

## PROCESS OF PRODUCTION - EPISODE 2

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

MO HATCH: Hello all, this is the second episode of Process of Production by Theatre SKAM. I'm your host Mo Hatch, and today we will be talking about the summer Pop-Up team here at SKAM. This will be a short series with two consecutive episodes that both feature the pop-up team, guaranteeing I get to interview all of them about their experiences with the devised theatre style of the pop-up creation. In this first episode, we have emerging artists Kaelan Bain, Zoe Salvin, and pop-up director Lynnée Chan here on the podcast.

We'd of course also like to acknowledge that we are lucky to record on the traditional territories of the lək'wəŋən peoples, where the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Thank you so much for listening, and now we welcome the first half of the pop-up team.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

MO HATCH: Hello and welcome. We've got the Pop-Up Team here today. Uh, would you each like to introduce yourselves?

ZOE SALVIN: Hi, I'm Zoe Salvin.

KAELAN BAIN: Hi, I'm Kaelan Bain.

LYNNÉA CHAN: and I'm Lynnée Chan, Director of the Pop-Up.

MO: So for all of you, you've been working really hard on making this collaborative process happen. And would you like to describe for our listeners what exactly the Pop-Up is?

LYNNÉA: I can take that if you want. Okay. [Laughter] um, Yeah. So the Pop-Up is a travelling theatre that happens on a flatbed truck, basically, um, during the summers and also sometimes not in the summers, we'll have the Pop-Up truck. Actors will come to your house and then perform off the back of it in summer. It's usually some really fun, short skits.

ZOE: Yeah.

MO: Uh, so for today, we're gonna be discussing the process, uh, that you go through when making the Pop-Up shows, which is a devising process, which not everyone may know about. So just to get into that, um, what makes devising different from other forms that you've done of creation and theatre?

KAELAN: Well, you're starting from scratch.

MO: Yeah.

KAELAN: So, uh, a lot of the times you come into a room and you come with like a concept and then that concept will evolve either through improv with your teammates, or if you have, if you've written like a piece and then your teammates discuss it and you expand it with them. Um, so it's a lot more collaborative in its construction.

Whereas regular theatre, you, you have like a piece of text that has existed most of the time if you're doing Shakespeare for hundreds of years. Um, so there's already a set way it should be done—air quotes—whereas with this process, it's free range.

MO: How would you describe devising to someone who's never heard of it before? Anyone can take that.

LYNNÉA: Does anyone have actual studies in devising? That would be more eloquent than what I'm about to say? [LAUGHS] Um, it's like, when you're, when you're little and you decide you're gonna put on a talent show for your parents, and then you spend like half an hour going, okay... and then I'll go here and you can go here and then we're gonna come over here and we'll spin around.

And then you say, "Okay, parents." And you gather for a talent show, and then you do a talent show for your parents and you just made it up.

MO: So that's basically what the Pop-Up is, except for all adults.

LYNNÉA: Yeah, we're, we're adults. We're professional. We're better than that. The difference between playing pretend and being adults is, uh, I don't know... There there's some, yeah...

KAELAN: We get paid.

LYNNÉA: Yeah, we get paid for it. [LAUGHTER]

MO: There you go. I mean, when you were little, you, you wish, but you don't really know what money is at that point, so...

LYNNÉA: No, no concept of money.

MO: Um, so like to describe it from like someone on the outside who has never seen behind the scenes, what you do at the Pop-Up, what has the process been like for each of you?

ZOE: Yeah, we, we started really kind of looking at broad themes that we each wanted to explore and a few more specific ideas. Like if we had a story idea that really interested us we brought it in. And a lot of the pieces that we ended up with actually started as just one or two or three of us getting up and doing an improv with no script, no idea where it was gonna go and just seeing kind of where it led.

And then we would take what resulted from those and refine them into written scripts. Or sometimes some of them are still improvs, but we have certain beats and certain, like, plot points that we're trying to hit. And so, yeah, it was just really a process of taking that one, like, broad nugget of an idea and refining it, uh, and getting feedback from everybody else.

Mo: Yeah. Do—would you say that you all had previous, like, improv experience before going into this?

LYNNÉA: Yeah, definitely. But I've never been paid for it.

MO: Yeah. So now you get to be paid to do improv. [LAUGHTER] Yeah. Um, I mean, obviously, like I know that improv can scare a lot of people, even people in theatre. Um, and would, what would you say was something that maybe, uh, intimidated you that you maybe overcame so far in this process?

KAELAN: The fear of doing improv.

MO: Yeah. I nailed it.

KAELAN: Um, yeah, I think cause I've done the Pop-Up previously.

MO: Yeah.

KAELAN: Um, and we never really had a show that was full, you just improv it throughout, right? So there was always, like, a structure and, like, lines. So, like this year, having the chance to just, like, have a, like, a whole, a whole show where you don't have any lines and you just, like, do it. And if something happens, it happens. It's both exhilarating and scary at the same time.

MO: Yeah.

KAELAN: But it is, it's also like an excellent learning curve for me as an artist, because there might be times where I'm on stage where I blank and I have to say a line to keep the scene going and you know, you have to improv it.

MO: Yeah. It helps to have those skills.

LYNNÉA: Are we talking about the pieces that are like improv, but beat by beat, like *Jonathan, the Council of Planets* or are you talking about, like, improv, like, uh, *Your Favourite Movie Abridged*? Huh?

KAELAN AND LYNNÉA: Both.

LYNNÉA: Yeah.

MO: What about for you as the director Lynnéa? What's something that, maybe, intimidated you about the process?

LYNNÉA: Oh, everything. [LAUGHTER] Um, but I studied directing in school. Um, my specialisation for my theatre degree is directing, but most of the classes that I was taking and most of the experience that I had in school was script work. Um, so this process has been a lot of, you have to go day-by-day, figure out where you're at and what the process needs going forward and then kind of making a plan just two days in advance or one day in advance after seeing where we ended on the day that you're leaving. Um, so it's, it's a lot of improving the directing process as well. Uh, but I, I don't know. I'm just, uh, I feel like I actually am doing a fairly good job, so that's...

KAELAN: I agree.

MO: I-I'm sure all these people can attest to that.

LYNNÉA: Uh, yeah, it was, um, it was intimidating to depart from having written scripts and being able to say this day: we're gonna do blocking. This day: we're gonna do, uh, table work. This day we're gonna do X, Y, Z.

MO: What would you say is like the one or two things that makes the Pop-Up most different from other theatre?

KAELAN: Well, I guess the one of the things is the fact that it's a travelling truck for the most part and the space is a lot more limited. So you have to be a lot more creative with what you, what you're doing.

MO: Mm-hmm.

KAELAN: And also, I guess the Pop-Up is you, you, you, you, because you're travelling around you, you're going to meet people who aren't typically theatre people, especially when it's like you're busking or something like that. So getting to bring those people into a theatre space so that they, uh, and like giving them that experience is, um, a big thing.

LYNNÉA: Yeah. I feel like theatre, as we've gone on, has become more and more of an almost elitist thing, because you can only afford to go to the theatre if you're, like, rich. Uh...

Mo: Yeah.

LYNNÉA: It's closely tied with opera and you know, you go to the theatre and then you dress up and you have to spend a bunch of money on play tickets.

Um, I think the Pop-Up kind of goes in opposition to that from every angle because of just the, the format of the venue that we're performing off of, how short the rehearsal time is, how accessible it is cost-wise. Um, it kind of stands in opposition to the elitism of professional theatre that's happened. How do I, uh, speak about me doing a gesture of unnhhh [unsure sound]?

Mo: There you go.

ZOE: Yeah, no, that's- everything you just said is what drew me to the Pop-Up as, as a form of theatre, that it is accessible in just about every way: it's accessible to people who aren't used to theatre; it's accessible cost-wise, it's, you know, pay-what-you-can/pay-by-donation; it's accessible because we literally go to the patrons and we go to the audience. Um, especially like the years that you, Lynnéa, and Kaelan did it, when theatre was much more impacted by COVID than it is this summer, it was a way of keeping theatre alive. When people couldn't go to a theatre and sit in a room with a bunch of strangers.

MO: Yeah. So going forward, what's something that you're most excited for with this experience?

ZOE: I'm excited to actually show what we've done to audiences. Yeah. For two months, I'm just excited to see the reactions and how people respond and how people feel about it.

Mo: Cause you also get to carry this on for a lot longer than maybe a normal show would go, especially in, like, university. So you get to keep doing that, which is really cool.

LYNNÉA: I don't know. I don't know a way to phrase my answer that's different—meaningfully different from Zoe's. Uh, obviously, I'm not gonna be performing the shows, but I'm excited to have people see them. I feel like there were things that I wished I could have changed, like walking away from my experience when I performed in the Pop-Up. And it's nice to have a bit more creative control and see things that I'm like, “yes, I wanted to change that.” And it's been nice.

MO: So now you can kind of, you know, go through the same experience, but from more of a position of power. [LAUGHTER]

LYNNÉA: Yeah, not to make it about a hierarchy, but yeah.

KAELAN: I guess I'm the same, but I'm also super excited to see how the shows impact the people themselves. Um, because the best part of last year was when we had people come up to us and say, “Oh, I really like this show.” “I really want to support you.” “How do I support you in this company?” Mm-hmm or how they would go, “Where did we get the shows?” And be like, surprised that we actually created these shows ourselves. Um, and would want to see more of it. I, I really, I'm really excited to see how—what they get from these shows and if they like them as much as they liked the shows last year, which I think they will.

MO: Yeah. Well, that's great. Is it possible—and we can cut this out if you can't do it— Is there any, like, teaser you can give about any of the shows?

LYNNÉA: Like lines or just like summaries or what are you looking for?

Mo: Um, I mean, I mean, it, it can be like a, maybe a line you really particularly like something to like, make people, you know, wanna, wanna, wanna watch it and maybe not to give away too much.

KAELAN: “Rather be shiny.” [LAUGHTER]

LYNNÉA: Oh, hold on... I'm looking at the, I'm looking at the list.

KAELAN: *Jonathan.*

LYNNÉA: Yeah. Jonathan is everyone. Can they just kind of like walk over here and stand around for a second. Can you just do this section where you're chanting for Jonathan to touch his toes. And then you all cheer when he does it

ALL TOGETHER, EXCLUDING MO, PLUS UNIDENTIFIED POP-UP MEMBERS  
PRESENT: Touch your toes, touch your toes.

DIFFERENCE VOICE [1]: Let's see you touch your toes!

VOICE 1: Jonathan, do the thing, do the thing.

EVERYONE: Touch your toes, touch your toes. Touch your toes.

VOICE 1: Yay.

VOICE 2: Crazy.

VOICE 3: So cool.

MO: So there you go. There's your teaser for, for the Pop-Up. And if that doesn't make you wanna come see it, then I don't know what will. [CHUCKLING] So right before we leave out here, um, since we don't have Matthew on this time, I will be just asking you one very recent Theatre SKAM trivia question. And that is, can you name the last two Pop-Up shows that SKAM did?

LYNNÉA: Uh... there was one about Cowboys.

MO: Yes, there was.

ZOE: And there was a, a romance.

LYNNÉA: Yeah, there was... there was, was that the cowboy one?

KAELAN: Maybe... Was this the...

LYNNÉA: -the winter one?

MO: Kaylee's got, Kaylee's got an answer out of the audience.

KAYLEE: I believe it was Love & Spurs.

MO: Yes. *Love & Spurs*. One point to Kaylee. [laughter] Thank you. Just to make that clear, Kaylee was not being interviewed for this round, but, uh, she had the answer. Um, and the other one, it was *A Leaf Outta Your Book*.

LYNNÉA: I was not gonna remember that one.

MO: And I, I, I remember the names because I had to update the website [laughter] but, um, yeah.

LYNNÉA: I can tell you the other ones. I was in those.

MO: All right. Thank you so much. Um, yeah, that'll be everything. I'm really glad that you could be interviewed today and then we'll get onto the next group. Yeah. Thank you.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

MO HATCH: A big thank you to the summer pop-up crew for sharing their experiences and learning from their time as part of the pop-up, as well as to you for tuning it. Keep your eye out for another episode next week that features the other half of the team, with new questions and new perspectives.

Also, it should be noted that the pop-up has already opened for bookings this summer! Check the Theatre SKAM instagram for updates, and check the website for ways to book a pop-up show yourself, to see the hard work these creators put in.

Also, it's very nearly SKAMpede here at Theatre SKAM, from the 8th to the 10th this month, where you can walk various paths through victoria to see incredible live theatre! Look on the website for tickets.

And one more time before you go, thank you so much for listening.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]