

“NIGHT FOR NED” Newsletter

Ned Vukovic is a highly respected theatre artist living and struggling with ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, a fatal neurodegenerative disease that usually attacks both upper and lower motor neurons and causes degeneration throughout the brain and spinal cord. The Toronto theatre community has rallied around him and organized a benefit show to help offset the costs associated with this illness. On **Sunday June 24** beginning at 7:00PM a fundraiser and tribute will be held at **Theatre Passe Muraille, 16 Ryerson Ave., Toronto., ON.** Following the performance will be a reception with buffet dinner and a silent auction.

Night for Ned, directed by Hrant Alianak, will run like a variety show of short, high-octane performances interspersed with film footage and photos of Ned- his work, his life as well as pre-taped and live tributes from both star players and close friends alike. Performers slated to appear include Laska Sawade, Stephanie Martin and Jack Nichol森. An informal post-show soirée will encourage attendees to meet and greet and spend time with Ned. Fittingly, June is ALS Awareness Month in Canada.

Currently a senior instructor of Dramatic Arts at the University of Victoria, Ned, originally from England, was a member of the Royal Shakespeare Society and has spent fourteen years in Toronto directing, writing, teaching, performing, running several theatres and all the while raising a young family with his lovely wife Lindsey, herself an accomplished actress, dancer and teacher.

Ned has an extensive list of acting credits on stage and on film in Great Britain as well as in North America. He has appeared in over 60 film and television projects including the court psychiatrist Dr. Neuman in CBC/TV's *This Is Wonderland* and Atom Egoyan's film *The Sweet Hereafter*. He was artistic director of Solar Stage Theatre in Toronto for three years and producer/director of his own company, Lovers and Madmen, with which he created numerous acclaimed projects including directing *Molly Wood* at the Bathurst St. Theatre, which received eight Dora Mavor Moore nominations and won Outstanding Production and Outstanding New Play. He was instrumental in the creation of the theatre company Horizontal 8 and directed *The Misfit* (a play he co-wrote with Neil Norman about the life of legend Montgomery Clift). Other credits include appearances at the Manitoba Theatre Centre (Sue Cox's production of *Noises Off*), London's Grand Theatre (*Dial M For Murder* for Derek Goldby) and Hamilton's Theatre Aquarius (*How Could You Mrs. Dick?* for Brian Richmond).

As a leading dialect coach, Ned has worked on numerous theatre, film and TV projects including *Being Julia* (Serendipity Point Films), *Night at the Museum* (Fox), *How She Move* (Sienna Films), *Kaw* (Reel One Entertainment), *Touch of Pink* (Sienna Films), *Hitler: the Rise of Evil* (Alliance Atlantis), *Salem Witch Trials* (CBS) and *Blue/Orange* (Can Stage). Ned has taught dialects to a veritable who's who of esteemed North American and British stars on different projects, including Sir Peter Ustinov, Sir Alan Bates, Jon Voight, Shirley MacLaine, Peter O'Toole, Ellen Burstyn, Eric Peterson, Sheila McCarthy, R.H. Thomson, Fiona Reid, Cedric Smith and many more.

The expense involved in caring for Ned is enormous. The mechanical chair alone that Ned will soon require in order to continue teaching runs upwards of \$30,000. Anything we can do to help alleviate these costs will be deeply appreciated by Ned, his wife Lindsey and daughters Francesca and Grace.

Much help will be needed to make this event possible. If you are a stage manager, a top entertainer, a technician, a producer, a publicist or chef and you would like to volunteer your services, please jump in. The water is perfect. Contact Michael Copeman @ m.copeman@yahoo.ca. Performers interested in contributing to the line-up are asked to get in touch with our director, Hrant Alianak at halianak@sympatico.ca.

A web page in support of this enterprise is now running at www.nedvukovic.com. Donations of art works and other items for the silent auction are being sought and will be displayed as they arrive. The line-up will also appear on the site as confirmations are received.

Tickets to the 'Night for Ned' are \$50.00 and can be purchased through the Passe Muraille box office by calling **416-504-7529** or by contacting the web site at www.passemuraille.on.ca. Can't make the show but wish to show your support, donate directly at **CIBC 0630-78-71937**.

We would like to congratulate the University of Victoria Faculty of Arts for a successful and jam packed "Night for Ned", held March 30. Over \$10,000 raised to date.