



Our Souls presents the World Premiere of

THE TIES THAT BIND

A brutally dark comedy

created & performed by
JAMES INCE

*“Do you understand?
Does anyone understand?”*

THE TIES THAT BIND is creator-performer **James Ince**'s semi-autobiographical solo show about the facts and fictions society tells itself regarding mental illness happening **November 4th - 8th** at the **Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace**. Eight years of love, humiliation, growth and painful existence have gone into the creation of this brutally dark comedy about living life as less-than-“normal”. Tickets are available online at www.artsboxoffice.ca, or by phone at **416-504-7529**.

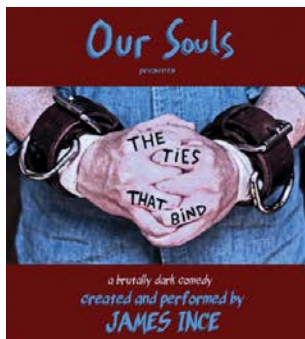
Sam Ward has spent most of his life trying to deal with the fact that he is not normal, which *is* normal to him. Plagued by peers, bosses, and parents who cannot understand how he is feeling — but condemn him for it — Sam finds himself alone and broken. With humour and humanity to guide him, Sam tells a true story of surviving mental illness, rather than the stigma of suffering from it.

Mental illness still carries a negative connotation in today's society despite affecting 1 in 4 Canadians. With that stigma, comes shame; and out of that shame comes lack of treatment, support and understanding for those who need it. *“We must all learn and relearn how to have compassion. “With that compassion, we can help create a better world, in which to live better, to live gently and well. And to be well,”* says **Ince** — whose first play, *Fragile*, premiered at the Toronto Fringe Festival in 2001. **THE TIES THAT BIND** continues an ongoing conversation in the public forum that can help create compassion, awareness, understanding and support.

Jame Ince (*The Winged Man*, SummerWorks; *The Penis Project*, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre) plays Sam Ward — as well as everyone else — directed by **Istvan Dugalin** (as playwright: *The Atomic Tradition*, Sterling Theatre Company; as film director: *The Modern Things*) in this premiere production and by **Tony Matthews** (as writer/actor: *Robbie Jensen: The 12 Steps of Christmas*, The NoHo Arts Center; *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, The Palm Canyon Theatre — Desert Theatre League Nominee) during development. Lighting design by **Christopher Ross** (red light district Theatre Company; Monkeyman Productions). Sound Design by Dora-nominated **Paul Humphrey** (*Glenn*, *True West*, *Soulpepper*; Theatre Rusticle; solo CD: *“A Rumour of Angels”*). Stage & Production managed by **Heather Bellingham** (*Panamania 2015*, *Summerworks*, *The Toronto Fringe Festival*, *Hamilton Fringe Festival*).

Performance information for **THE TIES THAT BIND**

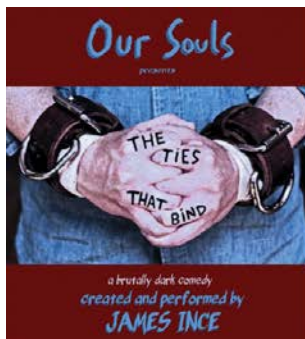
Venue: Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace (16 Ryerson Ave, Toronto)
Dates: **November 4th -8th** (Preview November 4th , **Opening Night Nov 5th**)
Wednesday – Saturday @ **7:30pm** *please note early curtain time
Saturday matinee @ 2:00pm *\$20 advance or PWYC at the door
Tickets: **\$20 - \$30**
Via www.artsboxoffice.ca, passemuraille.ca or **416-504-7529**



Media Contact: James Ince, 416.912.0969
oursouls@yahoo.ca

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

James Ince	Playwright & Performer
Istvan Dugalin	Director
Tony Matthews	Director
Heather Bellingham	Stage & Production Manager
Paul Humphrey	Composer/Sound Designer
Christopher Ross	Lighting Design
Jennifer Radford (of ThePublicityPod.com)	Lead Publicist & Graphic Designer



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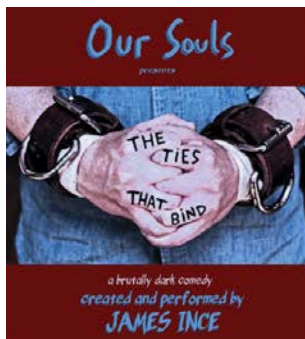
CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOS



James Ince **Playwright & Performer**

James has been performing in and around Toronto for more than 20 years. **THE TIES THAT BIND** is his second play and first full-length play as playwright and performer. His first play, *Fragile*, debuted at the Toronto Fringe Festival in 2001. Theatre highlights include: *Our Souls Theatre*, Victoria Fringe; *The Winged Man*, SummerWorks; *The Penis Project* and *The Penis Project, The 2nd Coming* for Michael McKid, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre; *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, Bloor Cinema. Film credits include: *Psyched* and *Offline - Introvert Type B*,

Raised Eyebrow Productions. James studied for four years under Yo Mustafa at West End Studio and then at The New School of Drama in Toronto.



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Istvan Dugalin *Director*

Istvan has acted in such productions as Neil Simon's *Biloxi Blues* at the Annex Theatre, as well as Morris Panych's *7 Stories* with the former Young Actors Performance Troupe of Toronto. He had his directing debut with his production of Peter Shaffer's *Equus* for Young Actors.

Istvan has produced and directed several short films. The first, *I Shall Fear* was shown at the 1999 Victoria Independent Film and Video Festival. *Put That Away*, was screened as part of the Digital Gun Awards in Toronto (2003). Istvan's first feature was the indie horror film *The Modern Things* (2003). Most recently, he's been involved with the Viewpoint Film Challenge

as both a filmmaker and sponsorship coordinator.

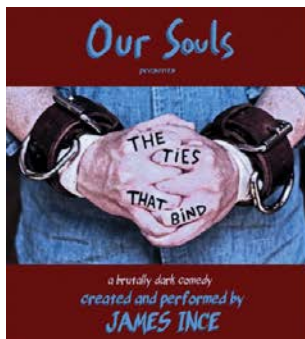
This past summer, Istvan's one-act play *The Atomic Tradition* premiered as part of Sterling Theatre Company's June One Acts. Istvan is currently a senior writer for Mooney on Theatre.



Tony Matthews *Director*

Tony came to Toronto five years ago to work in the world of animated films and visual effects, and has been thrilled with the arts community he has found in Toronto. He is excited to be back in the theatre making his directorial debut with **THE TIES THAT BIND**. Theatre work includes *Robbie Jensen: The 12 Steps of Christmas*, (writer, actor), The NoHo Arts Center; *The North Hollywood Canteen* (writer, actor), Fire Rose Productions; *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, The Palm Canyon Theatre — Desert Theatre League Nominee). Animation/Visual Effects: *Lego Marvel Super Heroes* (Producer); *Gnomeo & Juliet*, *Astro Boy* (Production Manager); *Dolphin Tale* (VFX Producer); *Frost* (VFX Producer — CFC Award Winner). Tony

has served on the board of trustees of Fire Rose Productions and The Centre for Spiritual Living, Toronto.



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Christopher Ross
Lighting Designer

Christopher Ross has extensive experience as a technician, stage manager, and production manager. He has worked in most of Toronto's independent theatres, and has been a venue technician for the Fringe Festival, the Next Stage theatre festival, and the Summerworks performance festival. He is a company member of both the red light district theatre company and Monkeyman Productions, and works with many independent theatre companies in an advisory capacity. He is

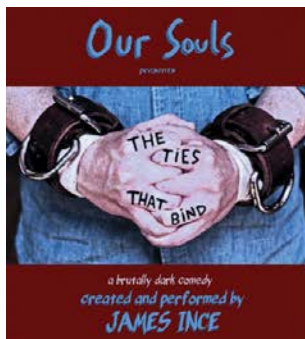
currently the head technician of the Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace.



Heather Bellingham
Stage & Production Manager

SM: *Aperture, Transfusions, Holy Mothers* (Summerworks), *The Big 'What Now?'*, *Yaíma Sáez y su grupo "Live in Concert"* (Panamania '15), *Served, Centre of The Universe, Then He Wakes Up* (Toronto Fringe), *Shove It Down My Throat* (Videofag), *Mahmoud, The Lost Sagas of Tjorvi the Flaccid* (Pandemic), *Becky Shaw, The Lover* (Sterling), *Hamlet* (Unit 102), *Drink With Death* (Soutus/Weatherstone), *Dance Like A Man* (Sawitri), *MSM* (World Pride '14), *Bachelorette* (Guest/Hinkson), *Three More*

Sleepless Nights, Suddenly Last Summer (The Playwright Project), *The Seagull* (The Chekhov Collective), *Shrew* (RedOne), *Warriors* (Stuck in the Mud), *The Anger in Ernest and Ernestine, The Dinner*(pivotalarts), *Boeing-Boeing* (Rogue Theatre Co.), *A Really Bad Play* (froMast Productions), *The Washing Machine* (Next Stage), *Crush* (Optic Heart). **Assistant SM:** *Mini Pops Kids* (K-Tel), *Shrek The Musical* (Lower Ossington Theatre), *Dutchman* (Summerworks), *Departures and Arrivals* (UTSC TAPS). **Apprentice SM:** *Vigil* (Talk Is Free), *Someone Else* (Crows & Canadian Stage), *Between The Sheets* (Nightwood). **PA:** *Gimme One Riddim* (NextSteps), *Waiting for Godot, Measure for Measure, Mary Stuart* (Stratford), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Nightwood). **PM:** *The Djinns of Eidgah* (Hamilton Fringe)



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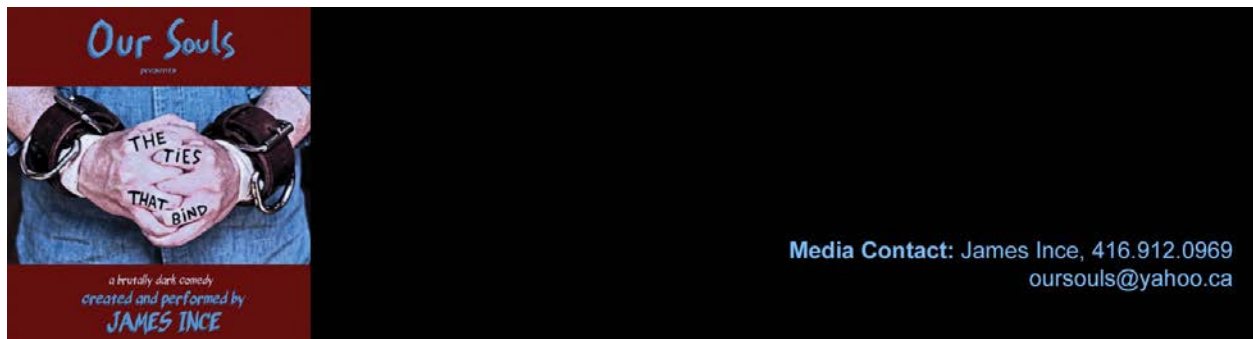


Paul Humphrey **Composer/Sound Designer**

For Souleppper Theatre: Composer/Sound Designer for *Glenn* (Dora Nominee), *The Gigli Concert*, *True West*, *Farther West*, *High Life*. OTHER THEATRE: Composer: *Yankee Tavern* at The Grand Theatre, London, Ont.

Composer/Musical Director for Briefcase Productions (*Old King Cole*, *Hunter's Moon*, *Savage Heat*, *Reversing Falls*, *Dads*); For Theatre Rusticle: *Dinner at 7:30* and *The Stronger Variations* at Buddies in Bad Times, *Time Stands Still* (TSS Collective) at Theatre Passe Muraille, (*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (The Red One Theatre Collective) *Waiting for Lewis* (Theatre Direct Canada).

OTHER: Lead singer for the 80's new wave band Blue Peter, U-Know Award winner (Best Male Vocalist, Best New Artist); singer/songwriter for Broken Arrow. Paul is currently working on the follow-up to his solo CD, "A Rumour of Angels" and enjoying reunion shows with Blue Peter.



PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

Like many stories, there are some that should be told, then there are some that must be told; **THE TIES THAT BIND** is one that must be and is not told often enough, the story of the survivor; of the person who lives with Mental Illness, not the sufferer.

Sam Ward's story came to me about eight years ago, while I was doing paintings about dark emotions and despair. The writing and the play itself really came about as a need for artistic expression. I found myself at that time, painting the same painting, or emotion, over and over again, not able to convey it in just the right manner. I thought to myself, "Perhaps the medium is not right." So I took pen to paper and began writing the story, not knowing where it was going or what the outcome would be. Just words, emotions and lists of words — a thesaurus of sorts, some of which still exist in the final piece.

Then, seemingly out of another world, another dimension, perhaps a past, "Sam Ward" came bursting into my studio, held me down and told me "*I will not let you up nor leave you alone until you have told my story.*" I have been a happy prisoner ever since. For several years, I would put pen to paper and write for a time and then put it aside. Within a month or two, "Sam Ward" would break down the door again and say "*I will never leave you alone until you are finished...until WE are finished.*" The journey was like an affliction that was a joy and a blessing to have. Finally, we are reaching the end of our journey together, in bittersweetness.

The semi-autobiographical script took form a few years ago and slowly, carefully, yet methodically, we have always trudged forward to having **THE TIES THAT BIND** and Sam Ward's story finally and properly told.

Sam Ward wants you to know, to understand. Does anyone understand? Life, work, family, the lifelong effects of bullying, brutality, depression, homophobia, loneliness, rejection, S.I. HRT, GIC'S, RSP'S, endless line-ups, disloyal friend, depression, gut-wrenching disappointment, depression.

Mental Illness affects all of us. 1 in 4 people will experience some form of Mental Illness at least once in their lifetime. For some, it lasts a lifetime. Sadly, for others, and far too often, Mental Illness ends their life. Mental Illness still carries an awful stigma in today's society. With that stigma, comes shame; and out of that shame comes lack of treatment, support and understanding for those who need it.

THE TIES THAT BIND is really all about society's perception of Mental Illness. What is normal? The ultimate goal of this play, is to help erase that stigma and to continue the conversation that will help create compassion, awareness, understanding and support. We must all learn and relearn how to have compassion. With that compassion, we can help create a better world, in which to live better, to live gently and well. And to be well. Be Well.

James Ince, August 2015



PRODUCTION NOTES

THE TIES THAT BIND is a single actor, multi character play that explores personal truths, societal perceptions, and many real implications of mental illness. It also happens to be a very funny, touching, sometimes harsh story of the intriguing, wild, brutal, and frankly not unusual life of our protagonist.

The structure of **THE TIES THAT BIND** follows Sam Ward through his induction interview into a mental health institution. We hear his story as told to his so-called care givers and we get a glimpse of Sam, of our world, and of our responses to mental illness.

What first attracted me to **THE TIES THAT BIND** was the nature of the subject and the vision for this piece that **James Ince** presented. I would be lying if I said I did not initially find this this subject matter slightly uncomfortable. But as a storyteller that's what got me hooked.

This show was written entirely by James and has a very specific point of view and artistic statement, so as a director, I see my first job as helping present a work of art that is professionally crafted to do what art does: to intrigue, to entertain, to perturb, to inspire.

Secondly, I look at how an audience may be affected by this. We are hearing the reality of Sam's life, and we are along for a journey. Sometimes the journey is hysterically funny, sometimes familiar and touching, and often in your face. Brutal even. This is Sam's reality. I have to ask myself, "*Is it mine? Is this all real?*" There is no doubt that this is the reality Sam has experienced. What would my experience be in the same situations?

As we learn more about Sam, his thoughts, his fears, his history, we end up knowing him, and through knowing, caring about him. There may be parts of Sam that are not likeable but we see the human being there and we relate to that human. We want to know that this imperfect human being is being given help to heal and to live. And we wonder if we as a society have the capability or empathy to actually help.

I hope to inspire the audience to examine their feelings toward mental illness, toward survivors of trauma and bullying. My goal as a director with this piece is not to provide simple answers, but to give us space to ask important questions. With **THE TIES THAT BIND** we are creating a space where it is safe to question one's relationship to this subject, or the relationship to their feelings.

Tony Matthews



FAST FACTS ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

From the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

What is mental illness?

Mental illness is the term used to refer to a variety of mental disorders that can be diagnosed. **Mental disorders are health conditions that are characterized by alternations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.**

- Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, friend or colleague.
- **20% of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime.**
- **Mental illness affects people of all ages, educational and income levels, and cultures.**
- Approximately 8% of adults will experience major depression at some time in their lives.
- Suicide accounts for 24% of all deaths among 15-24 year olds and 16% among 25-44 year olds.
- **Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in both men and women from adolescence to middle age.**

What causes it?

- A complex interplay of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors causes mental illnesses.
- **Almost one half (49%) of those who feel they have suffered from depression or anxiety have never gone to see a doctor about this problem.**
- Stigma or discrimination attached to mental illnesses presents a serious barrier, not only to diagnosis and treatment but also **to acceptance in the community.**

What is the economic cost?

- The economic cost of mental illnesses in Canada for the health care system was estimated to be **at least \$7.9 billion in 1998 – \$4.7 billion in care, and \$3.2 billion in disability and early death.**
- An additional \$6.3 billion was spent on uninsured mental health services and time off work for depression and distress that was not treated by the health care system.

How does it impact youth?

- It is estimated that 10-20% of Canadian youth are affected by a mental illness or disorder – **the single most disabling group of disorders worldwide.**
- Once depression is recognized, **help can make a difference for 80% of people who are affected**, allowing them to get back to their regular activities.
- Mental illness is increasingly threatening the lives of our children; with **Canada's youth suicide rate the third highest in the industrialized world.**
- **In Canada, only 1 out of 5 children who need mental health services receives them.**

Source: www.cmha.ca/media/fast-facts-about-mental-illness/#.VCBPwBbA_Qo

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presented by



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PHOTOGRAPHS

Promotional photos for media use are available for download here:

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All photos by Julia Fice (below are thumbnails only)

