

MUMP AND SMOOT

LETTERS

THEATRE RESOURCE CENTRE
317 ADELAIDE STREET WEST
SUITE #607
TORONTO, ONTARIO
M5V 1P8

January 29, 1989

To whom it may concern:

It gives me great pleasure to recommend Mike Kennard and John Turner to you. Simply, these two artists have a chemistry between them, that has a rare quality of potentially becoming one of Canada's great comic partnerships.

It's exhilarating to watch it happen on stage. In my experience of working with them, they are developing a fine sense of their craft; spontaneous and highly inventive in their concepts.

I completely endorse their project, and will make sure, I'm available to assist them in anyway I can.

I encourage you to do the same.

Sincerely,



Richard Pochinko
Artistic Director



PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

I am pleased to offer everyone associated with the production "Caged" my sincere congratulations on the debut of your play in New York.

Determination and artistic dedication have built a vibrant and exciting theatre community in Canada. The talent and genius of our artists form a vital part of our cultural life, and their work is appreciated by people from across the country.

You must all be very excited and proud that the creative effort and hard work which you have invested in "Caged" has culminated in such success. I am delighted to extend the traditional theatre wish of "Break a leg", and hope you have continued success in the future.

Brian Mulroney

OTTAWA
1991





American Repertory Theatre

and Institute for Advanced Theatre Training

Robert Brustein
Artistic Director

Robert J. Orchard
Managing Director

Ron Daniels
Associate Artistic Director

June 14, 1995

MUMP AND SMOOT
c/o David Johnston
290 Avenue Road #2
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M4V 2H1

Dear Michael, Richard, John and all,

We wanted to drop you a congratulatory note now that the Boston Theatre Awards have made "official" what we have known all along, namely that your visit was one of the finest theatrical events to be allowed within the city limits!

We are proud to have been the ones to sponsor CAGED AND FERNO. Thank you for your artistry and your humour.

With the warmest regards,



Rob Orchard
and the entire company of The American Repertory Theatre



SELECTION COMMITTEE

Carolyn Clay

Iris Fanger

Arthur Friedman

Joyce Kulhawik

Jon Lehman

Bill Marx

Caldwell Titcomb

May 10, 1995

Mump & Smoot
275 MacPherson Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1A4
CANADA

Dear Mump & Smoot,

On behalf of the Boston Theater Awards selection committee, I congratulate you for winning a 1995 award. As you know, you have been selected to receive the award for Outstanding Small Visiting Company.

We look forward to seeing you on Monday evening, June 5, 1995, at the Boston Harbor Hotel for the awards ceremony. There will be two complimentary tickets for the ceremony and buffet supper waiting for you at the door. We invite you to make brief remarks upon accepting your award. In case you would like to order more tickets for the event, I am enclosing an order form.

Please respond to Jennifer Clarke at Chamber Theater, (617) 542-9155, as early as possible to let us know that you will be there. To preserve the element of surprise, please keep your selection confidential until after the announcement on June 5th.

Sincerely,

Caldwell Titcomb
President

Canadian Consulate General



Consulat Général du Canada

750 N. St. Paul, Suite 1700
Dallas, Texas 75201
214/922-9806

23 June 1995


Mr. Michael Kennard
Mr. John Turner
Mr. Rick Kunst
290 Avenue Road
Toronto, Ontario M4V 2H1
Canada

Dear John, Mike and Rick:

I did not have a chance to say *hello* and how delighted I was after seeing "**Caged**" Friday night. It was absolutely outstanding and you were just superb as usual and even more!

I wish you some good times for the starting "pensive" period and all the best in the projects that will follow it. I sincerely do hope that you will honour Dallas again soon with your presence and bring us more such creative shows. Thank you again, and to Karen as well, for your unique contribution in bringing fine Canadian art to the U.S. Southwest.

Yours sincerely,


Yvon Turcotte
Consul

YT:sdl

STAN WOJEWODSKI, JR.
Artistic Director
Yale Repertory Theatre

March 1, 1994

Dear Subscriber:

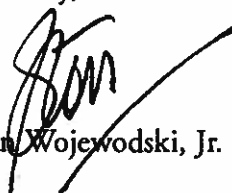
A year ago I stood at the rear of the University Theatre and watched Mump & Smoot in *Ferno*, running energetically around (and off and onto) the stage, gamely wending their way through comically nightmarish adventures. Through it all, these self-proclaimed “clowns of horror” were constantly engaging the audience with their humor – commenting on the behavior of audience members (especially latecomers), rummaging through purses in search of a piece of candy, and coaxing people into the action. The audience was responding: laughing, gasping, sometimes cringing, clearly loving it. Although Mump & Smoot spoke only a gibberish vaguely reminiscent of English, we all understood every moment.

I knew immediately that this experience, presented last year as a Special Event, was something I wanted to share with *all* of our members. I am delighted that Mump & Smoot, who have performed throughout the United States and Canada since their one-night engagement at the Rep last season, are returning with *Ferno* and another work, *Caged*, in which Mump tries to rescue Smoot from the clutches of the evil torturer Tagon.

Ferno and *Caged* will be performed in rotating repertory from March 18 through April 9. Depending upon which performance you attend, you will see one of these two exciting productions. Anticipating that you may want to see both, I've asked the Box Office to arrange a special discount. You can present your ticket stubs to the Box Office, or to the Concierge in the lobby after a performance of either play, and get tickets for the other play at prices ranging from \$10 to \$20.

Don't be late. And remember, it's only stage blood . . .

Sincerely,



Stan Wojewodski, Jr.



The Alliance for Children and Television
L'Alliance pour l'enfant et la télévision

Michael Kennard
& John Turner
Mump & Smoot
275 MacPherson Ave.
Unit #107
Toronto, ON M4V 1A4

November 26, 1996

Dear Michael & John,

I am writing to thank you for performing at ACT's 1996 Awards of Excellence.

The event has received accolades from many and a number of our board members have indicated that this was the best Awards show to date. You guys did an amazing job of spicing up the program. Your comic relief and energy helped move the show along at a fun clip. Thank you once again, and if we at ACT can be of assistance to you at anytime please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Judith Pyke
Operations Manager

April 29/94

DEAR MICHAEL : JOHN

du Maurier Ltd World Stage

What an amazingly exhilarating and completely exhausting experience! As we are in the midst of taking it all apart, we'd like to take this moment to thank you for your contribution to the success and extraordinary celebration of the **du Maurier Ltd World Stage '94**. Just in case you hadn't heard we broke all previous Box Office records in the twenty year history of **Harbourfront Centre** with well over 50 SELL OUTS and an overall attendance of 86%. **UNBELIEVABLE AND UNPRECEDENTED!** As this was such a critical year for the survival of the festival, we want to thank you for the major role you played in giving it a future. On behalf of our entire festival staff we simply can't thank you enough!!!

PS. The parties were a BLAST.

Michael

Michael Boucher
Artistic Director

Francesca

Francesca Accinelli
Assistant Director

Brenda

Brenda Darling
Administrative Producer

P.S. We look forward to your next production



Department of Music, Theatre and Dance
University Center for the Arts
1400 Remington Street
1778 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1778
(970) 491-5528
CSUSchooloftheArts.com

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

SUBJECT: Artistic Merit and Cultural Uniqueness of the work of *Mump and Smoot*, aka, John Turner and Michael Kennard and Touring Company Members

THE GENESIS OF MUMP AND SMOOT

I have seen *Mump and Smoot* perform several times in theatre venues in the US. I have watched their classes with students at UC San Diego where I was Department Chair of Theatre and Dance. They are the most imaginative and creative performers I have ever seen. Though there is not a word of English spoken in their performances (nor of any existing language) their performances are rich and precise, complex and challenging, moving and hilarious, and as nuanced as if they were in plays of Shakespeare or Chekhov.

Mump and Smoot have produced interactive, improvisational plays aimed squarely at adult audiences since 1988. Their work is very unique to clowning and performance. "Clown" makes most people think of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Red Skelton, Jackie Gleason, or the clowns in Ringling Brothers. *Cirque de Soleil* and *Blue Man Group* are examples of the most commercially successful example of contemporary clowning.

But as their extensive press packet confirms, *Mump and Smoot* are unique in their field. While they combine influences from sources as diverse as Monty Python, the Three Stooges, "I Love Lucy," Alfred Jarry, Samuel Beckett, and Antonin Artaud, they rise far above their influences. They elicit in their audiences a peculiar mix of sympathy, empathy, schadenfreude, and horror that stem from watching flawed individuals alternately fail and succeed at their petty but all too human schemes. *Mump and Smoot* shows are said to seem so spontaneous that people sometimes forget that they are scripted.

To obtain this effect, Michael Kennard and John Turner use an improvisational technique rooted in an art called "Canadian Clown" developed by late Canadian, Richard Pochinko, who, himself, borrowed from many traditions including the North American Indian, American and European traditions, to create a unique form of training Michael and John studied. They have also trained extensively with Fiona Griffiths and clown teacher Ian Wallace. Workshops with Philippe Gaulier in "Bouffon," (from the Lecoq methods of physical theatre), and John Towsen's physical comedy have also been very influential. This "horror clown" duo have performed and taught all across the globe, and have garnered multiple awards in Canada and the US. Apart from

numerous short sketches their primary repertoire includes six full length shows. *Something*-1989, *Caged*-1990, *Ferno*-1992, *Tense*-1997, *Something Else*-1998 and *Flux*-2002, *Cracked*-2010.

Their critical acclaim and popularity was developed through consistent sell-outs in the fringe festivals across Canada, which has led them on to enjoy successful runs in Toronto and at numerous North American regional theatres. These include: The Canadian Stage Company in Toronto (Canadian Comedy Award, Best Performers-*Something Else*, Dora Mavor Moore Awards, Best Production, Best Director-*Flux*), Yale Repertory Theatre (Associate Artists 1994-2001), The American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge (Boston Theatre Award for Outstanding Small Visiting Company), the La Jolla Playhouse in California (Drama-Logue award for best actors, Guest Artists, UC San Diego), The Dallas Theatre Centre, the Pittsburgh Public Theatre, the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, the Globe Theatre in Regina, and the World Stage Festival in Toronto. They also had the unique opportunity to perform at two festivals in Israel and teach a clown workshop at the University of Tel Aviv to a class made up of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Also serious educators (most clown performers do not teach beyond workshops and master classes), Michael and John are at the root of a renaissance in the art of clowning as they have been teaching Pochinko's techniques for over twenty years coast to coast to coast in Canada and the United States. In 1997, Mike and John opened The SPACE (Studio for Physical and Clown Exploration) and John started the Clown Farm. It is here they teach/taught clown, created and rehearsed their shows, produced monthly soirees, and directed and workshopped numerous student productions. The SPACE received no arts council funding; however, with the outstanding clown community support The SPACE was one of the most popular centers for independent theatre until they closed their doors in 2002 after six great years.

The Clown Farm is still thriving in Ontario. *Mump and Smoot* have received substantial financial support from the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council. Special mention should also be made of the Fringe Festivals of Canada. These festivals have been invaluable in the encouragement and development of *Mump and Smoot*, to say nothing of Canadian theatre in general.

The
FRINGE
of Toronto

September 19, 1989

Dear Mike and John,

We would like to thank you for participating in Toronto's first ever Fringe Festival. It is our sincere belief that the Fringe of Toronto '89 was one of the most important theatre events of the year, and you helped make it the success it was.

And it was a success. The final report demonstrates that box office attendance far exceeded our original projections. More than 5,000 people came out to see Fringe shows in the 15 days of the Festival, and a good many houses had sell-out crowds. In terms of revenue, this translates into more than \$20,000 that went back into the theatre community. This audience support, combined with the extraordinary support of the Toronto Press, gave this historic event the kind of profile it deserved.

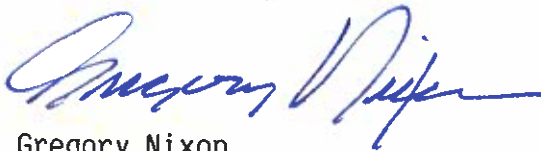
Furthermore, the high quality of the work presented, and the cooperative spirit which prevailed amongst all the participants, ensured that the Fringe was a great experience for all involved.

It all went to prove that a Fringe Festival can indeed work in Toronto (skeptics were many), and we are determined to do it again next year. We are confident that this first Fringe of Toronto is only the beginning of what will become a long and dynamic tradition of Fringe Festivals in Toronto.

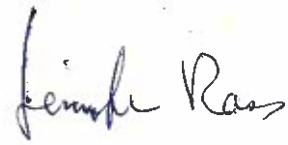
Thank you for being a part of the Fringe of Toronto 1989.

Wishing you the best of luck in your present endeavours,

Yours Sincerely,



Gregory Nixon



Jennifer Ross.