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Workman Arts presents the World Premiere of
Edward the “Crazy Man”
A play for children about mental illness and homelessness
by Emil Sher, based on the award-winning book by Marie Day

TORONTO, April 18, 2008...**Workman Arts**, recognized for their important work in raising awareness about mental health issues through theatre, visual art, film, and music, is proud to present the **world premiere** of ***Edward The “Crazy Man”***, a play for children about mental illness and homelessness. Written by **Emil Sher** based the award-winning children’s book by **Marie Day** of the same name, and directed by **Leah Cherniak**, ***Edward The “Crazy Man”*** previews June 8, **opens June 10** and runs to **June 19** at the **Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People**.

Edward might look different in his strange clothing made from other people’s garbage, but 12-year-old Charlie learns that he is a real person with a family past, with abilities and problems, and with the capacity to care for others. ***Edward The Crazy Man*** addresses difficult, yet important, issues relating to mental health, discrimination and difference in very accessible ways. Recommended for children aged 9 and up, the central message of tolerance and respect for fellow human beings is beautifully brought to life by the talented ensemble.

John Cleland, who performs the title role, has been seen in *Don’t Wake Me* at Factory Theatre, the Fringe hit *Autoshow*, the Dora-winning *Wrecked* (Roseneath Theatre), and spent 3 seasons at the Shaw Festival where notable plays included *The Millionairess* and *Lord of the Flies*. Cleland can also be heard as Lt. Petrovsky on CBC Radio’s *Afghanada*. **Victoria Danyluk** is currently studying for her BFA at York University, and is part of the York Acting Conservatory for which she performed in *Romeo & Juliette*, *The Waiting Room* and *As You Like It*. **Charles Revored** is a recent graduate of the Seneca College acting program whose credits include *The Ninja at Sekigahara* at the 2004 Fringe and the touring *No City Limits* youth project. **Lyon Smith** was seen in Aluna Theatre’s *For Sale*, and Moden Times’ *Macbeth*, as well as in Roseneath Theatre’s 2003/4 production of *Danny King of the Basement*. Set and costume design is by **Victoria Wallace** with sound design by **Thomas Payne**. The stage manager is **Andrew Dollar**.

After each one-hour performance, the actors and mental health professionals open up the discussion to the audience with a question and answer session meant to engage the issues in an interactive way. The play, combined with a strong study-guide developed by a team from the Toronto District School Board and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, creates a model for children to develop a more complex and compassionate view of the homeless people they encounter in their world.

Edward The “Crazy Man” was originally a book written by Marie Day, who was inspired to write this story by a homeless man she saw in her neighborhood who wore his own fantastic outfits. For years, she was an award-winning costume and stage designer for operas and plays all over North America. She is the author and illustrator of two other books, ***Dragon in the Rocks*** (1992) and ***Quennu and the Cave Bear*** (1999).

Playwright **Emil Sher** has been acclaimed for his works which include stage plays, screenplays, radio dramas and essays. His previous plays include ***Sanctuary, Derailed, Bluenose, Mourning Dove***; his lauded adaptation of ***Hana’s Suitcase*** has toured nationally and internationally. Director **Leah Cherniak** is the Co-Artistic Director (with Martha Ross) of Theatre Columbus for which she directed ***The Anger in Ernest and Ernestine***, among others. Other credits include ***Rune Arlidge*** and ***John and Beatrice*** for Tarragon Theatre.

Workman Arts was founded as **Workman Theatre Project** in 1988 and has produced 38 original new Canadian plays and toured over to over 30 theatres across Ontario and Manitoba. During its nearly 20-year history, the company has produced 8 annual Being Scene art exhibitions, 4 multidisciplinary arts festivals and 15 Rendezvous with Madness film festivals. Founder and Executive Director **Lisa Brown** is a former nurse at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre. In 2004 she received a Meritorious Service Medal from the Governor General of Canada for her work with the company.

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Previews June 8, Opens June 10 and runs to June 19, 2008
at the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, 165 Front Street East
Recommended for children 9 and up.

Performances: Sun June 8 1:30pm, Tues June 10 7pm (opening), Sat June 14 10:30am and 1:30pm, Sun June 15 at 10:30am and 1:30pm

School Matinees open to the public: Monday-Thursday 10:am and 12:45pm

Tickets through TICKET WEB at 1.888.222.6608 or online at www.ticketweb.ca

For school bookings and information, call 416-583-4339 ext 7 or shannon.quesnelle@camh.net

Based on the book *Edward the "Crazy Man,"* written and illustrated by Marie Day, published by Annick Press, 2002