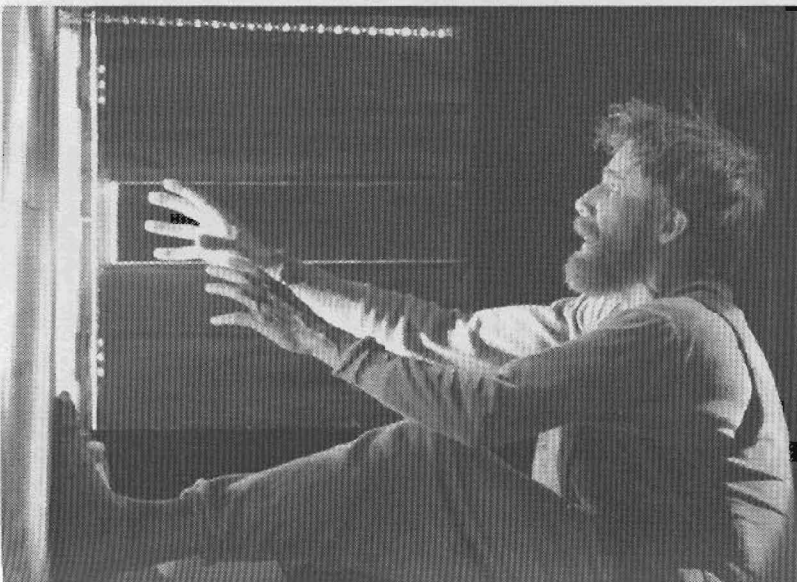
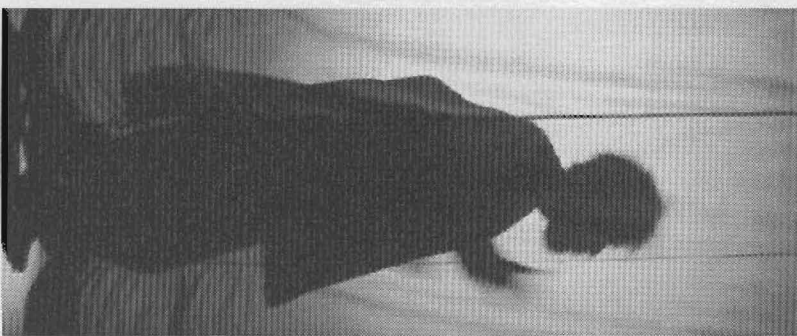
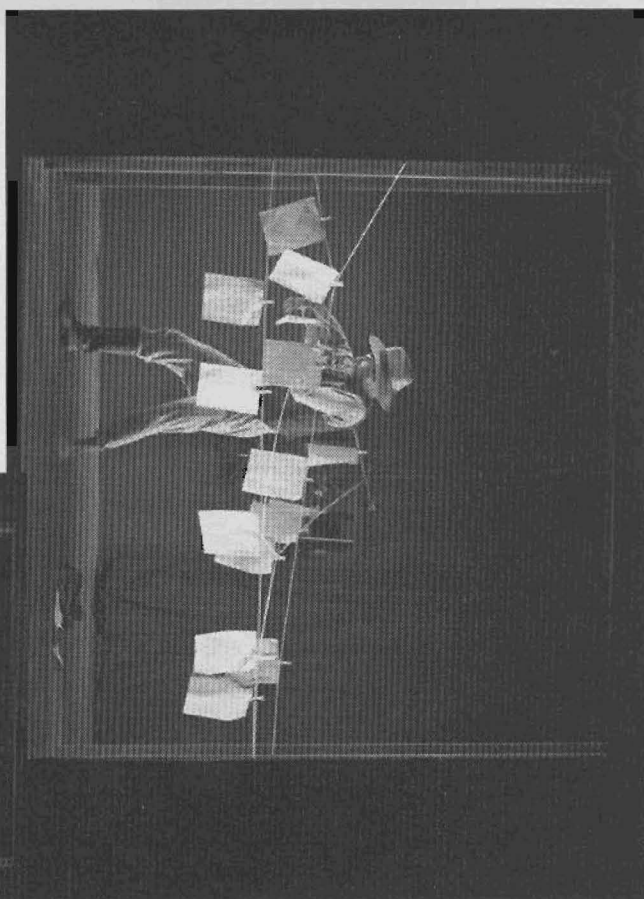
It has been a pleasure to revisit our friends at the Centre for Molecular Medicine & Therapeutics (CMMT). Dr. Michael Hayden, who heads the lab, originally commissioned the play in 1999. Once again the researchers at CMMT helped us study up on the latest breakthroughs providing invaluable technical feedback.

So now we are in preproduction. And yes we are directing the film. And you may be asking have we ever directed a film before? – No, Well then how about a short? – No. Picked up a video camera and made home movies? – Not really. But Kim did go on set for four days and to watch other people work, does that count?! But come to think of it, we had never directed for stage before, until we were in production, so why not film too?

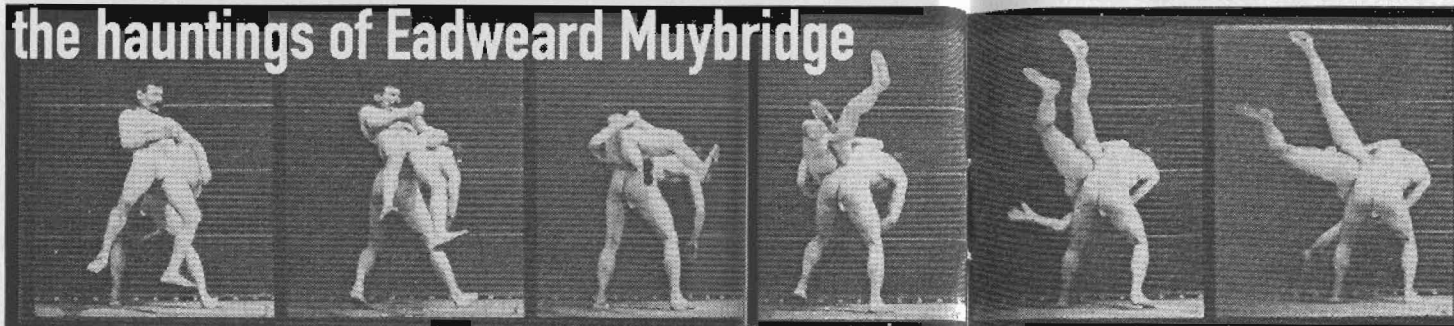
With the remarkable blessings and support of the Screen Sirens shooting will commence November 1 and the film should be completed in its entirety by June 1, 2005. Audiences will be able to view **The Score** next fall on CBC so please stay tuned! Lights, Camera – Action!!



PHOTOS: TIM MATHESON



In Development: STUDIES IN MOTION: the hauntings of Eadweard Muybridge



Men wrestling
Eadweard Muybridge

This season Electric Company teams up with Award-Winning Designer Robert Gardiner and Theatre at UBC for a series of physical and design-based workshops as we develop our latest play.

True to Electric Company form, we head into the secluded laboratory on that strange and stormy western promontory known as the University of British Columbia to explore the work of Eadweard Muybridge, the photographer that in his obsession to freeze time and capture the motion of the human body ended up creating the foundation of the motion picture.

And as Electric Company expands its

practice into feature film this season, it's more fascinating than ever to investigate the shadowy first frames of cinema.

The Story:

In 1885, in a compound at the University of Pennsylvania, surrounded by dozens of cameras, scores of nude models, domestic animals, and wild beasts, this famed photographer Eadweard Muybridge attempts to dissect time into fragments and expose a secret world within our gestures that until now has been hidden from our view.

On the surface Muybridge appears simply as an artist obsessed with his work. But cracks are beginning to show and demons

of jealousy, betrayal, and a past murder begin to invade the strange world of his motion studies.

The dead man that he gunned down, the young woman who died of grief, shame, and loneliness, and the baby that he abandoned are among the ghosts and memories that drive him to stop time and strip meaning from action.

The Workshop:

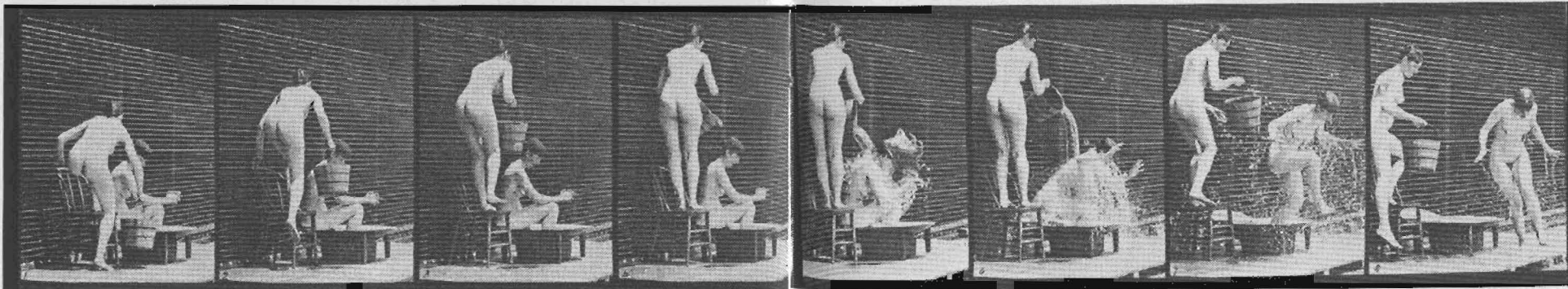
Starting with a sketch of the story, characters, and setting, we'll begin exploring the action of the play through the design elements. Projections, lighting, sound, and music will be layered with actors, text, and

gesture as we reconstruct the story from the found fragments of images and history.

Designer Robert Gardiner will attempt to push some of the limits of the current technology, and the process will make the design elements active players in the creation of the narrative.

Studies in Motion will premiere during the PuSh International Festival in 2006.

Woman emptying bucket of
water on seated companion
Eadweard Muybridge



GIFT WRAP THIS!

Brilliant!

The Blinding
Enlightenment
of Nikola Tesla

Electric Company

Are you like us in that you're already thinking ahead to those frenzied pre-Christmas shopping sprees? No doubt there's a "problem person" in your life who has it all. Well this year why not breakaway from the usual "links of spiced meat in a gift wrapped ceramic pot" solution? Why, we have just the thing:

In December 2004, **Brilliant! The Blinding Enlightenment of Nikola Tesla** will be available for the first time in a handsome soft cover edition. Yes, after 9 years, 5 separate productions and precisely 19,366 hours of writing and re-writing, **Brilliant!** is finally being published!

Through its many manifestations the pages of **Brilliant!** have been sliced open, dis-

emboweled, and stitched together so often it had become near as pretty as Frankenstein's bride. But in September our beloved monster went under the knife for the final time as we prepared her to meet the public in a brand new outfit.

Think of the smiles and nods as your "problem person" unwraps his own copy of this cherished classic. Imagine his delight as he spends the day plotting his very own production. This will certainly be a Christmas he will never forget. So why not **order your copy today?** Simply give us a call at the Electric Company, **604-253-4222** or contact our publishers: **Brindle and Glass** at **403-252-7632**. (And yes, we do bulk orders.)

Note: Large inflatable sphere/Serbian Accent/pigeon seed and AC/DC cassette tapes are not included.

One of Calgary's hottest independent publishing houses, **Brindle and Glass** also publishes the work of local theatre star T.J. Dawe. Find their web site and excellent on line magazine at www.brindleandglass.com

Order
your specially signed copy now!

Only \$16.95 + shipping & handling for
a total of **\$20.00** Cdn.

Please make cheque payable to
Electric Company Theatre Society

The Wedding of Kevin Kerr and Marita Dachsel

by Fanny McBride, ElectroScope's "Toast of the Town" Reporter



PHOTOS: TIM MATHESON

Friends, Romans, and Countrymen. Well, rather few Romans, really, but lots of country men, if you know what I mean. They were all there. Stetsons, leathers, chaps, the whole nine yards. Hanging round the bar, prowling round the corral, twirling their mustachios in the pale Victorian light of an antique oak dressing table, flirting with ladies twice their age whose hearts are not designed for that kind of agitation! Dear me, what a delicious time.

This was the ambience of the ever so charming wedding of Mr. & Mrs. Kerr. Or Kerr/Dachsel, what-have-you, I don't go in for these infernal double names anyway!!

"Set against the backdrop of gently rolling range country, and overlooking beautiful Nicola Lake, the century old Quilchena Hotel is located in the heart of one of British Columbia's largest working cattle ranches."

I'm such a sucker for charm charm charm,

and this place had oodles of it. Everything right down to the concierge was authentic. His accent—what was that (?), Swedish or Dutch, or something—was charming. The cute little restaurant with the doilies and the fine china—charming. Kevin and Marita scuttling about, plotting their procession in the mid-afternoon clouds of bloodsucking mosquitoes—how charming.

And of course, it was charming to be in a building older than I am and as well kept-up.

The night before the blessed event, the families and friends drew together in a rustic campsite nestled among the rolling hills. Decorum and pomp fell to the wayside, when the love-crazed couple stripped to their skivvies and plunged into the bounding main. Guests followed suit, and suits followed guests. Somehow, I found myself among them, bobbing in the waves, brief glimpses of Kevin and Marita laughing in the nurturing, calming waters. Made me think of the Ancients of Bath. As the winds picked up, howling down Nicola Lake, I ran for cover of the Hotel, where I knew a few well-timed nightcaps would keep me warm and toasty through the night.



THANK YOU

Individual donors, our Members, Duncan Low and VECC staff, Green Thumb Theatre, UBC Department of Theatre, Film & Creative Writing, Vancouver Playhouse, Studio 58, Brent Rossington, Dr. M. Hayden & staff at CMMT, Dr. Joanne Fox

TO DUNCAN LOW: Welcome back! We are happy you are next door again... Here's to exciting developments at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre over the next few years!

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
Department of Canadian Heritage
Celebration 2010
Province of British Columbia

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please support the Electric Company and join us for our annual general meeting that will be held on **Friday, October 22, 2004** at **7 pm** at the home of Cindy & Rory, to be followed by an evening gathering with food, wine and song.

Location:

5406 Bruce Street, between Knight & Victoria, just south of 37th Street.

Please **rsvp** to **604-253-4222**

Thank you!

OUR BOARD

Karen Berkhout President
Margaret Tom-Wing Secretary
Teresa Conway Treasurer
Linda Chinfen At Large
Margot Venton At Large

OUR STAFF

The Electric Company Theatre Society is:
Cindy 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 Financial Manager

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. 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.

NEEDED

Access to Translink
Storage Space
Volunteers
Etc.

MATCHING CAMPAIGN

Canadian Heritage Specialized Equipment Grant

Electric Company is a very fortunate recipient of a Canadian Heritage Specialized Equipment Grant that will cover 50% of the purchase of various sound, video and lighting equipment "...for use in producing live theatre productions so as to strengthen the Electric Company's capability to blend multimedia, audio and video with live theatre."

Thank you to our Donors so far: Margaret Tom-Wing & Anthony F. Ingram, Jane Ellison, Robert McQueen, Dawn Brennan, Megan Leitch, Bob Hudgins, the Kerrs, Uta Aja, the Youngs, Roberta Beiser, the de Verteulils, the Lonsdales, the Auerbachs, Nora Berkhout, DD Kugler, Teresa Conway & Patti Allan.

Help keep the Electric Company electric by donating to our **Specialized Equipment Campaign**.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes, I would like to become a:

- ☐ **Member of the Electric Company**
& enclosed is my \$5 membership fee.
- ☐ **Donor to the Specialized Equipment Campaign**
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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The Personal Information Protection Act governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by private sector and not-for-profit organizations in British Columbia. Electric Company respects your personal information and will not disclose information without your consent and does not rent, sell or trade mailing lists. The information you have provided will be used to deliver services and to keep you up-to-date with our activities. Activities include advising you of fundraising initiatives, programs, services, special events and performances. Thank you!

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PHOTO: TIM WATHESON

Jonathon Young, Kim Collier, Cindy Reid,
Kevin Kerr, David Hudgins

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