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High Resolution photo: [Where the Blood Mixes\\_arm wrestle.jpg](#)

Photo Description: Where the Blood Mixes, Craig Lauzon & Lorne Cardinal arm wrestling.

Photo Credit: Barbara Zimonick

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## CORNER GAS STAR LIVE IN CHILLIWACK!

CHILLIWACK, BC — *Where the Blood Mixes* is an amazing, powerful piece of theatre that everyone should see. Bitingly funny and brutally honest, the story is a deeply personal accounting about loss and redemption as it goes beyond the headlines in an emotional story about humanity and survival, tackling our nations darkest secret — residential schools. Winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama this extremely moving masterpiece stars **Lorne Cardinal**, known as the loveable Officer Davis on *Corner Gas*, and **Craig Lauzon** of *Royal Canadian Air Farce* fame. This stunning cast takes us on an emotional journey capturing one of the most-tragic and heinous chapters in Canadian history. Don't miss the opportunity to see this powerful

piece of theatre when *Where the Blood Mixes* is presented by The Chilliwack Arts & Cultural Centre Society with assistance from the Stó:lō Nation, comes to The Cultural Centre on **March 9**.

Written by **Kevin Loring**, *Where The Blood Mixes* is set in Lytton, British Columbia which is located where the mighty Fraser and Thompson Rivers meet. Loring says he wrote the play to expose the shadows below the surface of the community, and to celebrate its survivors. At first glance, *Where the Blood Mixes* may seem like a tough go: an aboriginal-penned play about residential school survivors coming to terms with years of abuse and cultural decimation. But one of the most surprising things about Loring's work is just how darn funny it is. In fact, laugh out loud funny... "a big part of our healing includes being able to laugh at the same time when serious matters are being dealt with." Says Naxaxalhts'i, Albert "Sonny" McHalsie. Hon.PhD., Cultural Advisor/Historian for the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre. "especially at a time when many of our people are dealing with their experiences at residential school through healing, court, or settlements or a combination of all."

We are introduced to the two main characters, Floyd and Mooch. Raised in a residential school, they must confront their personal demons when Floyd's daughter Christine returns to Lytton after a twenty year absence. Her arrival unleashes a flood of memories and secrets, forcing each of them to face the truth underlying not only of their own history, but the history of a Nation.

This moving, and very funny play lets us see into the lives and hearts of characters who experienced their childhoods in one of these institutions, and lets us see their present lost and dark times, the impact of past brutality, the burden of poverty and despair, and eventually, for some, a path of hope. "What a joy to witness... a genuinely great piece of theatre about our nation's dark secret" says Vancouver Sun.

Taking place during the salmon run, this highly acclaimed play introduces us to the heart of a People, and their struggle to heal. Though torn down many years ago, the memories of the Residential School nightmare still lives on deep inside the hearts of those who spent their childhoods there. For some, like Floyd, the legacy of that trauma has been passed down through families for generations. A man who has lost everyone he holds most dear, Floyd after more than two decades is faced with his daughter's return home to confront her father.

The title was inspired by the mistranslation of the name N'lakap'mux, the place now known as Kumsheen. For years, it was believed it meant "the place where the rivers meet", the converging of the muddy Fraser and the brilliant blue Thompson Rivers. However, a more accurate translation is: "the place inside the heart where the blood mixes." Powerful and disturbing *Where the Blood Mixes* is an important piece of theatre that is bringing a very sensitive subject out into the open. A definite must see. "*Where the Blood Mixes* goes straight to the heart, but it goes there via the funny bone" states the Vancouver Courier.

This is a marvelous opportunity not only to see incredible performers but witness a very important piece of theatre that will take you on an amazing journey as the

action shifts from past to present, dream and myth to reality, laughter to tears. Book your seat early, call 604-391-SHOW(7469).

*Where The Blood Mixes* is generously sponsored by Myriad Information Technology Solutions, Coast Chilliwack, The City of Chilliwack, The Chilliwack Progress, Department of Canadian Heritage and the British Columbia Arts Council.

– 30 –

### **Additional Information**

[Lorne Cardinal's website](#)

[Stó:lō Nation website](#)

[Western Canada Theatre website](#)

### ***Introduction to the Play***

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as Canada was being colonized, the Aboriginal peoples were moved from their traditional lands to less desirable locations, so that Britain could have the best land and resources for its own use. To solve land claim disputes, and “the Indian problem,” the Canadian government decided that they should assimilate the natives, and convert them to Christianity. They would begin by educating the children. D.C. Scott, Assistant Superintendent of Indian Affairs, declared that they should “kill the Indian within the child.” Newly established, white, Christian, Residential Schools took children away from their parents, by force if necessary, and forbade them their family, their language, their songs and ceremonies, their culture, for the ten years they were in Residential Schools. In these schools, children were often abused - punished, isolated, fed poorly, sometimes assaulted, taught an alien culture, allowed to visit their parents only in the summer. Children were taught, implicitly and explicitly, that they were inferior beings, “stupid.” At home, families lost their children, the heart of their homes, for two or three generations.

Of course the damage done to children, their communities, and the country was, and is, incalculable. Now that damage is being recognized. Native leaders have pushed these issues to the forefront since the 1980s, and in 2008, the Government of Canada made a long-overdue formal apology to Canada's Aboriginals in the House of Commons. Some reparation is

going on, as survivors of the schools are receiving payment. How far the money will go to heal a people has yet to be seen.

### ***About the Author***

Kevin Loring is a member of the Nlakapmox (Thompson) First Nation in Lytton, British Columbia. As an actor he has performed in numerous plays across Canada, including Marie Clements' *Burning Vision* and *Copper Thunderbird*, and more recently in the National Arts Centre's productions of George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* and William Shakespeare's *King Lear*. He also starred in the 2007 feature film *Pathfinder*, and co-produced and co-hosted the documentary *Canyon War: The Untold Story about the 1858 Fraser Canyon War*. He was the recipient of the 2005 Vancouver Arts Award for Emerging Theatre Artist, Artist in Residence at The Playhouse Theatre Company in 2006, and is currently Playwright in Residence at the National Arts Centre. *Where the Blood Mixes* premiered at the 2008 Luminato Festival in Toronto. Presented at the 2008 Magnetic North Festival in Vancouver, it opened on the day of the House of Commons' apology for the legacy of suffering generations of aboriginal people continue to endure as a result of their experiences at residential schools. A remount of this production, in association with the playwright's own company, The Savage Society, is scheduled for a national tour as part of the 2010 Cultural Olympiad. Kevin Loring participated in the closing ceremonies of the Aboriginal Pavilion at the 2010 Winter Olympics.

### ***The Purpose of the Play***

Loring says he wrote the play to expose the shadows below the surface of the community, and to celebrate its survivors. "The school still haunts my community [in Lytton, BC], the memories live deep inside those who spent their childhoods there, and for some the trauma has been passed on for generations," he says. The Lytton Indian Band has torn down the old school, and built the new Stein Valley School there. The new curriculum includes traditional native culture as well as necessary provincial curriculum material. The people are trying to undo the damage wrought, and to instill in today's children the self worth that was taken from so many at St. George's Residential School.

### ***The Meaning of the Title, Where the Blood Mixes***

The title comes from the name of the town, Kumsheen, the place where the Thompson and the Fraser Rivers meet. A more accurate translation is "the place inside the heart where the blood mixes." Kumsheen, now known as Lytton, was the heart of the N'lakap'mox Nation. The title also refers to a story about Coyote, the well-known Trickster character in Native mythology, and his tremendous battle with a transformer, a giant shape shifter who could transform the world. The transformer tore Coyote into pieces and threw his parts to the wind. Coyote's heart landed where the rivers meet. It is said that Coyote's intestines can still be seen along the canyon walls of the Fraser River.

Another reason for this title is that as the salmon come home, up the river each year, their bodies change to a brilliant blood red. It used to be said that you could walk across the river on the salmon run, as their numbers were so abundant.

***For additional information and to arrange interviews, contact:***

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by phone at 604.391.SHOW(7469)

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### **Chilliwack Cultural Centre**

Since opening the Chilliwack Cultural Centre September 2010, over 44,800 tickets have been sold through the Centre Box Office, with a value exceeding \$750,000. The Chilliwack Arts & Cultural Centre Society, whom oversees operation on behalf of the City of Chilliwack, are pleased to be on target for their initial projected budget and overall use projections for the Centre.

### ***Chilliwack Cultural Centre highlights:***

- 597 seat performance theatre
- 168 seat recital hall / rehearsal space / dance studio / meeting space
- Chilliwack Art gallery (22-foot high display area)
- 21 music instructional rooms
- Arts and crafts studios
- Storage and Archival Resource Room

### **Chilliwack Arts & Cultural Centre Society Board of Directors**

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