

Tragic tale of teenage lovers wins raves around the world

Tuesdays and Sundays got its start in Edmonton

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Vanya, Tom Wood's Alberta-themed retelling of Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, may be the centrepiece of the theatrical offerings being staged as part of Alberta Scene over the next two weeks, but it's a 45-minute, one-act play set in Prince Edward Island in 1887 that may prove to be the festival's biggest hit.

Tuesdays and Sundays, written and performed by Edmontonians Daniel Arnold and Medina Hahn, is a true story of two teenage lovers — William and Mary — whose relationship is destroyed by their youth and by their families and community, with tragic results.

Originally staged in 2000 as part of

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Medina Hahn

an Edmonton theatre festival, *Tuesdays and Sundays* has gone on to critical raves and numerous awards. At the Edmonton Fringe festival, it won awards for best actor, best actress and best new work.

After travelling to fringe festivals across Canada, where it picked up frequent “Best of Fringe” citations, the play went to Edinburgh's popular fringe festival, where its sold-out run, among 1,500 different



Daniel Arnold and Medina Hahn wrote and perform *Tuesdays and Sundays*.

productions, led the *Herald* to describe it as “unmissable.” When it ran in New York City's fringe festival — where it was named best production — the *New York Times* called it “engagingly humorous and touchingly sad,” while Broadway.com said it “deserves to make its mark in New York.” It has also been adapted for radio by the BBC and CBC.

Lise-Ann Johnson, the NAC's English theatre artistic associate director and the liaison there for Alberta Scene's theatre, says *Tuesdays and Sundays*, running through Sunday at the NAC Studio, is a “fantastically lovely one-act play that is told in quite a poetic way. It's beautiful writing and fantastic acting.”

For co-writer and actress Hahn, the play's success has been astounding. “It keeps touching people,” she says, “and we get to go around the world, so why would we say no? It continues to stun us.”

Hahn and Arnold, now in their late 20s, were students at the University of Alberta's Conservatory program when they began working on *Tuesdays and Sundays*, the basis for which Arnold discovered in an old anthology of Canadian short stories. “He lived across the street from me, and we'd go to school till 10 at night, and then I'd get home at 11 after rehearsals, put my pyjamas on and run back over to his house, and we'd be at the computer until three in the morning. And then we'd just repeat it.”

That was at the same time as the Columbine shooting, she remembers, an event that resonated with the story of the young P.E.I. lovers.

“We were saying, ‘Look at our world now,’” Hahn says, “And then we came across this story, and we realized it was always happening. People were always hurting each other — out of pain or fear or something, and that's where it got us: wanting to know what makes people do the things they do, and why doesn't love prevail? Why does fear take over so often?”