

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 25th – July 13th 2008

***Free Range* tapeworms its way to the Toronto Fringe**

“I think I’m in love with him. With Warren. My tapeworm Warren.”

A sassy hypochondriac sits listening for life in her belly through an amplified stethoscope. Alas, the hiccups and movement of an unborn child are being drowned out by the seductive haikus of her tapeworm Warren. Can she find out what ails her before Warren heads for her bloodstream?

The 2008 Toronto Fringe will see a remount of the award-winning *Free Range* after its 2007 tour to the Ottawa, Victoria and Vancouver Fringes. A dark comedy of misfortune about parasites and promise, *Free Range* is the newest solo work from the creator of 2004’s *Swimming Lessons with Paisley Kite* (“Savagely funny and gently poetic” – Glenn Sumi, NOW) Created collaboratively by writer-performer Emily Pearlman, director Lisa Oppenheim and composer Eric Powell, with dramaturgy by DD Kugler, *Free Range* features a live bassoon and mandolin soundscape that appears to emit from the bones of the protagonist, a history of longing hung from a giant metallic mobile and flashlight shooting stars.

Critical Distance is a company that creates collaborative and interdisciplinary works, focusing on aural landscape and theatrical poetry. With a creative team consisting of Simon Fraser MFA students and a Studio 58 graduate, *Free Range* blends theatre, sound and visual art to create an eccentric and noisy magic-reality.

ALL SHOWS AT THEATRE PASSE MURAILLE BACKSPACE,

Fri. July 4th at 6:30pm; Sat. July 5th at 3:15pm, Sun. July 6th at 6:15pm, Mon. July 7th at 11:00pm
Tues. July 8th at 1:30pm, Wed. July 9th at 10pm, Fri. July 11th at 7:00pm, Sun. July 13th at 2:15pm.

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PRAISE FOR FREE RANGE

“Not only endearingly eccentric but also a repository for our common dreams and anxieties....rings with conviction, lyricism and quirky humour” - Ottawa Citizen

“A confident performer with an original sensibility, her script offers up offbeat humour and rich poetic images.” -Georgia Straight

“Alternatively funny and moving....the creators beautifully incorporated sound, visuals and story into a delightful and surprisingly elegant performance” The Peak

WINNER: Outstanding Concept (Ottawa Fringe)

WINNER: Five Not to Miss (Ottawa Citizen)

FREE RANGE BIOS

EMILY PEARLMAN – WRITER/PERFORMER

Emily Pearlman has performed her original solo shows *Swimming Lessons with Paisley Kite*, *Radio Collar* and *Free Range* across Canada on the Fringe Festival circuit. She has worked in new performance creation as a director-dramaturg with writers Marianne Miller and Diane Forrest, and as a dramaturg-performer in the adaptation of Lisa Pasold's book of poetry *A Bad Year for Journalists*. A new member of LMDA, she has also dramaturged dance, film and sound projects. Her radio documentary *Shnartzenholler*, first aired on CBC's Outfront, and has since been re-broadcast by radio stations from Chicago to Alaska. A Concordia BFA, she is just months away from completing her MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts at Simon Fraser University, where she recently directed her new script *Palms Down like a Rainbow: A Folktale Eulogy*. Originally from Ottawa, Emily has recently lived in so many cities, she no longer knows which one is home.

LISA OPPENHEIM – DIRECTOR/CO-CREATOR

A graduate of Studio 58, Lisa is an actor/writer/director/teacher residing in Vancouver. Recent credits include "Rose" in Sunshine Theatre's premier production of *Break!*, "Alice" in Western Canada Theatre's musical production of *Alice, a Wonderland* and "Jessie" in Green Thumb's production of *The Skinny Lie*. Her original performance piece *Painting Cupid*, created at the One Yellow Rabbit Summer Lab Intensive, premiered in May at the 12 Minute Max new works festival.

ERIC POWELL – COMPOSER/PERFORMER

Currently working on his MFA in Interdisciplinary Studies in Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University, Eric's work has been heard across Canada. His practice focuses on the relationship between sounding object, space and place. Most recently he presented *Sound.Garden.Scape: Gastown*, as part of Vancouver New Music's Surrounding Sound Festival. Other sound projects include a site specific installation for *Crossfiring* at the Claybank brick factory in Southern Saskatchewan, *Sub theory: Iceberg sculptures*, a gallery installation in Minneapolis, MN in collaboration with Margaret Pezalla-Grandland. He makes folk, rock and electroacoustic music with Ian Oldham, Eric Powell and the Awesome, and Birds are Dinosaurs

DD KUGLER – DRAMATURG

Kugler is a freelance director/dramaturg and an Associate Professor in the Theatre Area of School for the Contemporary Arts, at Simon Fraser University. During five seasons (1993-98) as Artistic Director of Edmonton's Northern Light Theatre, Kugler primarily developed and directed Canadian writers. Kugler also served seven seasons (1985-93) as Production Dramaturg with Toronto's Necessary Angel Theatre. During that time he adapted Marc Diamond's *Property* and in collaboration with Artistic Director Richard Rose, he co-authored *Newhouse*, as well as the adaptations of Michael Ondaatje's *Coming Through Slaughter*, and Timothy Findley's *Not Wanted on the Voyage*. Kugler's freelance career includes work as a director/dramaturg for various theatre companies across Canada.

Critical Distance
Presents
FREE RANGE

Written and performed by Emily Pearlman
Directed and Co-created by Lisa Oppenheim
Music Composed and performed by Eric Powell
Dramaturgy by DD Kugler

PLAY SYNOPSIS AND INFORMATION

Sitting beneath a dangerous looking metal mobile, preparing for the birth of a mysteriously conceived baby, a sassy hypochondriac attempts to figure out what is ailing her. Through her amplified stethoscope, she tries to listen beyond the noises made by her personal leitmotif, opinionated tapeworm Warren, and palpitating heartache to hear the hiccups and movement of an unborn child. Can she diagnose herself before Warren heads for the bloodstream?

Free Range is a solo performance piece exploring the different weights of absence, the rhythms and noises of the body, and the fine line between parasite and pregnancy.

Writer/performer Emily Pearlman, director Lisa Oppenheim, and sound designer Eric Powell have been working collaboratively on *Free Range* since January as a partial requirement for Pearlman's MFA degree at Simon Fraser University's School for the Contemporary Arts. Text development has been supervised by SFU professor and dramaturg DD Kugler. During the development of the piece, movement, sound and visual art have also informed the text creation, blending together to create an eccentric and noisy magic-reality. The soundscape, which appears to emit from the bones of the protagonist, is performed live by the composer on mandolin and bassoon.

COMPANY MANDATE

critical distance: the point within a room where the sound level of the direct field radiating from the loudspeaker and the reverberant field within the room become equal in intensity or level.

critical distance

- Creates collaborative and interdisciplinary works, focusing on sound, aural landscape and theatrical poetry that make full use of the theatrical medium
- Builds theatre from the ground up, creating original texts that continue to change and develop through rehearsal and production, working in a fluid manner where the company is open to creative ideas from other members and beyond.
- Explores the audience relationship inherent in traditional storytelling by using those techniques on stage and in character.
- Believes that for both emerging and established theatre practitioners, personal artistic development and education should never cease, and the best learning can be accomplished through dialogue with others about their artistic processes in theatre as well as dance, visual art and music.
- Has a lot of questions:
 - How can the relationship between performer and spectator be explored by blending personal narrative and fiction with mediated sound environments and theatrical poetry?
 - How do the shared sensory spaces in live performance change the reception of text, the signification of spaces between words and the ache of a long winded metaphor?
 - What enables anyone to embrace the logic of a five year old, and believe it when they are told things like once upon a time countries were shaped like stars?