

Tuesdays team brings international hit home

> BY KATHLEEN OLIVER

Call it the little play that could.

Daniel Arnold and Medina Hahn were acting students at the University of Alberta when they started writing *Tuesdays & Sundays*, their first play, in 2000.

"We wrote it to showcase ourselves in Edmonton when we were coming out of school," Hahn recalls, interviewed in the Playwrights Theatre Centre library. "We thought, 'We'll do it in Edmonton and then we'll be done.'"

Hardly. Seven years later, they have performed the play well over a hundred times, across Canada and as far afield as Edinburgh, Prague, and New York City, where it made the *New York Sun's* best-of list for 2006. They've adapted it for radio, and a feature film is in the works.

Local audiences and critics (including this one) raved about the show when it played at the 2001 Vancouver Fringe Festival. The tight little two-hander returns to the Waterfront Theatre from Tuesday (August 7) to August 19.

Tuesdays & Sundays is based on a true story of young lovers in Prince Edward Island in the late 19th century. Hahn and Arnold play Mary and William, two innocents whose romance takes a tragic turn. Their story is told in spare, overlapping dialogue; the performers breathlessly trade off short lines. The play's minimalism is richly evocative and emotionally pure, and the creators' openhearted performances are a balm.

The piece has kept opening doors for their company, Dual Minds, over the years. "We've had a lot of people take us under their wing," Hahn says—from their original director-

dramaturge, Edmonton's Wojtek Kozlinski, whom Hahn credits with helping to hone the play's pared-down style, to the New York International Fringe Festival publicist who arranged for their show's photo to run with the reviews of that event in the *New York Times*. "We just lucked out," she recalls. "It's like fate—I think William and Mary are watching over us."

Hahn seems amazed that she and Arnold have received so much goodwill, but even in a brief conversation it's easy to see how her effervescent sweetness and genuine humility about her work would inspire generosity.

Not that it's all been easy going. "In Edinburgh it was hard," she recalls of their month-long run at the 2002 Edinburgh Fringe. "Everyone had distribution teams and we only had us. We'd get up at 8, we'd flier, we'd do our show at 2 every day until 3 or 3:30, then we'd flier all night, and at

11 o'clock at night we'd go to the assembly rooms to see if we'd been reviewed in the next day's papers." For the first two weeks they weren't, and they played to tiny houses. But soon critical accolades started pouring in, paving the way for other international opportunities.

Hahn admits that the play's unexpected success has sometimes meant having to turn down other work—ironic, given that she and Arnold, who both recently relocated to Vancouver, wrote the piece to showcase their skills. "I feel like I'm in a vortex sometimes because I'm doing the same play repeatedly," she says, "but then I realize it's such a gift." ♦