



TOTTERING **BIPED** theatre



First Dance

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Dear Presenter,

'First Dance' comes after years of preparation, conscious and otherwise. Jeff and I (the two performers of the piece) had been dancing together for about 10 years, we have been meeting with our co-creator Lisa for 2 years, in 2010 we had 2 readings of the piece at the Magnetic North Festival and Tottering Biped Theatre, and in 2011 we had our major workshop performances. All this still did not prepare us for the overwhelming response to the play.

The play has proven to be a rare balance: critically strong and still popular on a wide scale; significant in the dialogue about gay identity and gender in culture and yet marketable. We have received as much critical praise from the urban indy theatre crowd as from the 'I think I get this gay thing better now' first timers. We have found a formula to preach to the converted and the uninitiated.

In the course of our long rehearsal arc, we realized that this was a piece we wanted to have a long life. For that reason it was designed to tour from its inception. This piece is:

- Tour friendly.** Straightforward set up allows us to do same day in and out tech times to respect the quick turnaround often needed 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.
- Socially Responsible:** Questions of gender and gay identity are at the heart of this play and key questions to our company's values. The play aims to move us forward in our cultural and emotional responses to the issues raised by current issues like gay teen suicide, gay marriage, and gender roles in Canada.
- 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:** We aren't a one-off; we want to develop a relationship that deepens both our abilities to serve the audience. We have a long life ahead and we want you to be a part of all of it.

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. We'd love to prove to you.

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

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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



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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

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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
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