



# YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE.

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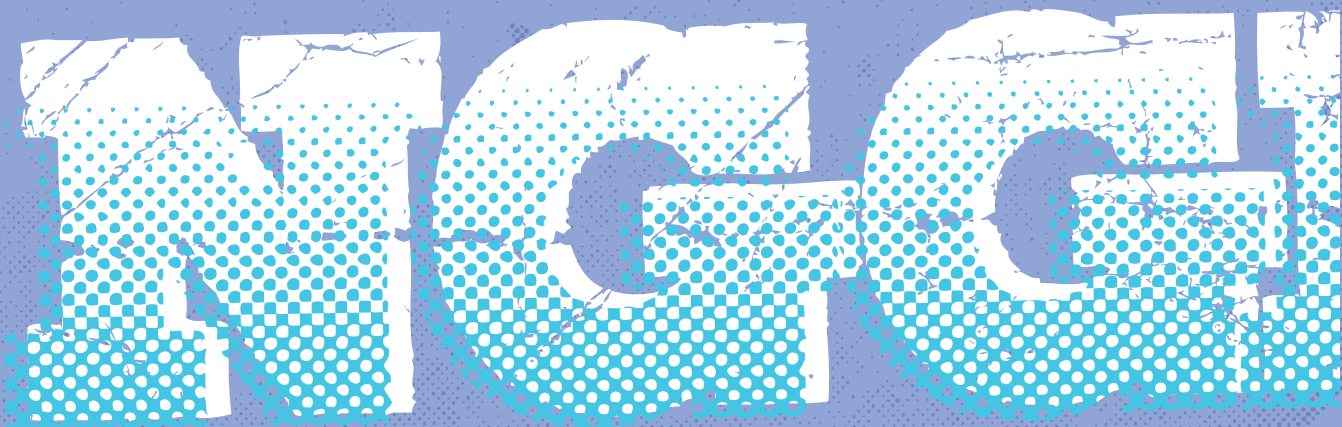
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## WOULD YOU SAY THE NAME OF THIS PLAY?

### (nggrfg)

WRITTEN BY BEREND MCKENZIE

STUDIO | NOV. 21 TO DEC. 3, 2011

# STUDY GUIDE

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# LIVE THEATRE IS AN ACTIVE EXPERIENCE!

## THEATRE IS A TWO-WAY EXCHANGE:

Actors are thrilled when the audience is engaged and responsive. We want you to laugh, cheer, clap and really enjoy your time at the theatre. However, please be considerate audience members. Talking, whispering and excessive movement during a live performance is distracting for the actors and disruptive for other audience members.

## GROUND RULES:

As members of the audience, you play a vital part in the success of a theatrical performance. Please review the following theatre rules with your students prior to your visit to YPT.

- Food, drinks, candy and gum are not permitted in the theatre.
- YPT is a nut-free zone, as many children have severe, life-threatening allergies. NO PEANUTS or NUT products may be brought to our theatre.
- No electronic devices are permitted in the theatre, because they affect our sound system.
- Photography, audio and video recording during a performance are prohibited by the Canadian Theatre Agreement.
- Students are not permitted to leave the theatre unless they are accompanied by an adult.

## ENHANCE YOUR VISIT:

Encourage your students to look at different aspects of the production. Before the show, identify tasks for your class. Have one group of students focus on the set, another listening for the music and sound effects, a third watching the lighting and a fourth, the costumes. Compare notes after the show about what they observed. Your students will be more informed and they'll be surprised by how much they noticed. Ask them to prepare one question to ask the actors after the show during the Q&A. Brainstorm with them about possible topics to get the most out of the experience!

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## THE STUDY GUIDE

### THEMATIC OVERVIEW

In this one-man show based on his life, Berend McKenzie tells the story of Buddy, a boy growing up both black and gay, and his experiences of marginalization and oppression as a child, a teenager and a young man. In *Would You Say the Name of This Play? (nggrfg)*, we travel with Buddy as he reflects on these events, learns the courage to be himself, and develops the strength to confront injustice.

At the heart of this season is an exploration of the connection between power and transformation. As part of this focus on “The Power of Change”, *Would You Say the Name of This Play? (nggrfg)* highlights the promise of language in challenging the status quo and making change. The play pushes the audience to consider how oppression operates and to think critically about how we might tackle issues of social injustice in our own lives. Told from the perspective of Buddy, *Would You Say the Name of This Play? (nggrfg)* examines the interconnected and complex issues of homophobia and racism in a candid manner and, as a result, students will connect with this show and will want to delve more deeply into its themes when they return to school.

This guide strives to promote both a reflective and practical response to the central issues and questions the play explores. The units of study push young people to reflect on and reconsider their attitudes and responses to stereotypes and issues of oppression. The pre-show lesson focuses mainly on understanding how stereotypes operate and the ways in which they lead to violence against ourselves and others, while the post-show unit places a greater emphasis on challenging entrenched language and behavioural practices and developing proactive approaches to confront social injustice. Through participation in these activities, students are encouraged to recognize and change their behaviour and are provided with opportunities to work together to make change in their home and school communities.

## STRANDS AND CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Social Sciences and the Humanities, Health and Physical Education, Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity



CHARACTER EDUCATION CONNECTIONS: Respect, Honesty, Empathy



THEMES: Overcoming Stereotypes, Bravery, The Right to Be Yourself

## THE COMPANY THE CAST

Buddy **Berend McKenzie**

## CREATIVE TEAM

Co-Directors **Allen MacInnis and Tanisha Taitt**  
 Playwright **Berend McKenzie**  
 Lighting Design **Michael Kruse**  
 Sound Design **Gavin Fearon**  
 Stage Manager **Kai-Yueh Chen**  
 Dramaturgy **Stephen Colella and Darrin Hagen**

## SYNOPSIS

In a series of stories based on his life, actor-writer Berend McKenzie presents his one-man show about Buddy, a boy growing up both black and gay, who is the target of taunts and marginalization. Buddy fluctuates between being an outcast, a rebel, a dropout and a survivor. Ultimately, he finds the power to face down the two very different, wounding words that affected his life.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Discrimination</b>	to make a distinction categorically rather than individually	<b>Protagonist</b>	the principal character in a work of fiction, film, drama, etc.
<b>Equal</b>	sameness; uniform in operation or application	<b>Race</b>	a group of persons with some similar biological traits; biologically, race is described today not simply in overt physical features, but according to genetic characteristics like blood groups and metabolic processes, and the groupings indicated by these factors seldom coincide very neatly with those put forward in the past; many now consider race to be more of a social construct than an objective biological fact
<b>Equality</b>	the quality or state of being equal	<b>Racism</b>	the invalid belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial difference produces an inherent superiority of a particular race; racial prejudice or discrimination
<b>Equity</b>	fairness; even-handedness	<b>Sex</b>	either the male or female division of a species, differentiated according to the reproductive functions
<b>Gender</b>	socially constructed ideas and expectations of characteristics about a particular sex	<b>Sexual</b>	of or associated with sex or the sexes
<b>Heterosexism</b>	the erroneous belief that everyone is, should be, or should wish to be heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is inherently normal and/or superior	<b>Sexuality</b>	the possession of sexual powers; capacity for sexual feelings; sexual orientation
<b>Homophobia</b>	the irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or homosexuals	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	the direction of one's sexual interest or attraction
<b>Human Rights</b>	the basic rights held to belong to every living person; race and sexual orientation are included in the prohibited grounds of discrimination	<b>Stereotype</b>	a widely held, but fixed and oversimplified image of a particular type of person or thing
<b>Ideal</b>	a perfect type, or a conception of this; existing only as an idea	<b>Tableau</b>	a silent and motionless group of people arranged to represent a dramatic scene
<b>Monologue</b>	a long speech in a play, film, etc., spoken by one actor, especially when alone; used to speak thoughts aloud to the audience		
<b>Norm</b>	an established standard of behaviour shared by members of a social group to which each member is expected to conform		
<b>Oppression</b>	the exercise of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust manner; the feeling of being heavily burdened by troubles, adverse conditions, anxiety, etc.		
<b>Prejudice</b>	a preconceived judgment or opinion without just grounds or sufficient knowledge		

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

There are rare instances when you read something and know even before its completion that you have been altered.

Such was the way I felt upon encountering the script for *Would You Say The Name Of This Play? (nggrfg)* for the first time. Before I began reading it I had no idea what to expect from a play originally called NGGRFG, other than possibly a heaping dose of anger. What I experienced was something altogether different -- a deeply affecting, heartwarming surprise. The script took me on an adventure that was shocking and smart, lively and hilarious, and very, very moving.

The story of Buddy, a young boy who grows up black and gay and carries the deep scars of bigotry into adulthood, the one-man show *Would You Say The Name Of This Play? (nggrfg)* is a powerful tale of discrimination, familial love and loss, self-doubt & self-discovery. Beautifully written and performed by Berend McKenzie, the show runs the emotional gamut from tear-jerking to laugh-out-loud funny. Through a series of vignettes, we are welcomed into Buddy's life at various ages. We witness an 8-year-old Buddy learn that his bed-wetting problem is the result of the "laziness" that comes with having black blood. We witness him as a 20-year-old aspiring actor longing to impress his agent by trying to not come across "so gay". We watch him hit rock-bottom in a police interrogation room at 29. Additional tales of defining moments in Buddy's life have equal impact, as we become increasingly invested in his challenges and triumphs.

Yet despite the specificity of Buddy's circumstance, the brilliance of *Would You Say The Name Of This Play? (nggrfg)* is in the universality of its story. One need not be black or gay to understand the pain of being the outsider. At some point in our lives, each of us has felt like we don't quite fit in. Most of us went through a period as an adolescent when all we wanted was to look in the mirror and see someone looking back that would be accepted in the eyes of our families and peers. The play addresses issues beyond racism and homophobia -- stereotyping, bullying and exclusion are also part of the landscape -- and presents a rich array of characters, all of whom play a significant role in Buddy's story. As his interactions with the people in his life directly affect his self-perception, you root for him to embrace who he is and find his way through this emotional maze.

*Would You Say The Name Of This Play? (nggrfg)* is a special piece of theatre, one which I have no doubt will be a transformative experience for students and a wonderful launching point for further discussion. I am honoured to have co-directed this show with Allen MacInnis and to bring to a young audience this beautiful story, that of a young man whose struggle is as unrelenting as his spirit.

Yours truly,

Tanisha Taitt  
Co-Director

## INTERVIEW WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT: BEREND MCKENZIE

**Would You Say the Name of This Play? (nggrfg) is both written and performed by you. Is there anything challenging about performing a play that you have written, especially one that is based on your own life experiences?**

Whenever an artist pulls from his or her own life it can place them in a vulnerable spot. Writing this show has done that for me. I had to reach into some very personal events, some of which I had buried in my memories. Many were embarrassing to my family and me. I had to dig deeply.

I have had moments of utter terror during this process. I want people to like the show and connect with it. I am terrified every time I step out on stage. Because *nggrfg* is a one-man show, I know that once I step out onto that stage, everything depends on me. There is no one who can help me if, God forbid, anything goes wrong.

I am very grateful that *nggrfg* has touched a chord in the vast, multifaceted Canadian Theatre landscape. This show has just been carried by so many. I cannot thank them enough.

**Why did you choose to create this play as a one-man show?**

As a black, gay man with a high voice, I was finding it hard to find work as an actor. Shows like *Les Misérables*, for instance, don't often have people of colour. They definitely don't have any openly gay characters. That being said, *Les Misérables* is one of my favorite musicals.

I have always been told that I am not black enough, that I am too gay, or that I am "un-castable". I love acting, and I wrote *nggrfg* specifically tailored to my unique personality. This show has given me the gift of finding moments of my true self.

**What is your favorite part of *nggrfg*?**

I love Buddy. To me, he is a total optimist. He is strong and vulnerable. He is brave. Every time he gets knocked down, he bounces right back. My favorite part of the show is the story "Tassels". It shows Buddy and his father at their purest.

**One of the themes in this play is the power of language. What is the connection between language and social change?**

I was taught that words like "nggr" and "fg" were bad, so I was told not to say them. I have found that not using a word does not take away its power or history. I was terrified of "nggr". I hated the word "fg". I don't anymore. I have come to respect them and I realize that it is not the words that are bad or wrong; it is the intention behind them. I have found that with the title of this show alone, people are using the words "nggr" and "fg" in a way that they never would have before. Students are being bullied daily and these words and others are being used as weapons. When I think about slavery and the word "nggr" or the Queer movement 50 years ago and the word "fg", I see how far we have come. If we don't talk about the words they get stronger. These words show us where we have been. Speaking them and discussing our own feelings about them, I believe, takes away their power and hopefully teaches us to respect others.

**What is the most important thing that you want people to take away from the show?**

These words are being used to suppress others in schools across this country. These words, used as weapons, hurt no matter who you are. We can only learn from them if we speak of our experiences with them.

My hope is that this show shows people that homophobia, racism and bullying are wrong and that we have the power to change their meaning and our behaviour.

I have been witness to schools suffering from rampant homophobia and bullying and after seeing this show, the students have written declarations to stop homophobia, racism and bullying in their hallways.

This is the power of youth. And it is awesome to see.

## UNITS OF STUDY

### CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

By participating in these activities, students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the dynamics of human interaction and the challenges involved
- Identify and assess the major influences that contribute to individual and group behaviour (i.e. the mass media, environment, etc.)
- Describe how society and culture affect individual perceptions and expressions of sexuality
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of respect for self and respect for others in reducing conflict in their personal lives
- Use social skills effectively in groups and enhance relationships
- Identify the factors that contribute to positive relationships with others
- Demonstrate an understanding of the media's role in perpetuating **stereotypes**.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the potentially damaging effects of **stereotypes**, and how they can lead to abuse and violence against ourselves and others.
- Demonstrate an understanding that “going along with the crowd” can involve sacrificing one's own principles, as well as infringing on the rights of others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of **discrimination** and exclusion in social relationships
- Identify aesthetic and technical aspects of drama works and explain how they help achieve dramatic purposes
- Use the elements and conventions of drama effectively in creating ensemble drama works
- Use the creative process and a variety of sources to collaboratively design and develop drama works

## PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS — ALL GRADES

- What is **equity**?
- What is **equality**?
- How do pre-conceived notions of **race** and **gender** change behaviors and/or interactions with other people?
- How do these pre-conceived notions change the way we present ourselves?
- How can these behaviors or interactions become **oppressive**?
- Are there any words that should never be said?
- What do sayings like “No homo” or “That’s so gay” mean? What is actually being insinuated when these are said? What impact do these sayings have?
- How does a group determine who is “in” and who is “out”?
- How do people determine their values?

## PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

Through the following activities, students will have the opportunity to reflect on and reconsider their own assumptions and to gain new knowledge about how **stereotypes** operate. Students will analyze **stereotypes**, in particular the ways in which racial, **gender** and other **stereotypes**, function together. They will learn that human attributes are not inherently tied to **race** or **gender**.

### PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY #1: TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

**Materials:**

- Writings utensils
- Scrap paper

**Directions:**

1. Have each student write down on a piece of scrap paper two truths about themselves and one lie. These statements should be simple (i.e. “I have never been on a plane,” “I play competitive basketball,” “I am allergic to cats,” “I can speak four languages,” “I have three brothers,” etc.)
2. Divide students into groups of three or four.
3. In these small groups, each student will take a turn reading their chosen statements aloud.
4. Then, each group member must guess which one of the statements is the lie.
5. After everyone has made their choice, the reader reveals the lie.
6. Using the following debriefing questions as stimulus, have students privately write a reflection about the activity. You may also choose to use these questions to frame a class discussion.

Debriefing Questions:

Were you surprised by any of the results?

What tools did you use to make your guesses about your group members' statements?

Did any **stereotypes** influence the choices you made? Where do we learn **stereotypes**?

## PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY #2: CHALLENGING NOTIONS OF THE IDEAL

*\*This lesson was adapted from the Media Awareness Network's "Gender Stereotypes and Body Image" activity which can be found at: [http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/elementary/body\\_image/gndr\\_stereo\\_body\\_image.cfm](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/elementary/body_image/gndr_stereo_body_image.cfm)*

### Materials:

- Chart Paper or Bristol Board
- Markers
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Glue
- Tape

### Directions:

- Break the class into two groups.
- Have one group of students create a collage of what they feel are "perfect" female attributes.
- Have the other group create a collage of what they feel are "perfect" male attributes.
- The collages should include images, as well as words and phrases.
- Have the students present their collages to one another.

### Debriefing Questions:

What **stereotypes** came into play in the previous activity?  
 Did **race, sexual orientation**, ability, etc. unknowingly/ knowingly play a role in the creation of the **ideal** gender? If so, why do you think this might be?  
 What measures do young people take to try to fulfill these attributes in society?  
 What are some situations where you may be pressured to conform to a racial or **gender stereotype**?  
 How might these **stereotypes** lead to violence?  
 How can they be resisted?

## PRE-SHOW CULMINATING ACTIVITY: FREE TO BE...

### Directions:

- Following a discussion of the previous debriefing questions, divide the class into groups of approximately five students.
- Invite each group to create a new collage entitled "Free To Be..."
- Have the students create a new collage of attributes of an individual that cannot be identified according to gendered or racial expectations and stereotypes. The collage should include words or phrases that the students feel are important to the image.

## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS — ALL GRADES:

- If you are not black and you are not gay, what does this play have to do with you?
- How are homophobia and racism interconnected?
- What is a Gay-Straight Alliance (or GSA)? Why are these groups important for everyone?
- Often victims of bullying or harassment are sent to a new school "for their own good." Is this an appropriate solution? Why or why not?
- What is the difference between treating someone **equally** and treating someone **equitably**?
- This play is set in 1968-present day. Have **homophobia** and **racism** changed at all during this time? If so, how?
- What is *Roots*? Why was it such a groundbreaking mini-series?

## POST-SHOW UNIT OBJECTIVES:

Through the following activities, students will have the opportunity to gain new knowledge about the impact of anti-LGBTQ epithets, reflect on this issue in their school community, and consider and implement ways to change their own and others' behaviour. Students will also analyze theatrical storytelling, consider what techniques enhance the impact of drama works, and learn and use the elements and conventions of drama to effectively create and present an ensemble piece.

## POST-SHOW ACTIVITY #1: WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE BORED?

### Materials:

- Excerpt from the Script (Appendix A)

### Directions:

- The play begins with Buddy passing a note to Melanie McDougall in class. Have the students re-read the conversation between Buddy and Melanie (Appendix A).
- After reviewing the excerpt, discuss the following debriefing questions:
  - What was Buddy trying to achieve by the note passing?
  - Why did Buddy decide to insult Stephanie Wilcox?
  - When do you find you pass notes the most?
  - Why do we gossip?
  - What is achieved by gossiping?
- Are there any positive outcomes of gossip? If so, have students brainstorm other means of achieving the same results, with the end result being curtailing their gossiping.

## POST-SHOW ACTIVITY #2.1: WHERE DO I STAND?

*\*This lesson was adapted from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's "Think B4 You Speak" Educator's Guide (2008), which can be found at: <http://www.thinkb4youspeak.com/ForEducators/>*

### Materials:

- One sign that reads: "Strongly Agree" and another that reads: "Strongly Disagree" placed at either end of the classroom
- "Where Do I Stand?" Statements (Appendix B)

### Directions:

- Have students line up side-by-side along the "Strongly Agree"- "Strongly Disagree" continuum.
- Explain to students that you will read a series of statements and that after each statement, students must choose to stand wherever on the continuum best reflects their opinion or experience. Remind students that they should remain silent while choosing where they will stand.
- Read the first statement aloud and allow students time to choose their place on the line. Once they have positioned themselves, allow time for them to observe how their peers responded.
- Following each statement, mediate a discussion among students about where they have chosen to stand. Have students share their points of view. Throughout these conversations, encourage students to change their position on the line, if desired.
- Repeat this process with the rest of the statements.

### Debriefing Questions:

Which statements were the easiest to respond to? Which statements were the most difficult? Why? Did the group's overall response to any of the statements surprise you? If so, which ones and why? Were you ever alone or in the minority in your response to any of the statements? If so, how did this make you feel? Did you ever change where you were standing, or feel the urge to change your place in the line, based on where you saw others standing? Did you change your mind about any of the issues raised in the course of this exercise? If so, how did your opinion change? Why did it change? Think about how decisions are made. Why is it right or wrong for the majority to decide for the minority?

## POST-SHOW ACTIVITY #2.2: “THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK”

### Materials:

- “Think Before You Speak” PSA resources:  
[http://youtu.be/LhKLBqLw\\_B8](http://youtu.be/LhKLBqLw_B8)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrJrw5ZZfRU>
- (Optional: Video Recording Equipment - If you do not have access to this equipment, you can still do this activity with your students. Have them create and present their PSA’s as live theatre performances, rather than as pre-recorded videos.)

### Directions:

- Discuss the following questions as a class:  
What names, sayings or put-downs are used when we don’t fit the “**norm**”?  
How do these reinforce **stereotypes**?
- Show this PSA entitled “Think Before You Speak” to the class:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrJrw5ZZfRU>
- Discuss the following questions as a class:

How does it feel when someone says something like this to us?  
Why do people choose to say these things?  
What do you think the person who is using these put-downs might be feeling?  
Are there any words that should never be said?  
How can language help affect social change?  
Do you think what you have learned today will change your attitude or behaviour in any way?

- Have students create their own Public Service Announcement on this subject to show to the school at an assembly, during lunch, or to a specific class. For inspiration and ideas take a look at this PSA created by a group of teenagers:  
[http://youtu.be/LhKLBqLw\\_B8\\_](http://youtu.be/LhKLBqLw_B8_)

## POST-SHOW ACTIVITY #3: TAKE ACTION!

### Materials:

- None required.

### Directions:

- Think-Pair-Share: In groups of two, have students consider the following:
  1. What they personally are willing to do to stop discrimination in their school communities
  2. What they would like to see others do in order to stop racism and homophobia
  3. Projects that they, as a class, can undertake to foster social equity
- As a whole class, have students share their ideas.

### Extension:

Encourage students to set up their own GSA or Equity Club and help them through the first steps.

1. Help your class navigate school policy or guidelines regarding setting up a student club or organization.
2. Volunteer to be or help them to locate a Teacher Advisor for their group.
3. Work with students to develop a set of ground rules and goals for their organization.

The following resources are particularly beneficial to teachers and students interested in creating GSAs, Equity Clubs or developing similar initiatives in their schools:

EGALE Canada  
<http://egale.ca/>

The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide  
[http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/programs/gender\\_based\\_violence\\_prevention\\_gbvp/docs/Part%20-%20Building%20and%20Activating%20Your%20GSA.pdf](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/programs/gender_based_violence_prevention_gbvp/docs/Part%20-%20Building%20and%20Activating%20Your%20GSA.pdf)

Gay-Straight Alliances: A Manual for Launching Allies <http://www.pink-triangle.org/Eng/gsaguide.pdf>

## POST-SHOW CULMINATING ACTIVITY: THEATRICAL RETELLINGS

### Materials:

- Writing utensils
- Scrap paper

### Directions:

1. Prior to beginning the activity, consider the following in a class discussion:
  - o **Would You Say The Name Of This Play?** (*nggrfg*) is a one-person show based on true events. Describe the relationship between an event in one’s life, the memory of that event and the ways in which an artist might relay that event

to an audience.

- o How does the passage of time change one’s memory of an event?
- o How is presenting a story to an audience different from a personal memory of that event?
- o How does the narrator or **protagonist** of a play affect the audience’s understanding of what happened?

- o What makes for a powerful theatrical experience?
- 2. Divide students into groups of 4 or 5.
- 3. Have students choose a significant moment in the play (i.e. when Buddy longs to skip rope with the girls at recess, but hesitates in joining them).
- 4. Have students brainstorm some words that could describe the way Buddy feels in their chosen situation.
- 5. Working in these same small groups, have students create a short scene that depicts Buddy's experience of the chosen event. Remind students to keep the following in mind when completing this task:
  - o The event, as he remembers it
  - o What Buddy felt before, during and after the experience
  - o How this event might be retold in order to create a powerful theatrical experience for the audience
- 6. Then, have students brainstorm some words that could describe another character's experience of the same event (i.e. how Buddy's mother or father might have felt during the visit to Dr. Lucas). Again, remind students to keep the following in mind when completing this task:
  - o The event, as the chosen character remembers it
  - o What they felt before, during and after the experience
  - o How this event might be retold in order to create a powerful theatrical experience for the audience
- 7. Each scene should include:
  - o A soundscape that represents the inner dialogue of Buddy and the other chosen character(s).
  - o **3 tableaux**
  - o 3 lines of text
 Encourage students to consider abstract, rather than literal, means of expression (i.e. think about distortion of sounds as a way to communicate a state of being, use light or movement to convey meaning, etc.).
- 8. Have each group perform their two scenes for the class.

**Debriefing Questions:**

How did using a different storyteller (a character other than Buddy) affect how the event was presented? How did changing the way in which the story was performed (a group scene, rather than a one-person **monologue**) affect the audience's experience of it? Considering your experience of the play, as well as your own and all of the other groups' scenes, what made for the most powerful theatrical experiences? Why?

## REVIEWING A PLAY

### JON KAPLAN'S INTRODUCTION TO STUDENT REVIEWERS

Theatre is, for me, an art form that tells me something about myself or gets me thinking about the world in which I live.

Whether going to the theatre as a reviewer or simply an audience member, I think that watching a play is an emotional experience and not just an intellectual one. I always let a show wash over me, letting it touch my feelings, and only later, after the show, do I try to analyze those feelings.

That's when I start to think about some of the basic questions you ask when you're writing a review - what did I see (story, characters, themes); how did I respond to what I saw; what parts of the production (script, performances, direction, design and possibly other elements) made me feel and think what I did; why was I supposed to respond in that fashion?

When you go to the theatre to review, take a few notes during a show if you feel comfortable doing so, but don't spend your time writing the review during the show; you'll miss what's happening onstage.

Writing a review doesn't mean providing a plot summary. That's only part of the job; you have to discuss your reaction to what you saw and try to explore some of the reasons for that reaction.

I don't believe that there's any such thing as a totally objective piece of criticism. We are all individuals, bringing our own backgrounds, experiences and beliefs to a production. In some fashion, every one of us sitting in the theatre is a critic, no matter whether we're writing a review or not; we all react to and form judgments about what we see on the stage.

When I go to a production, I always keep in mind that the people involved in putting it on have worked long and hard - weeks, months, sometimes years - getting it onto the stage. Even if I have problems with the result, it's important to respect the efforts that went into the show.

*Jon Kaplan is senior theatre writer at NOW Magazine, where he's worked for the past 30 years.*

## APPENDIX A

### EXCERPT FROM THE OPENING SCENE OF *WOULD YOU SAY THE NAME OF THIS PLAY? (NGGRFG)*

Today she entered the classroom. Her head hung low. She dragged her feet along the floor. She took her seat.

*Looks like Dozer's been using his human punching bag again.*

I shoot the boy beside me a glare. He gives me the finger.

I write Melanie a note.

"How are things between you and Dozer?"

*How do you think?*

"Are you guys going to the final bush party together?"

*He's going with Stephanie Wilcox.*

"You know she's a human Posture-Pedic?"

*Oh Buddy, You're so funny... and cute.*

This is my chance. I look at the clock. Only one minute to seal the deal.

"Melanie, will you go with me to the party tomorrow night?"

## APPENDIX B

### “WHERE DO I STAND?” STATEMENTS

I often hear phrases like “that’s so gay,” “you’re so gay,” “no homo”, or the word “gay” used among my peers.

When I hear “that’s so gay”, it is usually aimed at an object, rather than a person. When people say phrases like this, they do not mean it as an insult against people who identify as LGBTQ.

I have personally used expressions like “that’s so gay,” “you’re so gay,” or “no homo” with my peers.

When these expressions are aimed directly at me, it bothers me.

Expressions like “that’s so gay” and “no homo” are okay, as long as they are not used to directly attack someone.

I have never thought about how these expressions might make others feel.

Regardless of intention, expressions like these are probably insulting or upsetting to people with whom I go to school.

I would personally be willing to stop using these expressions.

I often hear racist slurs or comments used among my peers.

When I hear racist slurs or comments, they are usually aimed at an object, rather than a person. When people say things like this, they do not mean it as an insult against people of particular racial or ethnic identities.

I have personally used these sorts of expressions with my peers.

When these expressions are aimed directly at me, it bothers me.

Racist expressions are okay, as long as they are not used to directly attack someone.

I have never thought about how these expressions might make others feel.

Regardless of intention, expressions like these are probably insulting or upsetting to people with whom I go to school.

I would personally be willing to stop using these expressions.

Organizations and groups like Equity and Diversity Clubs help to make schools safe for all students.

Organizations and groups like Equity and Diversity Clubs are insufficient in challenging racism in schools.

Organizations and groups like Rainbow Clubs and GSAs help to make schools safe for all students.

Organizations and groups like Rainbow Clubs and GSAs are insufficient in challenging homophobia in schools.

It would be impossible to get people at my school to stop using homophobic expressions.

It would be impossible to get people at my school to stop using racist expressions.

It is impossible to change the views of someone who is racist.

It is impossible to change the views of someone who is homophobic.

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## SOURCES

Change Our World [www.changeourworld.ca](http://www.changeourworld.ca)

This website encourages students in grades 7-12 to challenge the behaviour they see in their schools exhibiting homophobia, racism and discrimination. This website is run by Safe@School and the Ontario Teachers' Federation and offers grants to students to organize community projects that help to change the cycle of discrimination. They also invite students to share their work: visual art, stories, etc. on their website.

GLSEN <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/educator/index.html?state=tools&type=tools>

Through a variety of initiatives, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network works with educators to confront homophobia and heterosexism in schools. This organization is based in the United States, but provides a variety of resources, including lesson plans and school programs, that can be used by educators and students in Canada as well. Post-show Activity #2 was adapted from their Educator's Guide for the "Think Before You Speak" Campaign.

Media Awareness Network <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm>

This website offers a variety of practical teaching units on media literacy and its connection to stereotypes and discrimination. This website provides lessons that focus particularly on equipping students with the necessary skills to critically analyze the media they encounter.

PFLAG Canada [www.pflagcanada.ca](http://www.pflagcanada.ca)

This organization has a partnership with the Vancouver School Board Pride Advisory Committee and is committed to providing parents, teachers and students with resources related to anti-homophobia education.

Race Bridges [www.racebridgesforschools.com](http://www.racebridgesforschools.com)

This website provides teachers with anti-racism strategies that they can incorporate into their classrooms and lesson plans.

Safe@School [www.safeatschool.ca](http://www.safeatschool.ca)

This website provides an extensive list of resources for promoting inclusive education, including specific lessons for various grades and curricula). This organization is a partnership with the OTF. Their motto is: "Everyone has the right to be safe, strong and free."

Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia (T.E.A.C.H) [www.ppt.on.ca](http://www.ppt.on.ca)

T.E.A.C.H. is an anti-homophobia peer education initiative offered through Planned Parenthood Toronto. T.E.A.C.H. trains peer facilitators to lead anti-oppression workshops that address issues of heterosexism and homophobia in high schools and communities in Toronto. They also provide volunteer, outreach and resource development opportunities.

Teaching Tolerance [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

This online magazine is produced in the southern United States, but has a wealth of resources in the form of stories, activities and lesson plans that address various forms of discrimination.

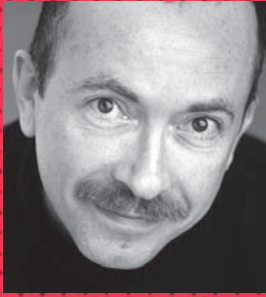
## SUBSIDIZED PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS

YPT offers subsidized tickets to qualifying schools through our Community Connections programming. It is only with the generous support of Great West Life, London Life & Canada Life, CIBC Children's Foundation and an anonymous donor that this program is made possible. Please visit [youngpeoplestheatre.ca](http://youngpeoplestheatre.ca) for more information.



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# YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE



(formerly Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People) is the largest Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) company in Canada and a significant institution in the Canadian professional theatre community. Over our 46-year history we have produced many of the most important works that now form the canon of

plays for young audiences in this country. At the heart of founder Susan Rubes' idea for Young People's Theatre (YPT) was a belief that children deserve a theatre of their own – with resources and standards no lesser than those for adults. She believed – as we do today – that young people deserve good theatre because theatre is good for young people.

Through the communal experience of the theatre we create for them, children can receive indications of what is important, funny, trivial; positive, negative, wrong, right, rightish, wrongish; frightening, reassuring, empowering, unavoidable; familiar, new, eternal ... We strongly believe that even through the most playful of plays, we are speaking powerfully to children about the community and the world in which they live.

Therefore, at the centre of the artistic policy of YPT is a desire to have a positive and lasting impact on the emotional, social, and intellectual development of young people. We want children to be imprinted with experiences that will increase their access to the world, in order for them to grow into the unique and wonderful

people they were born to be. To do this, our programming is drawn from the world classics of children's stories, from contemporary works, from the new plays we develop, and from productions showcasing the most innovative and accomplished theatre for young audiences by other Canadian and international theatre companies.

At YPT, because we are serious about child development through theatre art, children can experience our work as either audience members or theatre creators. We extend the learning opportunities of our professional productions through our substantial Education & Participation Department. The Department's services for teachers and students helps connect curriculum objectives and learning outcomes to the content of our professional productions; its Community Participation projects link our theatre skill with the educational aspirations of partners who are dedicated to the growth of young people; our interest-based Drama School offers young people the chance to engage deeply in the excitement of theatre art; and our Community Volunteer programme offers everyone who wants it, the opportunity to participate in the mission of YPT.

YPT is not only a professional theatre for young audiences but a vital community-based centre of arts education.

Allen MacInnis  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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