

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Harbourfront Centre's HATCH: *emerging performance projects 2010* Presents a Theatrical Open Source Staging of Canadian Civil Rights Narratives

TORONTO, ON (February 23, 2010) – Harbourfront Centre is excited to present Praxis Theatre's *Section 98*, an interactive work-in-progress on civil rights in Canada. The collective creation, directed by **Michael Wheeler**, Praxis Co-Artistic Director and Tarragon Theatre Director-in-Training, invites the audience to interact with and inform the artistic product. This open source creative model will solicit audience feedback and participation prior, during and following the presentation, through **praxistheatre.com**, voted #1 Cultural Blog in Canada by the 2009 Canadian Blog Awards.

Section 98 seeks an immediate relationship with the here and now by drawing inspiration from forms of political theatre of the past and juxtaposing them with the present day. Inspired by the Living Newspaper theatrical style made popular New York City as part of the Depression-era Federal Theatre Project, the production focuses on 1930s Communist theatre artists in Toronto, 1970s FLQ activists in Montreal, and reserves a portion of the performance to concern contemporary civil rights issues.

"The HATCH program is ideal for a work in this stage of the creation process" said Wheeler. "There is no other opportunity in Toronto to experiment with complex ideas and concepts mid-process with a full array of technical tools and support. We're quite excited to see which elements resonate and integrate with a live audience."

Led by groundbreaking feminist Jean "Jim" Watts, the Progressive Arts Club creates political drama in Depression-era Toronto. The group are pervasive agitators - at one point their sold-out protest play about the imprisonment of Communist Party leader Tim Buck, *Eight Men Speak*, is shut down by personal authorization of Conservative Prime Minister R.B. Bennett. During the FLQ crisis, Carole de Vault goes from being a FLQ collaborator to an RCMP mole. We experience the effects of The War Measures Act through her transformation and a series of first person interviews with a variety of Quebecers.

Section 98 is designed to allow each iteration of the production to insert material that considers contemporary civil rights questions occurring at the time of performance. In this workshop Praxis Theatre will be exploring the testimony given to the Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan November 25th, 2010 as well as civil rights issues that come to light following the exhaustion of a billion dollar security budget for the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver.

Harbourfront Centre is pleased to present *Section 98*, by Praxis Theatre in the **Studio Theatre** on **March 13, 8 p.m.** Tickets are **\$12** or **\$10** for students, seniors and arts workers and are available by phone at **416-973-4000** or through **www.harbourfrontcentre.com/hatch**. The performance will be followed by an artist Q & A.

Praxis Theatre is the Toronto-based award-winning indie theatre company behind *Stranger*, *Dyad*, *Steel and The Master* and *Margarita*. This production invites you to participate with your cell phone or PDA during the presentation, and online before or after the performance at praxistheatre.com.

Section 98

A work-in-progress presented by Praxis Theatre Created in collaboration with Michael Wheeler, Director; Laura Nordin, Assistant Director; Verne Good, Sound and Lighting Designer; Aislinn Rose, Script and Open Source Coordinator; Brittney Filek-Gibson, Stage Coordinator; and Margaret Evans, Melissa Hood, Greta Papageorgiu, David Tompa, and Alex Fallis, Performers.

About HATCH: emerging performance projects at Harbourfront Centre

Entering its seventh year, the HATCH residency and mentorship programme is a key initiative in Harbourfront Centre's mission to develop local artists and their unique practices.

The HATCH mentorship provides resources and professional assistance to a new generation of engaging and innovative contemporary artists to reach their next career stage with a comprehensive understanding of process and challenges that artists must embrace.

The HATCH residency package includes one week rent-free in the Studio Theatre, technical and production assistance, box office backing and administrative assistance, marketing and media relations support and workshops, and professional development assistance.

For more information please visit www.harbourfrontcentre.com/hatch

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