

electroscope



ELECTRIC COMPANY THEATRE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER . NOVEMBER 2005 . VOL 9 . ISSUE 1

10th anniversary season

Welcome to the Electric Company's 10th Anniversary season!

Activities this season

- + Brilliant! The Blinding Enlightenment of Nikola Tesla had its U.S. premiere at the San Jose Stage Company, June 1-26, 2005
- + The Score had its world premiere at the Vancouver International Film Festival & will be at the Puerto Vallarta Film Festival, Nov. 8 2005
- + Studies in Motion: The Hauntings of Eadweard Muybridge, a co-production with Theatre at UBC & PuSh, premieres at the 4th annual PuSh International Performing Arts Festival
- + Brilliant! The Blinding Enlightenment of Nikola Tesla will have its eastern Canadian premiere at the National Arts Centre, March 21-April 1, 2006

Highlights from last season

- + The Score became a film
- + Studies in Motion held workshops at Theatre at UBC
- + Attendance at Capacoa conference, Edmonton, & CINARS, Montreal, November 2004



COVER PHOTO OF ALLAN MORGAN BY TIM MATHESON

PHOTO OF STUDIES WORKSHOP BY TIM MATHESON

PHOTO: TIM MATHESON



STUDIES IN MOTION: The Hauntings of Eadweard Muybridge

An Electric Company creation co-produced
with Theatre at UBC & the PuSh Interna-
tional Performing Arts Festival
January 17-29, 2006,
Frederic Wood Theatre, UBC

he knew. As he scrambles to complete the
magnum opus of his life's work, the ratio-
nal scientist that Muybridge has attempted
to become, must face the naked animal that
remains inside him.

Studies in Motion is inspired by the life
and work of 19th century photographer
Eadweard Muybridge whose work in
instantaneous photography and exhaustive
studies in animal and human locomotion
would foretell the invention of the cinema.
The play, a physically and visually explosive
spectacle, explores themes of memory, iden-
tity, and the quest for meaning at the begin-
ning of our culture's obsession with the
image. In 1885 Muybridge embarks on an
exhaustive mission of cataloguing animal
movement and human gestures, stopping
and dissecting time and in doing so, reveals
a world invisible to the naked eye.

But as Muybridge pursues his obses-
sive documentation of bodies in motion, he
finds himself haunted by the ghosts of his
past actions; the man he killed, the child
he abandoned, and the woman he thought

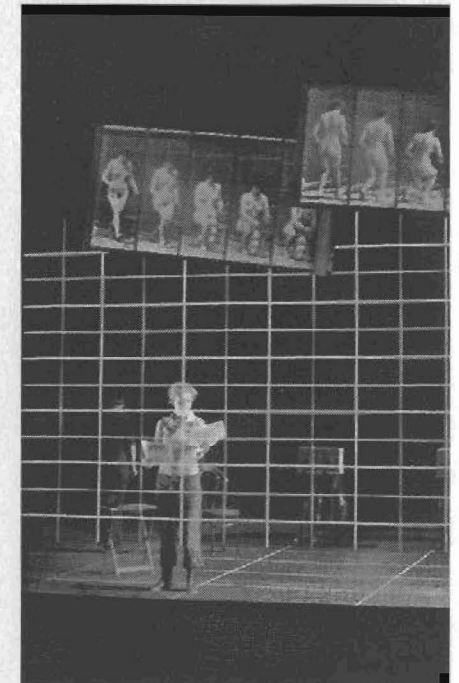


PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

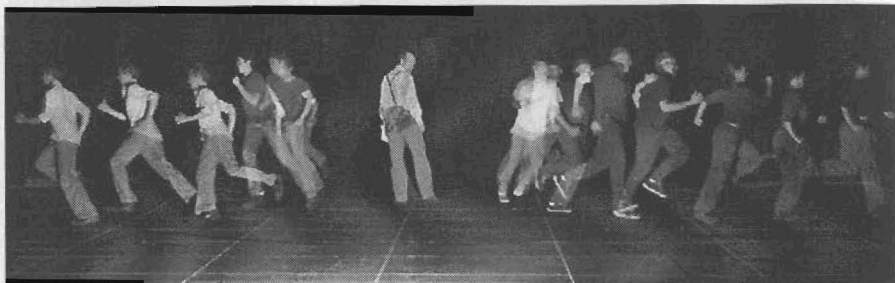


PHOTO: TIM MATHESON

Studies in Motion Workshop—April 2005

This past spring, as part of the development process of our new project, Electric Company experimented with its own **Studies in Motion, Light, Sound, and Performance**. Our thrilling collaboration with the University of BC allowed for a two week physical and design based dramaturgical exploration of the work in progress on stage at the Freddy Wood. Electric Company Members worked on stage with our brilliant design team and an acting company composed of seven Equity artists and four students.

The process allowed for the inspiration in design, staging, and performance to play an active role in the development of the narrative and text as well as an opportunity to try out some big ideas well in advance of production.

Coming in December: Internet Podcasts by Composer Patrick Pennefather which will explore the creation process of **Studies in Motion** with interviews, music, and samplings from the rehearsal room. Check out his website at www.expodradio.com in the near future. Also in January the original score to 'Studies in Motion' will be available on CD and on sale at the production.

Robert Gardiner provoked speculation that he might in fact be the reincarnation of Eadweard Muybridge as he delved into an exciting experiment in lighting with the use of two Digital Light Projectors, with which actors are lit with image, animation, and a seemingly unlimited versatility of shape and colour.

The workshop culminated in a public showing of 35 minutes of fully designed and staged scenes from the play followed by an informal discussion in the UBC shop and was attended by an invited house of approximately 50 people.

Equity Actors participating in the workshop: Patti Allan, Josh Epstein, Allan Morgan, Dawn Petten, Juno Ruddell, Andrew Wheeler, Jonathon Young
Photography: Tim Matheson

Creative Team for **Studies in Motion**

Writer: Kevin Kerr
Director: Kim Collier
Scenographer: Robert Gardiner
Costume Designer: Mara Gottler
Composer: Patrick Pennefather
Choreographer: Crystal Pite
Stage Manager: Jan Hodgson
Featuring: Patti Allan, Ryan Beil, Lara Gilchrist, Allan Morgan, Dawn Petten, Kyle Rideout, Joel Redmond, Juno Ruddell, Andrew Wheeler, Jonathon Young

BRILLIANT! at the San Jose Stage Company

Electric Company's tour of **Brilliant!** to the San Jose Stage Company was the result of our presence at the 2003 Edinburgh Fringe Festival where SJSC Associate Kevin Kennedy saw the production and thought it a good fit for San Jose audiences. In June of 2005 the company presented us for a four week run in their theatre as part of their season. The production marked Electric Company's debut in the U.S.A.

We arrived in San Jose on May 29 after a two week rehearsal period in Vancouver. (Yes we know this show better than we know our own mothers, but we needed to work in the fabulous Anthony F. Ingram <replacing David Hudgins> and had to adapt our staging for a thrust theatre. Okay?) On the 30th we began a generous three day tech at SJSC with the added luxury of three previews. Oh, that all touring schedules could be like this! Well-oiled, wigged, properly powdered and sporting the customary facial hair, we opened on June 4 to a boisterous full house.

The Silicon Valley is a hotbed of electrical engineers, tech gurus, and inventors many of whom have long revered Tesla as a heroic figure. Never have we played to audiences so tuned in to this story and its enigmatic central character. Come to think of it, never have we played to so many enigmatic characters. Most post-show discussions were less about the finer points



Tesla takes a break

of our performance (our preferred topic), than about the virtues of Tesla's zaniest theories, his extraterrestrial experiences and the FBI conspiracy against him. Highlights included frequent post-show demonstrations by the San Jose Historical Society of a "Tesla Coil", a device used to step up voltage in electrical current. Each time the coil was plugged

in it generated enough electricity to black out any TV and radio signals within a four block radius of the theatre.

The excitement generated by this fusion of science and theatre brought new audiences to the SJSC and expanded the potential for future tour bookings for Electric Company. One interesting contact was writer Nebojsa Petrovacki, who wrote an article on **Brilliant!** for Gloria, a leading lifestyle magazine in Serbia. It has always been a goal of ours to bring **Brilliant!** to Serbia, the birthplace of Tesla and where he is still a national hero.

Thank you to everyone at San Jose Stage Company who made our first foray into the U.S. a wonderful experience. As always, deep gratitude to Adrian & Jan for making this tour successfully smooth. And last but not least, thank you to all our funders and donors whose financial contributions helped to make this tour possible, with particular thanks to Foreign Affairs Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Kovaliks.



The Score had its world premiere on October 1, 2005 at the Vancouver International Film Festival and was voted one of the most popular Canadian films and one of the Georgia Straight's top ten picks. If you missed The Score at the Festival, please keep an eye out for its television premiere on CBC's Opening Night.

Interview with Screen Siren Pictures' Producer Trish Dolman, September 25, 2005

Why were you interested in working with Electric Company?

I had seen a number of Electric Company's plays and was introduced to them personally by a friend, Brent Calkin. I was impressed by the innovation and lo-fi visual effects so we approached them to adapt a play for the screen.

Was it a big risk, or was it scary for you as a producer to be working with Theatre Artists?

No. I'm really proud of the risks we took on The Score. It's always a risk to work with a 1st time director for the screen, but one we enjoy as producers and Kim and ECT

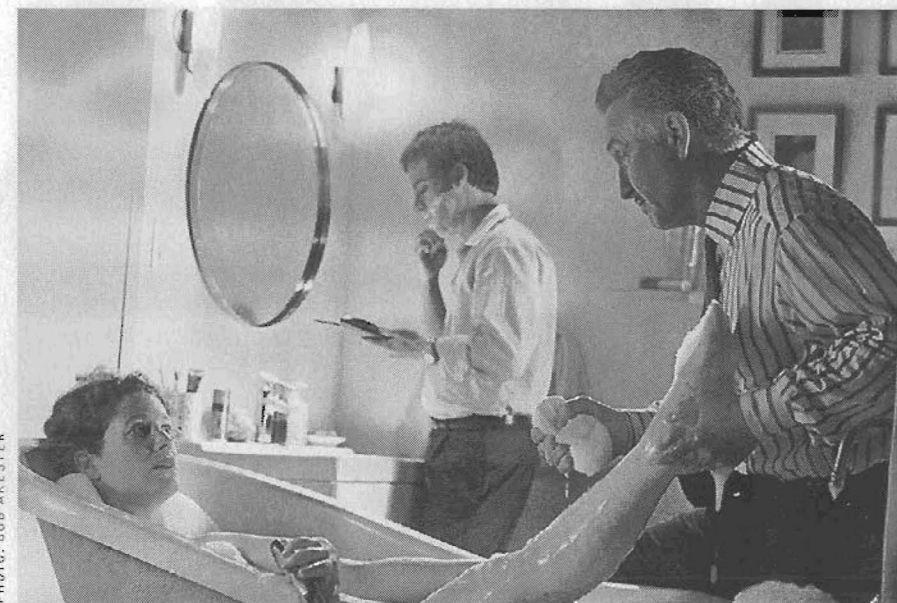
Above: Kevin McNulty
Below: Trish Dolman



had lots of experience. I'm also committed to working with women directors.

You seem very daring as a producer, what things need to be in place for you to tackle a project and what inspires you?

I like to tackle projects that are personally



Above: Jane Perry, JR Bourne, Tom Butler
Right: Kim Collier

interesting to me, that inspire me and that I want to spend several years working on. So I'm either looking at the subject, the people involved, the script or all of the above.

Did you find the process similar to your other projects, or were there things about this production that were unique?

The collaborative nature of ECT is unique. Often in film a director may write, direct and fulfill many roles, but in this case there were four people fulfilling a number of roles. I had never produced a musical before or one with so many visual effects.

We had some just insane shooting days on The Score, is there any particular day or moments that stood out for you?

The train day was the hardest. The musical numbers were incredibly fun. Seeing what



everyone did with so little money was great. I'm really proud of all the work done. Kim is stoic.

What projects do you have coming up that are very exciting for you?

Several new feature films: the second feature by Keith Behrman, Sook Yin Lee's first feature and a number of docs.

THE SCORE PARTY

PHOTOS BY WESTON TRIEMSTRA

Go to www.thescorethemovie.com for more pictures, info & trailer

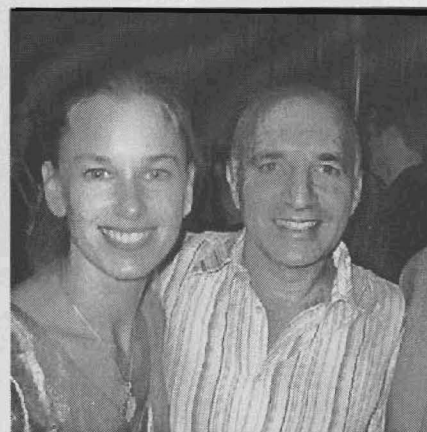
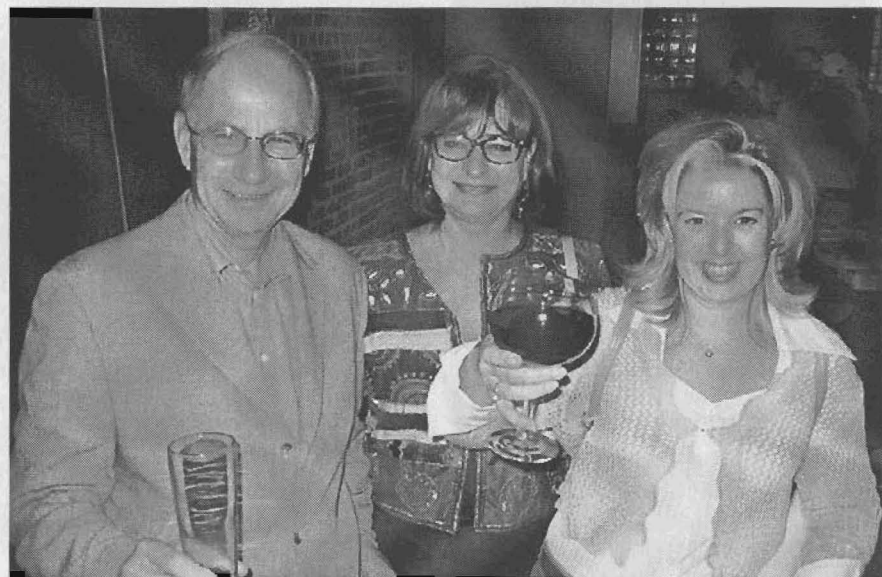


Above Left: Kevin McNulty

Above Right: Peter Allen

Right: Lois Anderson & Trish Dolman

Below: Alan Winter & Linda Bartz, Genome BC,
Anie Perrault, Genome Canada

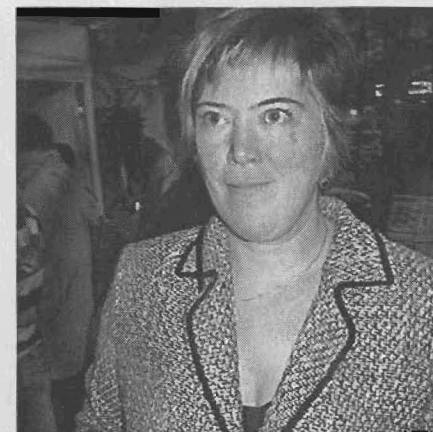


Above Left: Kim Collier & Michael Hayden, CMMT

Above Right: Cindy Reid

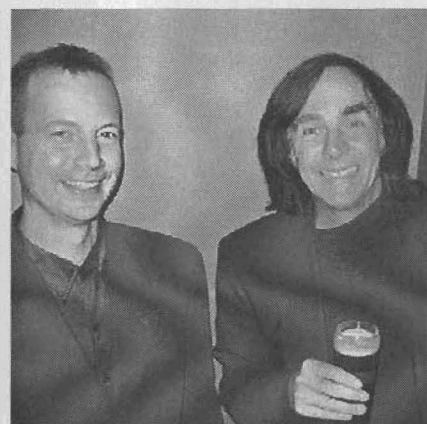
Right: Kim Collier & fans

Below: Kim Collier & Jonathon Young



Below Left: David Hudgins & Peter Allen

Below Right: Leah Mallen



Brilliant! is published



PHOTO: JOCYLYN MCDOWELL

This time last year, our play **Brilliant! The Blinding Enlightenment of Nikola Tesla** was published by Brindle and Glass—a small publishing house out of Calgary. To celebrate we had “High Tea” at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre on April 17, 2005. At this extremely civilized occasion we were thrilled to have three local theatre critics read scenes from the play: **Peter Birnie** as Robert Underwood Johnson, **Jerry Wasserman** as Nikola Tesla, and **Jo Ledingham** as Katherine Underwood Johnson. We followed their performances with an irreverent critique of their work:

And now filling in for Jerry Wasserman in the **Province**:

“They call the script a Canadian Classic, but I have to take exception as I have yet to see it anthologized in any one of the 40 editions of the multi-volume set of “modern Canadian drama”—and until we find it next to “Doc” or “1837: The Farmers Revolt” I’m unconvinced as to its ultimate relevance on the Canadian landscape. The production was barebones, but there was

David, Jonathon, Kevin & Kim thank everyone who has ever worked on **Brilliant!** over the years—Thank you!

magic in the performances. Wasserman brings a cinematic naturalism to the role of Tesla that made me think the Serbian inventor was explaining his theories to the crime squad on **DaVinci’s Inquest**. And speaking of Coroners – no one does dead-pan like the curious coupling of Peter Birnie and Jo Ledingham.”

Filling in for Peter Birnie in **The Sun**:

Well the review is a bit long so we’ll use the handy “At A Glance” sidebar offered in **The Sun**, because, really who has time for in depth critical analysis in the arts?

Big Picture: Local Critics take to the stage to get the job done right once and for all.

General Appeal: Undeniable sexual chemistry between Peter Birnie and Jo Ledingham and between Jo and Jerry and between... well you get the point—is this what they mean by media monopoly?

For the Connoisseur: Birnie’s chame

PHOTO: JOCYLYN MCDOWELL



Above: Karen Berkhout, Margaret Tom-Wing, Cindy Reid, Azra North Young, Hannah Happeney, Elaine Conway, Phoebe Collier Conway, Kirsten McGhie, Fergus Conway Collier

PHOTO: JOCYLYN MCDOWELL



Left: Peter Birnie, Jerry Wasserman, Jo Ledingham

leon-like transformation from endearing absent-minded professor type to endearing absent-minded actor type.

Best Moment: Peter’s Hair

Worst Moment: Hot tea in my lap as I chuckled and guffawed my way through his performance—and then there were the funny bits!!

Running Time: Who cares? I can’t get enough of this ironic post-modern exercise!

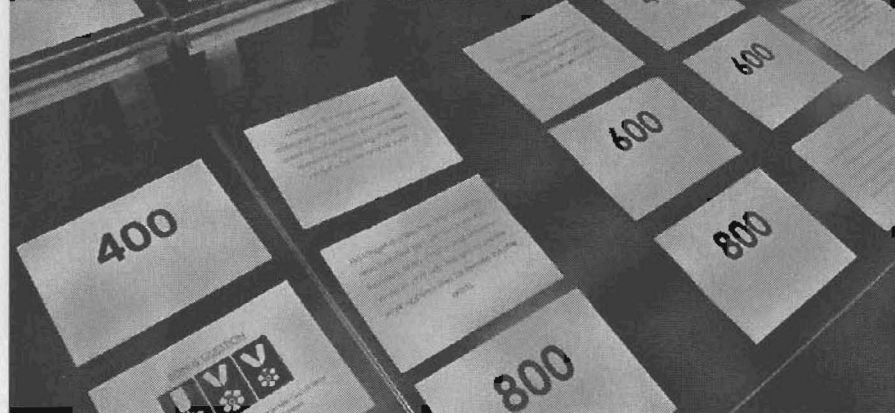
Filling in for Jo Ledingham in the **Courier**:

Jo Ledingham is undeniably one of the most emotionally honest and intellectually fierce critics in the city—thankfully she brought none of these qualities to her performance as Katherine, but instead

chose to provide a decidedly understated approach to the role. Her reading of “oh what’s the occasion” was clearly a homage to Wendy Noel’s performance in the 1994 production of **Lion in the Streets**. And her physical work was a definite nod to Bernard Cuffling’s artistry in **Krapp’s Last Tape**. Should the play be remounted again, I think we have found the new Katherine—which means I’ll be on the beach having a cocktail. Thanks Jo!!

Electric Company gave readings as well and even provided some tap dancing! Thank you to our special musical guest Bill Costin and to our board, who hosted the event serving lovely treats and delicious tea. **Thank you to those who celebrated with us!**

PROGRESS LAB '06

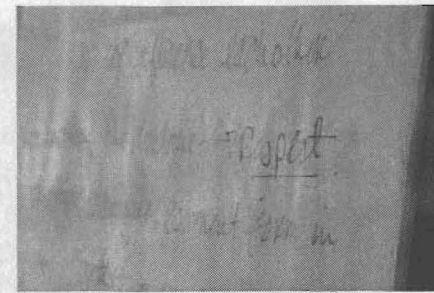
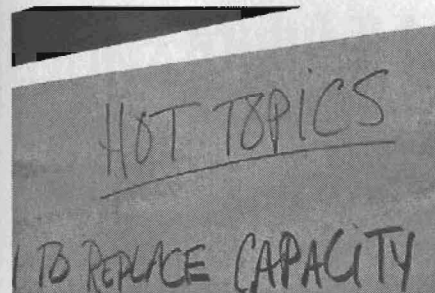
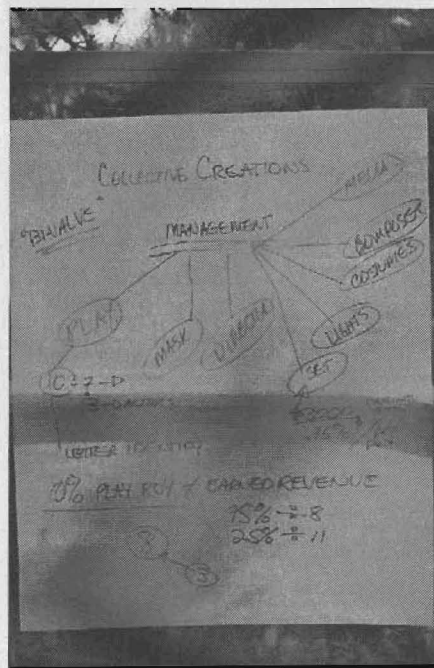


PHOTOS: TIM MATHESON

A few years back Electric Company spearheaded an initiative called **Progress Lab**—a five day session where some of Vancouver's creation based companies met to brainstorm and discuss working methods. On September 24 a group of us met again at Kim and Jonathon's house for what proved to be an exceptionally good party. Here's the schedule of events as was emailed to all participants:

- 6:00 Greetings, updates and evenings hot topic list proposed and selected
- 6:30 roundtable hot topic one
- 7:00 roundtable hot topic two
- 7:30 drinks, visiting, snacks and chatting
- 8:00 roundtable hot topic three
- 8:30 visiting, drinks, snacks and chin wagging into a dinner event
- 9:30 continue shooting the shit over dessert—perhaps a hot topic
- 10:00 a fine selection of scotch emerges from everyone's bags, much excitement, more fun.
- 10:30 suddenly Jon is dancing, Maiko is singing and we are all solving all the problems of the world

- 11:00 Ami leads the knicky knicky nine doors around the neighborhood and David Hudgins is making obscene phone calls
- 11:30 Camyar declares Oban the finest scotch in the world and we all cheer



12:00 everyone toasts everyone and everyone kisses everyone and we lose track of time

...And here is the response received from Kevin Kerr via "La Mission" Hotel in Kelowna:

Kim, Jon—that sounds fantastic and I've already made a formal petition to Oxford to include your e-mail under the dictionary definition of "Progress".

I hope you all can make it and stick to the agenda.

Sadly, I will still be in Kelowna at the time of the event (working on a project for Sunshine Theatre who, incidentally, founded **Progress Lab** back in 1962); But I guarantee to be participating in the following manner via long-distance:

- 6:00 Greet myself in the mirror, vocal warm-up, solo mask work
- 6:30 Make a model of the Vancouver theatre ecology out of instant mashed potatoes
- 7:00 Channel surf in hotel room and record a "snap shot" of popular culture; discuss with front desk clerk
- 7:30 Call Linda Quibell in her room and request that my copy of **Seneca's Dirty Joke Collection** (in the original Latin) be returned immediately

8:00 Discussion Break Out: "If the site is specific, does the play need to be?"
—Guest panelist: the Panago Pizza Delivery Boy

8:30 Eat pizza in the bathtub

9:30 Pretend Kelowna is in a different time zone: start scotch tasting half-hour ahead of you suckers

10:00 Read bible to see if money was left in it by generous Christians—if so, beer run.

10:30 Sketch a picture from memory of Jamie Long riding a camel

11:00 Turn various "Do Not Disturb Signs" around to "Please Make Up Room"—giggle. Stand by wearing only my underwear to receive obscene phone call from Hudgins.

11:30 Make cut out dolls of Sherry J. Yoon and Rachel Ditor and use them to act out "the jokey bits" from **My Dinner With Andre**

12:00 make toast holding Wonder Bread over stove top element. Shave legs. Call front desk for wake up call at 5:30 am. Give Linda Quibell's room number.

12:30 cry myself to sleep because I'm missing the most Whimsical Theatre Event of the Season!!

Much love to you all.

From somewhere in the interior,
Kevin

Other activities: past & future

- + Board Member **Teresa Conway** stepped down this season—a big thank you to Teresa for her tremendous support and contribution over the last two years.
- + Jonathon attended **Harbourfront's Flying Solo Festival** in Toronto.
- + Kevin discovered a converted Bank of Montreal building somewhere north of Toronto when he attended the **Siminovitch playwriting master class**.
- + David & his lovely wife Julie welcomed a second addition to their family: Evan; David was also welcomed as the new Associate Director at **Studio 58**—Congratulations on both major accomplishments David!
- + Cindy received a special treat when she was invited to participate in the **British Council's Edinburgh Showcase '05**.
- + **Brilliant!** will be presented at the National Arts Centre, March 21–April 1, 2006—please tell all your Ontario friends and family!
- + Kevin Kerr was writer in residence at Green College, UBC and the National Theatre School, Montreal.
- + And look for a PARTY—this is Electric Company's 10th anniversary and we are in the thick of planning our 10th birthday party—goody bags, streamers and all! Look for more information in the near future.

2004–05 Donors

Candle Power \$20–99

Jane Ellison, Pamela Hawthorn, Sandra Head, Jean Gylander, Sam & Marilyn deVerteuil

Volt \$100–249

Linda Chinfen, Jane Heyman, Kevin Kerr, Terry & Joan McQuillan, Jenna Newman, Carol Robertson, Kathryn Shaw

Forked Lightning \$500–1.999

Karen Berkhout, Sheila Collier, Teresa Conway, Robert Hudgins

Killer Watt \$2,000–4.999

George & Carol Kerr, Joe & Nancy Kovalik

2005–06 Donors (so far)

Candle Power \$20–99

Kendra Fanconi, Pam Johnson, Jennifer Lord, Pat Parsons

Volt \$100–249

Jan Hodgson, Gayle Murphy

Spark \$250–499

Cindy Reid & Rory Gylander

Forked Lightning \$500–1.999

Robert Hudgins

Thank you!



PHOTO: ELIZABETH HUDGINS

David Hudgins & Family:
Julie McGeer, Sophie & Evan

THANK YOU to our Board of Directors, Members, Duncan Low & the VECC staff, Green Thumb Theatre, UBC Department of Theatre, Film & Creative Writing, Screen Siren Pictures Inc., Vancouver Playhouse, Studio 58, Brent Rossington, PuSh International Performing Arts Festival, Marian Bantjes

THANK YOU to our Funders: Canada Council for the Arts, British Columbia Arts Council, Province of British Columbia, Spirit of BC, City of Vancouver, Vancouver Foundation, Melusine Foundation, Hamber Foundation, Koerner Foundation, Department of Canadian Heritage, Foreign Affairs Canada

SPECIAL NEEDS:

Board Members with expertise in accounting & fundraising
Special event volunteers

OUR BOARD

Karen Berkhout, President
Mitch Anderson, Vice President
Linda Chinfen, Treasurer
Margaret Tom-Wing, Secretary
Margot Venton, At Large

OUR STAFF

Cindy Reid, Producing Manager
Kim Collier, Co-Artistic & Managing Director
David Hudgins, Co-Artistic Director
Kevin Kerr, Co-Artistic & Managing Director
Jonathon Young, Co-Artistic Director & Managing Director
Linda Gorrie, Financial Manager

OUR MANDATE

Rooted in physical and visual imagery the award winning Electric Company is Kim Collier, David Hudgins, Kevin Kerr, and Jonathon Young who have united to form a collective theatre company at the forefront of Vancouver's most innovative and exciting theatre. 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.

DONATION & 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 : \$ _____
Donations over \$20 will receive an Official Receipt for Income Tax Purposes,
an opening night invitation and a lifetime membership.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Province: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

e-mail: _____

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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Resident company at the
Vancouver East Cultural Centre



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