

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

TOUCHSTONE THEATRE and RUBY SLIPPERS THEATRE team-up to present the world premiere of HURRICANE MONA, a climate crisis comedy from Vancouver playwright/actor PIPPA MACKIE

**PLAYING NOVEMBER 18 - DECEMBER 3, 2023
(Media Opening: Wednesday, November 22)
HISTORIC THEATRE, THE CULTCH**

VANCOUVER (August, 2023) - In November 2023, Touchstone Theatre and Ruby Slippers Theatre partner to co-present the world premiere production of *Hurricane Mona* by **Pippa Mackie**, a fast-paced and absurdist dark comedy about a privileged middle-class family grappling with their life and relationships under the grim shadow of the climate emergency.

“We are thrilled to be partnering with Ruby Slippers Theatre, opening the 23/24 with Pippa Mackie’s urgent ‘crisis comedy’ *Hurricane Mona*. It shines a burning light on our fears and sense of helplessness about climate change in hilarious, loving, and surprising ways,” said **Roy Surette**, Touchstone Theatre Artistic Director. Artistic Director **Diane Brown** adds “Like many of us, we at Ruby Slippers Theatre feel the urgency to address and respond to the climate crisis in a way that helps inspire resiliency, action, and therefore hope. Partnering with Touchstone Theatre on this important project is part of our response and we are honoured to be working with them and this company of artists.”

Directed by Roy Surette and assistant director **Cameron Peal**, the play follows the story of its titular character, Mona (played by **Pippa Mackie**), a rebel environmental activist who is placed under court-ordered house arrest after smashing a police car during a climate protest. Forced to serve her term in her parent’s suburban home, tensions begin to flare as Mona rails against the lifestyle choices of her boomer parents (**Diane Brown, Craig Erickson**) and struggles for connection with her withdrawn gen Z sibling, Jay (**Sherine Menes**). **Raugi Yu**, as a salty, man-sized frog, joins the cast of family dysfunction, portending trouble on the horizon. When one day a catastrophe befalls their home, landing the long-feared climate reckoning on their doorstep, Mona and her family must come to grips with their role in the crisis and their own unmaking.

“I was driven to create *Hurricane Mona*, not only to share my past experiences as a young climate activist, but create a show that isn’t about educating or blaming people,” playwright and performer Pippa Mackie said. “I wanted to find a way to address climate change with humour, in the hopes that it will offer people a chance to have a cathartic community experience. One that is free from blame or guilt.”

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First developed as part of the Arts Club Theatre's Emerging Playwrights Unit, with further support through Touchstone's David King Prize (Mackie was the inaugural recipient) and The Banff Playwrights Lab 2023, dramaturgy by **Stephen Drover**, the play will world premiere on the Historic Theatre stage at The Cultch.

"I am so excited for audiences to come into the theatre and laugh together. Also, this show has a lot of stage magic, so it is particularly thrilling to witness the designs come to life. Also, the cast is outstanding. It is a dream come true!" said Mackie.

Hurricane Mona stars **Diane Brown** (*The Duchess A.K.A. Wallis Simpson*, Ruby Slippers Theatre), **Pippa Mackie** (*Juliet: A Revenge Comedy*, Monster Theatre), **Craig Erickson** (*The Cull*, Arts Club Theatre), **Raugi Yu** (*Bad Parent*, Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre), and **Sherine Menes** (*BUTO/BUTO: Bones are Seeds*, National Pilipino Canadian Cultural Centre).

Tickets NOW ON SALE at the Cultch website. Touchstone's Play Club Passes can also be purchased online through touchstonetheatre.com

-PLAY SYNOPSIS-

Hurricane Mona is a fast-paced and absurdist dark comedy about an upper-middle class family at the literal center of a climate emergency.

Rebel environmental activist and elder millennial Mona is placed under house arrest after smashing a police car topless during a peaceful climate march. Forced to serve her term in her parent's suburban home, tensions flare as Mona rails against the shopping habits of her Boomer parents and her Gen Z sibling's apparent apathy in the face of looming catastrophe. But as Mona's burning drive for her family to "do better" begins to turn the home on its head, an unimaginable disaster happens right in the middle of their living room, forcing them to reckon with themselves and a future in crisis.

A crazy mushroom trip, a giant talking frog, and catastrophic family dysfunction: *Hurricane Mona* is a hilarious and arresting cautionary tale for our times.

Learn more about Touchstone's 2023/2024 season at touchstonetheatre.com

LISTING INFORMATION

Hurricane Mona, A Touchstone Theatre and Ruby Slippers Theatre Production
Written by Pippa Mackie | **Directed by** Roy Surette

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Venue: Historic Theatre, The Cultch
Showtimes: *Hurricane Mona* previews from **November 18 -21** and runs **November 22 @7:30PM (Opening)** thru till **December 3, 2023**
Matinees: Sat, Nov 25 & Dec 2 @2PM; Sun, Nov 19, 26 and Dec 3 @2PM
Pay What You Choose: Nov 22, 2PM & Nov 29 @2PM
Discount Tuesday/Talkback Tuesday: Nov 28 @7:30PM
VocalEye Live Description: TBD
Relaxed Performance: TBD

Running Time: 90 minutes

Boxoffice: www.tickets.thecultch.com or call 604-251-1363
For More Info & Passes: www.touchstonetheatre.com or call 604-709-9973
Learn More: www.touchstonetheatre.com
Email: info@touchstonetheatre.com

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Roy Surette
Assistant Director: Cameron Peal
Starring: Diane Brown, Craig Erickson, Pippa Mackie, Sherine Menes, Raugi Yu
Set Designer: John Webber
Lighting Designer: Hina Nishioka
Sound Designer: Mary Jane Coomber
Costume Designer: Sheila White
Dramaturgy by Stephen Drover
Stage Manager: Stephen Courtenay
Apprentice Stage Manager: Finnley O'Brien
Technical Director | Production Manager: Alistair Wallace

ABOUT PIPPA MACKIE

Pippa Mackie is an award-winning actor, playwright, and producer of feisty and satirical theatre. Her work has been performed on stages and at festivals across North America. Most notable credits include *The Progressive Polygamists*, co-written/performed with Emmelia Gordon, which toured across Canada for many years, including the Just For Laughs Festival and the Firehall Arts Centre, and won Vancouver and Edmonton's Pick of The Fringe. *Juliet: A Revenge Comedy*, which she co-wrote with Ryan Gladstone, was nominated for six Jessie Richardson awards, including Outstanding Original Script and Best Production Small Theatre, and has been touring Canada since 2019. *Juliet: A Revenge Comedy* will be presented as part of The Cultch's 2023/24 Season in February 2024.

Her one-act play *Starman*, which was originally commissioned and produced as part of Upintheair Theatre's The Array, was adapted into an audio drama as part of Sound the Alarm

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Theatre's podcast series in 2021 and received 3 Berlin Film Haus nominations, including Best Scriptwriting and Best Podcast. She is also co-writing a mockumentary comedy podcast titled *Philippa Po: Changing Minds* with Ryan Gladstone produced by Sound the Alarm Theatre.

Hurricane Mona was created as part of the Arts Club Theatre's Emerging Playwrights Unit and was awarded Touchstone Theatre's David King Prize for Comedy in 2022. Pippa was also a participant in the 2023 Banff Playwrights Unit with *Hurricane Mona*.

Pippa is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada and a member of the Playwrights Guild of Canada. www.pippamackie.com

ABOUT TOUCHSTONE THEATRE

Touchstone has been a mainstay of theatrical innovation and excellence on the West Coast for 47 years. The company's all-Canadian mandate has helped launch and develop some of the country's most respected theatre artists, while its substantial body of work has garnered over 75 local and national awards. The company explores the contemporary Canadian play through content and form and stimulates public interest in Canadian cultural perspectives.

www.touchstonetheatre.com

ABOUT RUBY SLIPPERS THEATRE

For three decades, critically heralded Ruby Slippers Theatre has given voice to under-represented artists garnering over sixty awards, three national tours, and the creation of five original full length works. We are the premiere purveyors of Québec works in English translation within our region, translations that we at RST often commission, and have a reputation for smart social satire that is infectiously entertaining. RST's annual Advance Theatre Festival provides development and showcase opportunities to female identifying and gender non-conforming playwrights and directors who also identify as Indigenous, Black, or Persons of Colour. Our two annual main stage offerings and Artist in Residency program also reflect our values and commitment to advance the radically inclusive stage.

www.rubyslippers.ca

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