



**BENEATH
SPRINGHILL:**
THE MAURICE RUDDICK STORY

CREATED AND
PERFORMED BY
BEAU DIXON

“

A **spellbinding**
solo show



- STEPHEN HUNT (CALGARY HERALD)

Best Solo Performance
CALGARY CRITICS AWARDS

Best New Play
(TYA Division)

DORA MAVOR MOORE AWARDS

Best Individual Performance
(TYA Division)

DORA MAVOR MOORE AWARDS



TOURING PACKAGE



“
compelling
theatre



- LOUIS HOBSON (CALGARY SUN)

“
out of despair
comes
beautiful art

- GALEN EAGLE (PETERBOROUGH EXAMINER)

About BENEATH SPRINGHILL: THE MAURICE RUDDICK STORY

This sixty minute chamber musical chronicles the life of Maurice Ruddick, an African Canadian who survived the historic mining disaster in Springhill, Nova Scotia in 1958. Ruddick - an African Canadian - was awarded “Citizen of the Year” for saving the lives of his fellow workers.

This one man show will recall the events of seven miners trapped two miles beneath a small mining town, the effect it had on their rural Canadian community and the racial tension that surfaced as a result.

Actor Beau Dixon portrays 10 characters: Maurice; the six miners whose lives he was credited with saving; a news reporter; Valerie, one of Ruddick’s 13 children; and Ruddick’s wife, Norma.

Beneath Springhill is a story filled with tragedy, drama and comical - yet conflicting moments of hope and bravery.



A note from the Playwright

The Springhill mining disaster which occurred on October, 1958 was the most severe bump (underground earthquake) in North American history. The Bump devastated the people of Springhill, Nova Scotia for the casualties they suffered. It also devastated the town as the coal industry had been its economic lifeblood. The disaster actually became famous for being the first major international event to appear on live television broadcasts (on the CBC).

About four years ago, a fellow actor approached me and told me about an African Canadian coal miner who was awarded 'Citizen of the Year' for saving the lives of the last six surviving coal miners in the Springhill disaster. His name was Maurice Ruddick. He was the father of twelve, with a loving wife and a deep passion for music. In fact, it may be fair to say that his singing kept them alive while trapped two miles beneath the earth's surface for almost nine days.

I've always been fascinated with stories of courage and great challenges. As I interviewed friends and relatives of Maurice Ruddick, I learned a great deal about humanity, survival, and the strength of a community. His story of survival also encouraged me to ask some important questions; how do we deal with life and death situations? Where does truth lie when faced with difficult choices? What does it mean to be human? ...

Beneath Springhill has traveled throughout Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. I hope Maurice's story inspires you as much as it has for me.

Beau Dixon, Playwright



A note from the Director

This play has a cast of ten. Each character broken down, figured out, understood. They are as real and adored to me as the artist who created them. And I thank them all. But especially Maurice, who was and is a model for how one hopes to behave when things go very wrong. This was an integral event in our history. I am so proud to be a part of its telling.

Linda Kash, Director





Nominations and awards:

WINNER

Best Solo Performance

- Calgary Critics Awards

WINNER

Best New Play
(TYA Division)

- Dora Mavor Moore Awards

WINNER

Best Individual Performance
(TYA Division)

- Dora Mavor Moore Awards

NOMINATED

Best Touring Play

- Calgary Critics Awards

Best Director (Linda Kash)

- Dora Mavor Moore Awards

Best Male Performance

- Betty Mitchell Awards

BENEATH SPRINGHILL: THE MAURICE RUDDICK STORY

Created and Performed by **Beau Dixon**
Music and Lyrics by
Susan Newman and Rob Fortin
Dramaturged and Directed by **Linda Kash**

Set Design: **Gabe Robinson**
Sound Design: **Beau Dixon**
Production Management and Lighting: **Rob McInnis**
Tour Manager: **Esther Vincent**
Additional Voices: **Phil Oakley, Matt Gilbert,
Brad Brackenridge**



Beau Dixon PLAYWRIGHT / PERFORMER

Beau is a multi award-winning actor, playwright, and music composer. He is self taught. Selected theatre credits: *Don't Dress For Dinner* (Thousand Islands Playhouse / WCT / Gateway Theatre); *Farewell, My Lovely* (Vertigo Theatre); *Motherf@#!er With The Hat* (Alberta Theatre Project); *Othello* (Mysterious Entity); *The Real McCoy* (4th Line Theatre); *Next To Normal* (Tarragon). Selected writing credits: *From Here to Africville*, *Once A Flame* (Factory Theatre); *Other People's Heaven*, *FreedomBells* (Heritage Pavilion Stage). Apprentice music director for Dora Award Winning *Caroline, Or Change* (Acting Up Stage/ Obsidian Theatre); *Ragtime* and *Trouble In Tahiti* (Shaw Festival). In Peterborough, Ontario, Beau was inducted into the Pathway of Fame for his leadership in the arts. He is founding artistic director of Firebrand Theatre, an independent theatre company that has produced numerous plays throughout Canada. Beau has three recorded solo albums under his name.



Linda Kash DIRECTOR / DRAMATURG

Linda began her professional life at the Second City in Toronto. Linda has been a guest on *Seinfeld*, *Third Rock From The Sun*, *Monk*, *Cybill*, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, *Ellen*, and *Sabrina*, but she is primarily known as Canada's beloved Kraft Philadelphia Cream Cheese Angel. She also worked on Ken Finkleman's series for CBC *Hotel Metropolitan* (Gemini Award), *Hatching*, *Matching & Dispatching* with Mary Walsh, *Ron James Show* and *The Mercer Report*. Her list of films include *Waiting for Guffman* and *Best in Show*, the mutli nominated *Cinderella Man*, *Man of the Year*, and *Are We Done Yet*. Linda is an ongoing morning co-host for the radio station 96.7 fm and has co-created several shows for TV. Linda also has taught sketch writing and improvisation for Humber College. In 2009 she and her late husband founded The Peterborough Academy of Performing Arts. Daughter of the late great Canadian opera singer Maureen Forrester and the late great violinist/conductor Eugene

Kash, married 14 years to the late great Paul O'Sullivan. Her greatest production to date are her 3 beloved children.



Rob Fortin & Susan Newman MUSIC AND LYRICS

Peterborough, Ontario based husband and wife team. Susan Newman (music) and Rob Fortin (lyrics) met singing

Gilles Vigneault songs for a production at the Peterborough Summer Theatre in 1977. They honed their skills writing songs for Rehearsal In Progress Theatre Collective (Pioneer Chainsaw Massacre, 1988) and Ground Zero Productions (Rag, Tag and Bobtail, book by Don Bouzek, published in Canadian Theatre Review 1999). They spent many seasons performing, music directing and composing at 4th Line Theatre including that company's first full length musical, *Cavan Casanova* (book by Robert Winslow, 2003). Other credits include *Hungry: A musical Hansel & Gretel* (book by Kate Story, produced by Public Energy, 2008) and *A Nine Days' Wonder* (co-written with Susan Spicer and Martha Cockshutt). They are currently working on a new musical, *Freedom of Flight*, with Beau Dixon & Michele Coleman, and rehearsing Rob's settings of the Don Marquis archy and mehitabel poems for *Damned Be This Transmigration* (book by Kate Story). Susan continues to develop her choral piece, *A Sea Change Suite*, based on text from *The Tempest*. They also perform in the folk band Carried Away and the jazz vocal trio Chester Babcock.

Gabe Robinson SET DESIGN

Gabe studied fine arts at the University of Toronto. He has always had a passion and love for visual art. He has done art installation and set designs for 4th Line Theatre (Millbrook, ON) and Market Hall (Peterborough, ON). He has self-published a book of poetry and is a carpenter presently living on his farm in Lakefield, Ontario.

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Beau came to our school this past week and performed the show. He was absolutely **AMAZING!!!!!!** All of his performances have been fantastic. This one - being a one man show - **just highlighted his strengths as an actor and a playwright.**

If there is some type of award I could nominate him for, I will.

- LAURIE MUDD (ONTARIO ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL)



For more information, or to book
**BENEATH SPRINGHILL:
THE MAURICE RUDDICK STORY**
please contact:

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