

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

***They're coming back!***

## **Announcing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Victoria International Improv Festival**

***Victoria gets another shot of improv – September 16-18, 2004!***

The Impromaniacs, Victoria's original Improv troupe, are pleased to announce that plans are already underway for a sequel to the incredibly successful Victoria International Improv Festival.

"We were overwhelmed by the interest by everyone in our festival," said chief festival organizer Jonathan Argue. "The support we received from our sponsors and our audience has convinced us to do it again. It's going to be a blast!" The venue for the festival will be the same as 2003: St. Ann's Academy, 835 Humboldt Street. Once again the former convent will be filled with the sounds of laughter. And we do mean filled – last year's shows were nearly sold out. Performers for this year's festival have yet to be officially announced, but many of the tremendous troupes from last year have already expressed an interest in coming back.

"We were proud and pleased to be a part of VIIF 2003," said Unexpected Productions' artistic director Randy Dixon. "We would be more than willing and hope to be able to participate in VIIF 2004."

The Impromaniacs will be working hard in the coming months putting together sponsorships, grant applications and the myriad of other things that help make a festival special. We are always looking for folks who'd like to help out, especially with grant application writing. Please contact the Info-line (388.3658) and we'll get in contact with you.

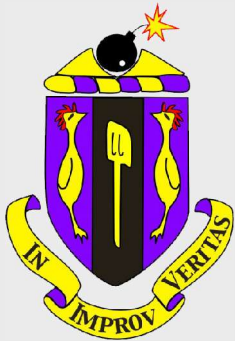
The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Victoria International Improv Festival promises to be another great experience. Mark September 16-18 in your calendar, and prepare to be entertained!

If you would like a press kit or an interview about the festival, please contact:

Steve May, Media Liaison, (250 388 3658 or [media@viif.ca](mailto:media@viif.ca))

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### **VICTORIA INTERNATIONAL IMPROV FESTIVAL**

September 16–18, 2004  
St. Ann's Academy

835 Humbolt Street  
Victoria, BC Canada  
email: [info@viif.ca](mailto:info@viif.ca)  
[www.viif.ca](http://www.viif.ca)

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## Confirmed Performers

### Instant Theatre Company, Vancouver, BC



Alistair Cook, Artistic Director of Instant Theatre, has long been a friend and mentor to the Improvians. His commitment to the troupe's continued development has been extended in his offering to assist the Festival in planning, technical, and marketing areas.

Over the past thirteen years, Alistair has been performing, instructing, consulting, directing and coordinating improvisation to the benefit of audiences across Canada. Alistair's main focus has been as director of the National improvisation tournament for young people, the **Canadian Improv Games**. This improviser's love affair with the Canadian Improv Games has now brought him to the positions of

National Director, National President, and BC Regional Director.

This year he was awarded the "Founders Award" for his dedication and contributions to the Games. Alistair is also the founder and Director of Instant Theatre.

With Instant Theatre Alistair has had the joy of directing for the past four years a truly professional improvisational theatre company that has endeavoured to expand the possibilities of improvisation as an art form.

Instant Theatre was a participant in VIIF 2003.

### Rapid Fire Theatre, Edmonton, AB



Zany, innovative, and world class, the Rapid Fire Theatre troupe from Edmonton will add a unique element to the Victoria International Improv Festival. Their distinctive use of music, props, and puppets brings a skill set to this mix from which all participants will benefit. Thanks to the generous support of the Vancouver Theatre Sports League, Rapid Fire will be available to contribute to both the professional development and performance aspects of the Festival.

Rapid Fire Theatre was invited to attend VIIF 2003, but was unable to make the commitment.

### Rock-Paper-Scissors, Vancouver, BC



Established in 1992 under the creative direction of David C. Jones, Rock-Paper-Scissors (RPS) has built a reputation for producing hit comedy shows and critically acclaimed corporate entertaining and training. RPS is where great minds come to laugh, learn and play--from the stage to the boardroom; and from the convention hall to the classroom.

RPS performs hundreds of live comedy shows and conduct celebrated training and team building workshops from coast to coast.

Our award-winning services have been profiled on numerous radio and television programs. They have performed for audiences from Las Vegas to Bosnia, from Israel to Greenland, and from British Columbia to Newfoundland.

RPS was a participant in VIIF 2003.

## Unexpected Productions, Seattle, WA



Randy Dixon is a world-renowned improv performer and coach. He is currently Artistic Director of Unexpected Productions in Seattle, Washington. In 1983, he was a founding member of Unexpected Productions and has served as the company's Artistic Director since 1988 where he has conceived, directed, and acted in numerous shows.

Randy has taught improvisational theatre all over the world. His book on Improvisation, *Being Present: Spontaneous Storytelling and the Art of Improvisation*, was published in German in 2000.

He teaches around the globe and really enjoys spreading the joy of improvisation.

Unexpected Productions was a participant in VIIF 2003.



## Vancouver TheatreSports League, Vancouver, BC

Recognized as the premier improv troupe in BC and one of the top not-for-profit improv theatre troupes in Canada, the Vancouver Theatre Sports League has flourished under the long time leadership of Executive Director Jay Ono. The

Impromaniacs are proud of their decade-long relationship with Jay and are grateful for his assistance with the Victoria International Improv Festival.

Driving Mr. Ono's work with the Vancouver Theatre Sports League is their mission to foster exceptional work and to promote improvisation as an art form - to stimulate, to transform, and to challenge audiences.

And, of course, to keep them laughing. In addition, VTSL has pioneered the use of improvisation in corporate team building, largely through the expert facilitation of Mr. Ono. The Impromaniacs have benefited from this expertise over the years, and are pleased to invite other Victoria community improv theatre troupes to share in that relationship through this Festival.

Vancouver TheatreSports League was a participant in VIIF 2003.

## ***Performers to be confirmed***

### **General Fools Improvisational Theatre, Regina, SK**



General Fools Improvisational Theatre was founded in May of 1997. Early performances began on a weekly basis at the Royal Retro Cinema at midnight. The General Fools continued their first and second seasons presenting short form improvisation. They outlasted the cinema and moved their show to 10pm for their third season.

The change proved to be a success and for their fourth season, the General Fools moved to a prime time 8pm slot at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. But, the ensemble grew tired of performing short form and began organically exploring long form improvisation.

By the end of their fourth season, the 'Fools decided to develop a show that would encourage the improvisational theatre community in Regina to grow and develop by introducing TheatreSports™ for season five.

In their sixth season, the General Fools formed a partnership with the Globe Theatre and presented four shows that challenged and pushed the type of improvisation Regina had already seen. Premiere - an Improvised Play, Odyssey - and Improvised Journey into the unknown, CharACTOR and Lounge Lizards were successful and proved that Regina audiences were ready to explore the boundaries of improvisation as an art form.

Today, General Fools Improvisational Theatre is enjoying its seventh season as a company. They aspire to challenge themselves and their audience with new creations!

### **Yellow Man Group, Japan**



Improvisation performances have the power to dissolve international barriers and speak to all people. Improvisation performance is not primarily a medium of the intellect; it can be about the emotions and agitation of the mind. It is not only a word. The Yellow Man Group (YMG) was established by Japanese improvisation players in Chicago in 1999. It is not easy to perform in a foreign language. But YMG believes in performing throughout the world in quest of personal connection that transcends language. Anyone can have fun and perform with universal appeal.

## About the Impromaniacs



The host troupe of the Victoria International Improv Festival is the Impromaniacs Theatre Company Society. First organized in 1989 and incorporated as a society in April 1992, the Impromaniacs have a 14-year history of commitment to the Victoria arts, social,

and business community.

They have performed throughout the capital region in venues including Central Bar and Grill, The Belfry, La Boehme, Cinecenta, the Open Space Gallery, Mocambo Coffee, The Diner, and Kaleidoscope Theatre. In addition to their regular by-donation Sunday shows, the Impromaniacs have also participated in and in some cases produced local arts Festivals, including participating in Fringe 1992 and 1993 and creating The Alternative Arts Festival and Singe 1997 and 2000.

The troupe has an active cast of approximately 15 performing members and 6 developing members at any given time, and holds open auditions throughout the year to encourage more community members to explore improvisation. Troupe members include computer architects, historical researchers, teachers, business owners, and students. They come from various areas throughout the Greater Victoria region and range in age from 16 to mid 40's. Diversity of thought and expression being crucial to the presentation of improv comedy, the troupe encourages people of all classes, genders, religions and ethnicities to participate and exists in an attitude of openness.

All members of the troupe, including the society directors, are volunteers, and any money raised contributes to the troupe's continued development.

## A Brief history of the Victoria International Improv Festival



Way back in the fall of 2002, Jonathan Argue of the Impromaniacs was yacking away with Alistair Cook (Instant Theatre) about long form & the various versions thereof. It went something like this...

Alistair: "Hey, you guys could do 'Blank Slate!'"

Jonathan: "'Blank ...?'... what's that?"

Alistair: Blablablabla... "..drop Randy Dixon a line and ask him if it's OK."

Jonathan: "Randy Dixon? You mean of Unexpected Productions?"

Alistair: "yeah, Randy... he's very cool [insert other praises here] - I'll pass on his email address."

<Pauses>

Alistair: "...say, you guys thought of doing an Improv festival in Victoria....?"

Jonathan: "That's a lot of work man... yikes!"

Alistair: "I'd help out with publicity

Jonathan: "Hmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm....."

Next, Jonathan drops Randy Dixon a line. They have a back and forth conversation...

Randy: "Sure, you can perform Blank Slate... no \$\$\$ required, just put in a plug for us when you perform it".

Jonathan: "Cool! By the way... how \*do\* you perform Blank Slate?"

Randy: "Well, it's kinda hard to explain... there's no "manual"... why don't you guys come down and workshop it with us... or we could come up there".

Jonathan: "Wow! Sounds good... we're a little broke right now, but I'll get back to you later in the fall"

**[Time passes]**

Jonathan drags several other Impromaniacs (and some of their friends) into organizing an improv festival. After a long search for a venue, St. Ann's Academy graciously accepts us. Sponsors are lined up, troupes are contacted, and most of them actually agree to come!

**[Time passes]**

It's September! The Impromaniacs open the festival with the long-form "Rubber Chicken Soup". People actually show up! Excellent shows from local and guest troupes include:

- Instant Theatre: Harold
- Rock-Paper-Scissors: The Further Adventures of Hamlet
- Vancouver Theatre Sports: Closing Time
- Unexpected Productions: City Life.

The festival ends late Saturday with the uninhibited Improv Cage Match. The place is packed – people clap.

The next day, the Impromaniacs get together to figure out how to do it all over again....