



TOTTERING **BIPED** theatre



First Dance

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Dear Presenter,

'First Dance' comes after years of preparation for the show itself as well as the approach we took in creating the show. Of the 150+ PACT members, only 4 are in a suburban area like us; yet 50% of Canadians live in suburbia. Why?

Most PACT theatres live in major urban centres or tiny towns; the vast majority do not create work for the CCI network. The CCI network presents but doesn't produce in suburban and small town areas. How can the CCI network program professional contemporary Theatre when *no one is specifically creating theatre for them?*

With this gap in mind, 'First Dance' was created. I have been creating theatre professionally for over ten years and I have ideas, aesthetics, approaches, social and spiritual beliefs that I insert in all my work – as do many professional artists. What is unique is that I have also spent this year personally meeting with Warren Garrett, Cheryl Ewing, Cameron Smilie, as well as venue managers such as Brenda Heatherington, Ken Coulter, Jayson Duggan and Jamie Grant to understand *from the presenter's point of view* how 'straight' theatre and CCI network houses can best mix. **This piece was created to be:**

- Tour friendly.** Straightforward set up allows us same day in and out tech times to respect the quick turnaround needed for effective CCI network touring.
- Affordable.** We are new in the block and that inevitably implies a risk for the presenter. We are priced to encourage you to take that risk.
- Marketable.** This is Ballroom-Dance Theatre. It has a couple of award winning Ballroom/Latin dancers in it. Get them in the door on the wave of popularity that Ballroom dance is enjoying – and on which we deliver – and keep them coming back with a piece that is as moving and important a play as it is enjoyable.
- Risk tolerable.** Many pieces with homosexual themes are shocking to non-urban centre audiences. 'First Dance' deals with its gay marriage content in ways that are tasteful while still clear and honest.
- Flexible.** Intimate scenes and Latin dance shows off well in studio spaces, the ballroom sequences fill out the Mainstages. We'll accommodate virtually any space.
- Long Term.** This show is the first of many pieces our company will create with a vision to make theatre and CCI presenters an easy match. We don't want to be a one-off; we want to develop a relationship that deepens both our abilities to serve the audience.

You originally got into this business because of the feeling that theatre can change the world. We have put together one of those plays that does exactly that. In the words of one of your peers after seeing the production:

"FIRST DANCE is a wonderful play that I have been unable to forget. A uniquely Canadian story about love and marriage that is thought-provoking. Your audiences are intelligent enough to tackle this topic -- which is handled with class and care in this production."

- Jamie Grant, former Executive Director, Centre in the Square

All the best,

Trevor Copp
Founding Artistic Director, Tottering Biped Theatre



TOTTERINGBIPEDtheatre

Tottering Biped Theatre ('TBT') was founded in 2008 as the first professional theatre in the Burlington area. TBT focuses on contemporary works with social issue themes, and emphasizes highly physical and Canadian devised theatre. TBT is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres.

The name of the company was inspired by a study on human movement, P. Tobias' "Man, the Tottering Biped." Tobias' theme is that, in terms of evolution and the body, humans have not actually completed the process of being fully 'bipedal' or two-legged. We are in mid-process, transitioning, incomplete; we are structurally premature to execute the basic motor functions of living.

It's a thought that is compelling in its total relevance: everything we know is in mid-process. Nothing about our identities, relationships, and ways of being are fixed, complete, or reliable— we live in the world of 'becoming.'

This is a theatre devoted to evolving.





Production Overview

Three months after gay marriage becomes legal in Canada, a man prepares to marry his male partner. He enlists the help of his friend and professional dance partner to help him devise the traditional first dance. Their journeys to adulthood as gay men are explored as they set about creating a dance for a ritual that has no history.

About 'First Dance'

In 2008 Lisa O'Connell, Artistic Director of Pat the Dog Playwright Centre (Ontario's professional play development centre), attended a small LGTB oriented performance festival and saw Trevor Copp and Jeff Fox, two male champion ballroom dancers, demonstrate 'Liquid Lead'. It's a unique evolution of Ballroom they developed in which the lead and follow switches seamlessly throughout the dance; a form that they viewed as more in keeping with a modern relationship of give and take as opposed to the classic male/lead female/follow formula.

Lisa felt that the performance was so innately theatrical and thought provoking that it needed to become a full piece. All three met over the course of a year while Lisa interviewed Trevor and Jeff and they spoke of their experiences as gay adolescents, ballroom dancers, and friends. These interviews became the raw material for 'First Dance'. It was read at the Magnetic North Play Series and then again at Tottering Biped Theatre. A year later, Neruda Productions in Waterloo and Tottering Biped Theatre presented the play.

The play takes the creation of a First Dance as its launching point into story. Rituals of masculinity – shaving, childhood games, tying a tie, life at camp, marriage – are recalled and remixed into scenes and dance. One character shaves the other's face while waltzing, a Tango is performed to the tying of a necktie, WWF wrestlers emerge from childhood, and life at camp is all brought into the focus through the advent of marriage.

Production of

Tottering Biped Theatre

Mailing: 912-360 Torrance St. Burlington, Ontario L7R 2R9

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First Dance



Created by: Trevor Copp, Jeff Fox,
Lisa O'Connell

Number of Actors: 2

Total on Tour: 4

Language: English

Length: 1:20



TOTTERING **BIPED** theatre

First Dance

Production Overview

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

...gives the marvel to marvelous ... repeated scores of thrilling moments, arousing last night's audience to emotional gasps and joyous bursts of explosive laughter.
- *Tom Mackan, View Magazine*

They move with considerable style, grace, strength and precision... a sparkling gem that needs little polishing.
- *Dennis Smith, Burlington Post*

The audience floats from nostalgic to the deepest level of hardship in the deepest kind of bond. In the end... the most important message isn't about the politics of the gay identity. It is about love.
- *T.M. Chartrand, Urbanely Urbane*

FIRST DANCE is a wonderful play that I have been unable to forget. A uniquely Canadian story about love and marriage that is thought-provoking. Your audiences are intelligent enough to tackle this topic -- which is handled with class and care in this production.
- *Jamie Grant, former Executive Director of the Centre in the Square*



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TOTTERING **BIPED** theatre

First Dance

Tottering Biped Theatre's *First Dance*
TECHNICAL RIDER
Version: September 2011

Set Description and Masking

DESCRIPTION

First Dance needs a stage that

- is at least 15x20 feet
- has an off-stage area with an actor's entrance on either side of the stage

TO BE PROVIDED BY ENGAGER:

- an 8ft metallic step ladder
- a small cart on wheels that can support the weight of an actor
- prop tables on stage left and right

TO BE PROVIDED BY THE COMPANY:

- all remaining sets and props





TOTTERING **BIPED** theatre

First Dance

Video

TO BE PROVIDED BY ENGAGER:

- an LCD projector

TO BE PROVIDED BY THE COMPANY:

- projection screen
- a USB key with the video montage

Lighting

FOR A STUDIO STAGE:

- 18- 36 degree source four
- 8 -6" fresnels
- 4 8 foot booms

Instrument count may vary depending on grid height.

SET UP TIME:

Given that there is a prehang of lights, 8 hours of technical time:

3 hrs focus
2.5 hrs levels
2.5 hrs tech



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Sound

TO BE PROVIDED BY ENGAGER:

- sound system (including CD player), sound board, and speakers
- wiring to connect sound from laptop to the sound board

TO BE PROVIDED BY THE COMPANY:

- House Music CD
- Show CD

The Company

The Company consists of 2 of actors, stage manager, and lighting designer, Total of 4.

TO BE PROVIDED BY ENGAGER:

- video operator

TO BE PROVIDED BY THE COMPANY:

- all others





TOTTERING **BIPED** theatre

First Dance

Load-In/Set Up Specs

- Show takes 8 hours to load in and set up

Strike/Pack

- Show takes 1 hour to strike

Contact Us

If your venue or event presents any unique challenges please contact us to discuss options and alternatives.

We look forward to speaking with you!

Trevor Copp, Artistic Director
artisticdirector@totteringbiped.ca



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