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For immediate release  
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*Photos available on website.*

## 4TH LINE THEATRE LAUNCHES THEIR 2009 SEASON WITH *THE RIGHT ROAD TO PONTYPOOL*

**MILLBROOK, ON** – 4th Line Theatre is proud to present the world premiere of **Alex Poch-Goldin's** (*This Hotel, Cringeworthy, Yahrzeit*) *The Right Road to Pontypool* on Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>. *Pontypool* is a fascinating story the likes of which audiences have come to expect from this internationally-renowned company. 4th Line, in its 18<sup>th</sup> season, has distinguished itself with a knack for peeling back history to reveal compelling stories of the lives of rural Canadians. *The Right Road to Pontypool* launches 4th Line Theatre's 18<sup>th</sup> season, directed by the sure hand of 4th Line veteran, **Kim Blackwell** (*Freedom 85*; 4th Line: *Schoolhouse* 2007, 2008; *The Art of Silent Killing*).

**Pontypool, Ontario** is a quiet and unassuming village founded about a hundred years ago and located one hundred kilometres north-east of Toronto. Larger-than-life Moishe Yukle, a Polish Jew, immigrated to Canada in the 1890's and as a traveling salesman often traveled through Pontypool on his way to somewhere 'more important.' He didn't find it a particularly impressive place but the land was cheap enough for a poor immigrant to buy and make a life for himself, even if he was the only Jew in town. When he decided to invite Jewish members of Toronto's garment sweatshops out for some relief from the summer heat, so began an astonishing tale of Canada's own version of a 'Catskills' vacation community. Over the next fifty years, it grew to encompass thousands of Toronto's working class Jewish immigrants in the heart of a protestant southern Ontario town. Today it is a cherished memory of a world that was.

4th Line Theatre's tradition of producing epic outdoor productions combines with **Poch-Goldin's** tale of the town's rise from rural obscurity into rabid development with the Jewish cottage community and its journey through prejudice to cultural acceptance and finally its unexpected demise in a poignantly comic yet richly captivating theatrical experience.

"As a Jew of Russian heritage, discovering this untold history affected me. I felt that this story was my story and that I had a responsibility to tell it. In this story of Pontypool are the seeds of what has become one of North America's largest and most progressive communities," explains **Poch-Goldin**.

Hot after her recent successes with *Freedom 85* at the Toronto Fringe Festival and following run in New York's Frigid Festival, director **Kim Blackwell** looks forward to another season of environmental theatre. "A story like *Pontypool*, about a group of people looking for a place to relax and enjoy the freedom from the drudgery of everyday life, should resonate with everyone," explains Blackwell. Alex has written a love letter to a place and people now disappeared and scattered to the wind. I'm honoured to be bringing his beautiful script to life."

*The Right Road to Pontypool*, with a cast of 40 stars renowned Canadian actors **Ellen-Ray Hennessy**, **Allan Price** and **Dov Mickelson** alongside a cast of 37 others. The story begins with Mickelson (CanStage/Citadel: *Amadeus*; Catalyst Theatre: *The House of Pootsie Plunket*) playing the incomparable Moishe Yukle Bernstein and follows his family throughout the years to the present day story of his granddaughter, Doris Manetta, played by **Hennessy** (Nightwood Theatre: *The Age of Arousal*; Vancouver Playhouse: *The Edible Woman*) and accompanied by Allan Price's (Theatre Collingwood: *Fiddler on the Roof*; Tribal Productions: *Death of a Salesman*) cousin Harold.

The accompanying cast includes **Caitlin Driscoll** as young Doris, **Matt Gilbert** (4th Line: *1837: The Farmer's Revolt*) as Bernie the Schohet, **Mark Hiscox** (4th Line: *Schoolhouse*) as Mr. Henley, **Justin Hiscox** (4th Line: *The Last Green Hill, Schoolhouse*) as Rudy, **Marie Jones** (Theatre Passe Muraille: *The Crackwalker*; Gairbraid Theatre Co.: *Romeo and Juliet*) as Annie Manetta, **Jordan Kanner** (Stratford Festival: *The Count of Monte Cristo*) as Sam Manetta, **Marsala Lukianchuk** as Rifka Bernstein, **Bridget Norris** (Fringe Festival: *The Bacchae*; Gairbraid Theatre Co.: *Much Ado About Nothing*) as Rita and **Peter Pasyk** (*Way of the Tosser, Gravy Train*) as Jackie Miller.

The balance of this 170-character cast will be filled by local community members including **Christina Adams**, **Ray Barker**, **Shawna Blackwood**, **Françoise Bouchard**, **Graeme Browning**, **Griffin Clark**, **Linda Driscoll**, **Rae Fleming**, **Annie Gleason**, **Stuart Hanmore**, **Anne Lukaszewicz**, **Nancy Lynch**, **Cody McMahon** **Lauren Murphy**, **Drew Mills**, **Lee Oliver**, **Meg O'Sullivan**, **Anika Spasov**, **Emilie Spasov**, **Hannah Spasov**, **Peter Spasov**, **Renate Spasov** and **Maura Wingle-Land**.

Blackwell has assembled an impressive creative team for this world premiere including **Anne Redish** who joins the company this summer as costume designer assisted by **Ruth Weaver**. They are joined by **Elizabeth Nutting** as set designer. Blackwell will be ably assisted in directing by **Peter Pasyk**. **Justin Hiscox** continues his role as the musical director and composer of an original score and soundscapes for *The Right Road to Pontypool*. This is the seventh time he and Blackwell have collaborated on a production and their third world premiere together.

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### Artistic Bios

#### **Alex Poch-Goldin, Playwright**

Alex is an award-winning playwright and actor, whose work has been produced on international stages, for CBC TV and Bravo Television. He is also artistic director of the Toronto based Planet 88 Theatre Company. His theatre writing includes the recently produced, Dora nominated, *Cringeworthy* at Theatre Passe Muraille, Dora Award-winning *This Hotel* and *Yahrzeit*. *This Hotel* was Toronto's top selling show of 2000. He has worked for Canadian Stage, Tapestry New Opera, Theatre Passe Muraille, Winnipeg Jewish Theatre, and Tarragon Theatre. Alex has been Playwright-in-Residence at Canadian Stage and Theatre Passe Muraille with the assistance of the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council. He has written an opera libretto for Tapestry New Opera entitled *The Shadow*, slated for production in May, 2009

and is currently Playwright in Residence at 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre. Alex has also developed work with Buddies in Bad Times (*Jim and Shorty*) Winnipeg Jewish Theatre (*Louie's Dilemma*) and the Tarragon Theatre (*The Life of Jude*).

### **Kim Blackwell, Artistic and Producing Associate & Director**

Kim has been a theatre practitioner for 32 years. She has been directing professionally for 17 years. 2009 marks her 15<sup>th</sup> season with 4th Line Theatre. Selected 4th Line credits include: artistic associate since 2001; directing: *Schoolhouse, The Art of Silent Killing, That Summer, Crow Hill, The Cavan Blazers, Attrition, Gimme That Primetime Religion*; directing development workshops of *Attrition, Cavan Casanova, The Art of Silent Killing, The Right Road to Pontypool, The Last Green Hill* and *Welcome Death*; stage managing *The Cavan Blazers, Crow Hill, 1837: The Farmer's Revolt, Moodie Traill, The Farm Show, Stone Angel, Winslows of Derryvore, The Orchard*. Kim has directed 23 productions and 12 development workshops of new Canadian plays throughout her professional career.

Other favourite directing credits include: *Freedom 85* (Toronto Fringe, 2008) *Getting Lucky* (Rhubarb!, 2005), *Unlucky* (Summerworks, 2003), *The Ugly Man, Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet), Poor Super Man, Unidentified Human Remains..., House, The Lover, Killer's Head, Seduced* (Black Well Theatre), *Once A Flame, Fire in the Stable, The Shadow of Genius* (Heritage Pavilion). Kim's sold-out Fringe show *Freedom 85* was just performed off-off-Broadway at the Frigid New York Festival where it received excellent critical and audience response and the Audience Choice Award and the See It Twice Award. Kim is also the creator and performer of the movement-based poem *Kim Blackwell Starring as Keanu Reeves in The Matrix*.

### **Justin Hiscox, Original Composition, Musical Director, Actor & Musician**

Justin is delighted to be back at the 4th Line Theatre's Winslow Farm again this summer for what will be his eleventh season with the company. Justin studied composition at York University with the late great American maverick composer James Tenney, and still to this day writes his pieces in pencil and pen (not the computer), much to the chagrin of his musicians. Throughout the year, Justin works as an instructor with the Peterborough New Horizons Band where he teaches percussion. The rest of his time is spent working as one of Canada's very few gigging conch shell/contrabass trombone doublers. Justin's list of musicals and plays for which he has been either an accompanist, composer, musical director or all three at once (!) runs near fifty now and he refuses to name them all here. Justin loves the challenges that each individual production presents to composers, and thanks Robert and Janette Winslow for the ongoing chance to be a part of the magical world that is 4th Line Theatre.

### **Anne Redish, Costume Designer**

Anne (Thompson) Redish is a costume designer, costumer and stage management instructor at Queen's University where she has been teaching Stage Management since 1989, and costuming since 1995. She has designed the costumes for shows including Theatre Kingston: *The Winter's Tale* '01 & '04, and *Brebeuf's Ghost* '03, Thousand Islands Playhouse: *Goodbye Piccadilly* '02 and Queen's U. Department of Drama: *Skin of Our Teeth* 2000, *Caucasian Chalk Circle* '04, *Dr. Faustus* '07, *Drums in the Night* '08. Anne studied Drama (B.A.H. / B.Ed.) at Queen's University after attending Adam Scott C.V.I. and Edmison Heights P.S. in Peterborough in the 60's and 70's, not long before Kim Blackwell attended the same schools. After graduating from the National Theatre School of Canada, Montreal in 1980, Anne apprenticed in stage management in Toronto, and thereafter stage managed and/or a.s.m.-ed at Theatre Plus, Phoenix Theatre, Nightwood, Theatre Direct, Waterwood Productions, Tarragon Theatre, Huron Country Playhouse in Grand Bend, Centaur Theatre in Montreal, and Stratford Festival.

**Elizabeth Nutting, Set Designer**

Elizabeth graduated in 2002 with a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Drama from Queen's University. After working for two years at The Banff Centre, she furthered her education at the Toronto School of Art; pursuing her dream to work as a set designer. Elizabeth is now combining her art and theatre background through her installation art. These pieces use theatre scripts as a springboard for her art. Recent theatre design includes Thousand Islands Playhouse's *Summer of My Amazing Luck*. Elizabeth is excited to work on a new script like *The Right Road to Pontypool* with such a rich background in history and culture.

**Ellen-Ray Hennessy, Doris**

Ellen-Ray Hennessy is an international award winning actress, writer, director and producer who has been in over 275 productions. Most recently she was nominated for a her fifth Dora Mavor Moore Award for Best Actress for her work in *The Age of Arousal* at the Factory Theatre and a Jesse Award for her work in *The Edible Woman* at the Vancouver Playhouse. She recently completed the feature film *Then Again*, as well the animation feature film *Z-Baw* for Paramount Pictures, due for release this fall. She was chosen as one of the Mille Femmes as part of a huge installation for the World Stage Festival-LuminaTO this past year for her outstanding contribution to the arts. Elley is currently writing her third animation feature film for Paramount Pictures and Imagination Films and will be directing *The Alley of Dreams* this fall in Toronto. She runs a successful charitable, not-for profit theatre company called Dare, which has a monthly playreading series and is currently working with Kick Theatre to bring Phylis Nagy's play *Butterfly Kiss* to Toronto. Besides teaching voice and creating demos, Elley does an immense amount of charitable work and travels world wide working with children of impoverished countries and most recently brought a young man from Uganda for a very successful operation at the Sick Children's Hospital. She has created a documentary on her travels called "The Mighty Jungle" and hopes to travel to Indian and China this year to work with several orphanages and eventually create an art/music summer camp in Ontario for orphans.

**Dov Mickelson, Moishe Yukle Bernstein**

Dov is making his 4<sup>th</sup> line theatre debut and is so pleased to be sharing this story with you, having been involved in earlier workshops of this fantastic script. Dov is a Toronto-based actor and a company member of Catalyst Theatre. He has toured their award-winning shows of *The House of Pootsie Plunket* and *Frankenstein* across Canada and the UK. Also for Catalyst - *Electra*, *The Abundance Trilogy*, *Songs for Sinners* and the *Blue Orphan*. Dov continues to work on stage, film and television. Selected theatre: *Amadeus* (CanStage/Citadel), *Reading Hebron* (Sage Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (CanStage), *The Trials of John Demjanjuk* (Theatre Asylum/Chutzpah & Hatch Festivals), *The Amorous Servant* (Pleiades), *Kyke Kabaret* (for Buddies/ Rhubarb Festival – which he wrote and performed), *Dying To Be Sick* (Pleiades/NAC) and *The Gladstone Variations* (Resurgence Theatre). Dov can also be seen in the acclaimed prize-winning short film "Found Objects" (Old World Films/Bravo!).

**Allan Price, Harold**

Torontonian Allan Price began his acting career working in children's theatre while still a student at University of Toronto. This was followed by three seasons as a regular on Lorne Michaels' CBC variety show "The Hart and Lorne Terrific Hour" and a lead role in Ivan Reitman's cult classic "Cannibal Girls" which starred Andrea Martin and Eugene Levy. Allan temporarily left acting while raising his family and pursued teaching (theatre and creative drama) and a business career, finally returning to the theatre with the support and encouragement of his wonderful family. He has enjoyed theatre roles at Theatre Collingwood, The Leah Posluns Theatre, and Tribal Productions. Allan is currently in Edmonton this spring to play The Wizard in *The Wizard of Oz* before returning to Ontario for rehearsals of *The Right Road to Pontypool*.

*4th Line Theatre, Canada's premiere outdoor theatre company, brings history to life on the barnyard stages of the picturesque 5th generation Winslow farm in Millbrook, Ontario. The theatre company is committed to preserving and promoting our Canadian cultural heritage through the development and presentation of regionally based, environmentally staged historical drama.*

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***The Right Road to Pontypool***

**By Alex Poch-Goldin**

**Directed by Kim Blackwell**

June 30 to August 1 / *Previews: June 30 and July 1 / Opening night: Thursday, July 2*

Tuesday to Saturday at 6 p.m.

With an added performance on Monday, July 27

A loving chronicle of one man's sun kissed dream for Toronto's working class Jews in the early 1900's. With a way of life now vanished, Pontypool was a summer haven for thousands of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in the heart of Protestant southern Ontario.

TICKETS: Single Tickets \$26/23/15; \$35 for Gala Opening and \$20 for Previews

Subscriptions \$45/40/23; \$60 for Gala Opening and \$40 for Previews

Call 1-800-814-0055 or 705-932-4445 or visit [www.4thlinetheatre.on.ca](http://www.4thlinetheatre.on.ca)

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The 2009 season is generously sponsored by the Nexicom Group.



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