

– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

Arts Club Theatre Company On Tour presents

# **BENEATH SPRINGHILL: THE MAURICE RUDDICK STORY**

Created by Beau Dixon

Music & lyrics by Rob Fortin & Susan Newman

Originally directed & developed by Linda Kash

**January 5–February 4, 2024**

**IN BRIEF** Beau Dixon's *Beneath Springhill: The Maurice Ruddick Story* tours **January 5–February 4** across the Lower Mainland and B.C. Details at [artsclub.com](http://artsclub.com)

**VANCOUVER, B.C. (December 14, 2023)**—Experience an inspiring Canadian story told through song in Beau Dixon's *Beneath Springhill: The Maurice Ruddick Story*, touring **January 5–February 4** across the Lower Mainland and B.C.

Trapped 4,000 feet underground with no food, little air, and even less hope of survival, the indomitable spirit and song of coal miner Maurice Ruddick (**Jeremiah Sparks**) served as a lifeline for his fellow miners over nine unimaginable days. This is the true story of the African-Canadian "singing miner" that emerged from the 1958 Springhill, Nova Scotia, mining disaster. A remount of the Arts Club's successful 2021 production at the Granville Island Stage, this award-winning one-person show recalls the tense historic events and celebrates hope, courage, and community.

Artistic Director **Ashlie Corcoran** said, "What makes the piece work so well is its determined optimism and celebration of the power of community. We are thrilled to be remounting it for our local tour."

Director **Bobby Garcia** added, "*Beneath Springhill: The Maurice Ruddick Story* is an uplifting exploration of how the human spirit triumphs in the darkest of hours. Audiences can expect a beautiful, albeit sometimes harrowing, true-to-life story of resilience performed by Jeremiah Sparks, an actor of tremendous skill and generosity. We hope to see you all at the show!"

"The quintessential Canadian story: a strong, modest Canadian hero pitted against a hostile environment, refusing to be its victim" —*Vancouver Sun*

## **ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT**

Beau Dixon is an award-winning actor, musician, playwright, music director, and sound designer based in Ontario, Canada. He is the co-founder and artistic director for Firebrand Theatre, a Canadian educational theatre company. His award-winning play, *Beneath Springhill: The Maurice Ruddick Story*, garnered him a Calgary Critic's Award for Best Individual Performance and two Dora Mavor Moore Awards for Best New Play and Best Individual Performance. In 2021, he was curator and music director for the Stratford Festival's production of *Freedom: The Spirit and Legacy of Black Music*. Recently, Beau became the music director for Sheridan College and Lakefield College School. Currently, Beau is



working on a variety of projects, including acting in film and TV roles, producing and writing plays, and composing and performing music for digital distribution, public live stream events, and corporate functions.

#### CAST

**Jeremiah Sparks** (Maurice Ruddick)

#### CREATIVE TEAM

**Bobby Garcia** (Director), **Ted Roberts** (Set Designer), **Alaia Hamer** (Costume Designer), **Jeff Harrison** (Lighting Designer), **Malcolm Dow** (Sound Designer), **Rebecca Mulvihill** (Stage Manager), **Rachel E. Ross** (Apprentice Stage Manager)

#### TOUR VENUES AND DATES

NORTH VANCOUVER	<u>The BlueShore at CapU</u> <u>604.990.7810</u>	January 5
NEW WESTMINSTER	<u>Anvil Centre</u> <u>604.521.5050</u>	January 6 & 7
SURREY	<u>Surrey Arts Centre</u> <u>604.501.5566</u>	January 10–20
MISSION	<u>Clarke Theatre</u> <u>604.687.1644</u>	January 21
COQUITLAM	<u>Evergreen Cultural Centre</u> <u>604.927.6555</u>	January 23–27
WEST VANCOUVER	<u>Kay Meek Arts Centre</u> <u>604.981.6335</u>	February 1 & 2
MAPLE RIDGE	<u>The ACT Arts Centre</u> <u>604.476.2787</u>	February 3 & 4

#### ABOUT THE ARTS CLUB

The Arts Club Theatre Company is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, in particular the xʷmə θ kʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selilwítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. As we are all here together, we invite you to reflect on your relationship to these lands.

The Arts Club, now celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, is one of the largest not-for-profit theatre organizations in the country and is the principal gathering place for the theatrical arts in British Columbia. Comprising three unique venues across Vancouver, the Arts Club welcomes more than a quarter million guests annually, tours provincially and nationally, and engages students and artists alike through educational and professional programs.

Above all, the Arts Club is dedicated to the advancement of local artists telling stories from around the globe and, in particular, those of our region. From this, we believe that culture expands, an understanding of differences is nurtured, and art bursts forth. The Arts Club was founded in 1964 and is currently led by Artistic Director Ashlie Corcoran and Executive Director Peter Cathie White.

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