

The Cultch presents

## BLACKBIRD

A Theatre Conspiracy / Rumble Productions Co-production

Written by David Harrower

Directed by Norman Armour

Featuring Jennifer Mawhinney and Russell Roberts

Stage management: Joanne PB Smith | Lighting design: John Webber | Costume design: Barbara Clayden

Sound design: Candelario Andrade | Set design: Barbara Clayden and John Webber

Assistant director: Camille Gingras

**WHERE: VANCITY CULTURE LAB AT THE CULTCH (1895 VENABLES STREET)**

**WHEN: MARCH 12 – 29, 2009**

Mar 11: PWYC preview @ 8 PM

Mar 12 – 29 @ 8 PM

Mar 14, 21, 28 @ 2 PM

Mar 15, 22, 29 @ 4 PM

No performance Mar 16 & 23



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### Winner of the 2007 Olivier Award for Best New Play

**Vancouver** — *Blackbird*, the electrifying drama that has left London and New York audiences breathless, will receive its West Coast Premiere at The Cultch, opening March 12th and running through to the 29th.

David Harrower's "cat-and-mouse tale of revenge and sexual intrigue" (Associated Press) won Britain's highest theatrical honour, the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play, and has been featured on many London and New York critics' top 10 lists. Vancouver director Norman Armour will stage this gripping two-character piece, co-produced by Theatre Conspiracy and Rumble Productions, featuring Jennifer Mawhinney and Russell Roberts.

This powerful, volatile piece begins when Una shows up unexpectedly at the office of Ray, forcing him to come to terms with the effects of their relationship. Una pulls Ray into an encounter that is gripping, surprising and utterly unforgettable. Guilt and raw emotions turn poisonous as they recollect a passionate but disastrous affair they had 15 years earlier. As tensions rise, we are left to question: where is the line between love and abuse? And can we ever break free from the shackles of the past?

The New York Post gave *Blackbird* "four stars! This haunting, powerful, incendiary work is the sort of daring theater far too absent from our stages these days." Charles Spencer of The London Daily Telegraph stated, "I have rarely seen an audience watch a new work with quite such rapt attention... *Blackbird* is a drama that mixes guilt, memory and desire into the most potent of theatrical cocktails." The New York Daily News called it, "a provocative, shocking and worthwhile new play."

*Blackbird* marks Norman Armour's return to directing since heading up the PuSh International Performing Arts Festival Society in 2005. Previous directing credits include *Designated Mourner* for Felix Culpa; and *Soulless*, *Hedda Gabbler*, and *Three in the Back, Two in the Head* for Rumble Productions.

Russell Roberts has appeared locally at the Playhouse (*Fiddler on the Roof*), Arts Club (*Elizabeth Rex, To Kill a Mockingbird*), and performed five seasons of leading roles with Bard on the Beach (including *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* for which he received a Jessie nomination) and where he was seen this past summer playing the title role in the acclaimed *Titus Andronicus*.

Jennifer Mawhinney recently returned to Vancouver after three seasons at the Stratford Festival (*Of Mice and Men, Henry IV and Orpheus Descending*). Other credits include *Equus* (Playhouse), *The Shape of Things* (Citadel), *Unity 1918* (Western Canada Theatre), and *Disco Pigs* (Pi Theatre).