University of Victoria

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MEDIA TIPS AND LEADS

UVIC RESEARCH SPOTLIGHTS "AH-HA!" MOMENTS IN THEATRE:

After analyzing hundreds of descriptions of people's most unforgettable theatre experiences, University of Victoria PhD candidate and theatre instructor Will Weigler has developed a guide for assisting community groups to create dynamic and compelling performances about everyday issues. In his recently completed doctoral dissertation "Engaging the power of the theatrical event," Weigler demonstrates how certain theatrical staging can lead audience members to have an "ah-ha!" moment.

"When I compared and contrasted what was happening on stage in all the descriptions in my study," says Weigler, "I discovered that even though the plays were very different, there were clearly identifiable patterns in the staging." He explores how the way the play was staged helped audiences to engage with the stories they were seeing in a fresh new way.

Applied theatre promotes education, social change and community building through the performing arts. As an applied theatre practitioner, Weigler collaborates with community groups to help them make and perform their own plays that will give audiences insights into the performers' cultural perspectives and experiences. By creating and teaching this vocabulary of theatrical staging, he hopes that people in a community will be able to increase their knowledge of how to turn their stories into powerful theatre.

Weigler is also the author of *Strategies for Playbuilding: Helping Groups Translate Issues into Theatre*, which won the 2002 Distinguished Book Award for outstanding contribution to the field from the American Alliance for Theatre and Education.

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Media Contacts:
Dr. Will Weigler (Theatre) at 250-382-7324 or willweigler@yahoo.com
Adrienne Holierhoek (Theatre) at 250-721-7992 or aholierh@uvic.ca

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