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Presentation Series Launches With An Award Winning Production of Hamlet *Hamlet (solo) has been capturing audiences with its 'bare-bones' approach to Shakespeare*

SAINT JOHN – After a successful run last year, Saint John Theatre Company plans to continue the popular Presentation Series for the 2012-2013 season. The Presentation Series was introduced last season as an extension of the company's annual line-up which includes large stage productions performed at Imperial Theatre as well as smaller scale in house works as part of the intimate in-house Studio Series. *"Having artists come in from across Canada is a wonderful way to present works that have received acclaim abroad,"* adds Stephen Tobias – Executive Director, *"we feel our space provides a great venue for smaller scale, cutting edge works to be brought in for Saint John audiences to enjoy".*

The first show in the season's presentation line-up is *Hamlet (solo)* which is presented by the Hope and Hell Theatre Company. *Hamlet (solo)* is an exciting one-man version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* performed by Raoul Bhaneja who has impressed audiences for over a decade with appearances in major feature films like *The Sentinel*, *Ararat* and *Weirdsville*, numerous television projects such as *Train 48* and *The Dresden Files* and is one of the few Canadians to have ever performed at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London, U.K.. Directed by Brooklyn based OBIE Award Winner Robert Ross Parker, the production has received rave reviews across Canada.



Bhaneja and Parker began developing the project in 2000 with members of the Soupepper Theatre Company. *Hamlet (solo)* combines the ancient art of storytelling and the modern "one-man show". This thrilling evening focuses on the three most essential elements of theatre: The Actor, The Text and The Audience. This production is best described as "bare bones" in its presentation with Bhaneja playing seventeen parts in a two-hour version using only Shakespeare's text. In describing his one-man version of *Hamlet*, Bhaneja says, *"For many of us, our most powerful experience with the play Hamlet occurred on our first reading of it – outside of the theatre – where we, alone, had to conjure up the setting, characters and drama. With this production, the audience is guided through the actual text, almost in the way an ancient storyteller might do, where the actor/storyteller provides an outline of a character upon which the viewer extrapolates."*

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