

# SKAMnanigans S1E1 Transcript

(upbeat music)

Hello and welcome to SKAMnanigans, the Theatre SKAM podcast. SKAMnanigans brings you into the whimsical and wacky world of theatre. I'm your host, Branden Sugden. (upbeat music) Let the SKAMnanigans begin.

Thank you for joining us on this, our first episode of many.

You may be asking yourself, "Branden, what on earth is SKAMnanigans?" Well, dear listener, I'm so grateful you asked. SKAMnanigans is a saloon to celebrate and soliloquize upon the scenographic offerings of stage and site-specific thespians in Victoria, BC. It's a podcast about theatre. We will have a number of different episodes. There will be interviews and round table discussions where you learn more about SKAM artists and the local theatre ecology. Behind the scenes episodes with exclusive insights into the who, what, and why of theatre SKAM projects. Live and in-person episodes with on-location interviews and discussions at SKAM events. And finally, creative episodes featuring exciting new radio plays, audio dramas, and sound-based experiences.

In today's episode, we will introduce you to the faces, or rather voices, that make up the Theatre SKAM Office.

(upbeat music)

Hi, Janine. Thank you so much for joining us today.

Hi, Branden. Thank you so much for having me here.

So do you want to just introduce yourself a little bit and tell us what you do here at Theatre SKAM?

My name is Janine Rzeplinski. I use the pronouns they/them and she/her, and I am the Marketing and Communications Coordinator here at SKAM.

Excellent. And how did you first get involved with Theatre SKAM?

I got involved at Theatre SKAM through an Indeed ad that I found, which I feel like most people don't get involved that way, but I found Theatre SKAM, and it's been a great opportunity to get back involved in the theatre world, which I hadn't been involved in for a few years before I started working here.

And how are you enjoying the theatre world?

I am enjoying it a lot. I think it's such a unique occupation, life calling. I don't know what word to use, but it is wonderful. It's really great to get to be creative and be around so many people who have a passion for the arts, which is, you know, one of my favourite things.

Speaking of passion for the arts, can you tell me about one of the most memorable arts experiences you've had, whether that be in theatre or some other medium?

I would say the most interesting art experience, most memorable art experience I've ever had was at an exhibit at the Vancouver Art Gallery. It was the Yoko Ono exhibit, and she had a piece where you were hammering a nail into what was essentially a canvas made of drywall, and only the first nail that was hammered in was properly in there. Everyone else was very delicate. All the nails would start falling out of the canvas when you were trying to hammer yours in, because I think everyone just felt very uncomfortable with disturbing other people, even though this was what was asked of us. So I thought that was a very interesting experience to be a part of and to juxtapose the kind of what was required of us and what was the request with what we were comfortable doing and how self-conscious everyone in the audience was.

What is one non-arts thing that you are passionate about and just love to talk about?

One thing I'm passionate about is history. I got my degree in it, and I specifically studied the history of medicine and science, which I think is a very fun combination of non-artsy things. Not that history isn't an art, the art of storytelling. But yeah, I love history. I read a lot of history books in my free time, and I still try to stay up to date on everything going on in my field. I did get the wonderful opportunity to bring that into SKAM with the pop-up docs project that we did. I got to do the research for that, and that was really wonderful to combine those two passions.

Do you have a particular favourite period of history?

The 19th century, that was what I focused on chiefly. I actually got into the 19th century because of art history. It's kind of when everything really starts to change in art history because of the introduction of the camera and the steam trains and everything. So how people are seeing things are obscured by steam and smog, and the desire to replicate everything almost perfectly onto the canvas is replaced by the desire to imitate the camera and also go as far away from those realistic depictions as possible. And there's a lot of anger in the art world and lots of back and forth, and people are really figuring things out, and it's so fun to study.

Amazing. Well, thank you so much for taking the time to come in and be on the podcast.

Thank you for having me.

(upbeat music)

Hi, Emily. Thank you for joining us on the podcast.

Hi, thanks for having me.

So for starters, can you introduce yourself and tell us what you do here at Theatre SKAM?

My name is Emily Campbell. I'm the school administrator here, and I use she and they pronouns.

What does it mean to be the school administrator? What kind of stuff do you do?

I organize our school camps and our Pro-D day camps.

What does Theatre SKAM Camp look like?

So they're week-long classes. The children make a play. They write a play all on their own, and then we go through all of the process of design and directing and acting techniques, and then we put on the show at the end of the week for their parents.

What's your favourite play that the students have come up with in your time running SKAM camps?

In my first year working here, we did a show with the five to eight class, and they came up with a silent play. So it was mostly just, they ran around like Scooby-Doo characters, like in and out of doors. They made the Cat Bus from Totoro, and that was a character in their show. I couldn't really tell you what the plot line was, but it was so much fun to watch, and they had a lot of fun creating it. So it was a pretty cool one.

So how did you first get involved with Theatre SKAM?

I was a SKAMPied site manager one year, and then I think the summer following that, I was the school admin assistant for camps.

And what is your favourite part of working at SKAM?

I think seeing how kids can grow as individuals in camp. We've had a couple of kids who were really nervous to start camps, and they were really nervous about being on

stage and acting for the first time, and seeing how much they can grow and evolve through just five days of working on a play and how comfortable they can be on a stage is really fun to watch.

What's something that you are passionate about that you really like talking about?

I like to paint. I like doing art stuff and face painting, and whenever I can fit face painting into things I do at work is really fun. I don't get to do it very often, so working somewhere like this makes it a lot easier to do that, which is super fun.

What is your 30 to 60 second pitch to someone of why they should send their kids to SKAM Camp?

A lot of different theatre camps don't let your kid create a show. I think that's something we do here that isn't really an option at other camps. They usually give you a script and they give you an idea of what you're doing. Here, kids get to explore their ideas in a deeper level than they would in a class or a different camp. I think that's why people should sign up for this one 'cause your kids get to have free reign. They get to make everything, and it's not really up to the teachers. It's up to the kids, which is really fun.

Fantastic. Thank you so much for joining us on SKAMnigans, Emily.

Thank you.

(upbeat music)

Hi, Logan. Thank you for joining me on the podcast.

Thanks for having me.

Could you please introduce yourself and just tell us a little bit about what you do here at Theatre SKAM?

Yeah, my name is Logan Swain. He/him pronouns. I'm the artistic producer here at Theatre SKAM. So I do everything from write grants to lead artistic projects to clean the toilets when things are busy.

Sounds like a big job.

Everything and anything. So it can be daunting, but I like it. I like to have a variety of things to do.

And how did you first get involved with Theatre SKAM?

I first got involved with Theatre SKAM in the fall of 2018 when they put out a last-minute call that they were gonna be at a co-op event for fine art students at UVic. And so I went over and I met Kate and did an interview and had a subsequent interview after that, and then volunteered at a show and I was part of a co-op grant to fund a four-month work term, which started in 2019 when I was a co-producer for SKAMpede. And I kind of stuck around and kind of just worked my way up and taken on more over the years.

So what's your favourite part of working with the company?

I think my favourite part of working with the company is just the breadth of things that I get to do. From one day to the next can be totally different, whether it's writing grants one day, working on budgets, doing maintenance and covering up graffiti with new paint. Every day is different and there's a large variety of different things that I get to do, which is great. I love to change things up and keep it fresh.

How did you get into pursuing theatre as a career?

I had been debating on what I wanted to do. I went to Vancouver in grade 12 to look at film school and audio production school, and ultimately decided I didn't want to move to Vancouver. So I took a gap year and did some programming up at UVic, and then I did a community theatre show at the same time, and I was kind of humming and hawing about what to do. And then my mom said, "Hey, why don't you go to UVic and try theatre? They have co-op." And I said, "Okay." Not sure if I'd stick with it or not and tried it and I liked it and first year turned into second year. And then about third year I was like, "Huh, I actually really like this." And all the different elements of different career paths I had considered were kind of found within theatre. And here we are, I guess I got the bug and never left.

That's how they get you, the bug. Logan, what is a topic outside of your work that you are very passionate about and that you like to talk about?

I'm a bit of a nerd. I really love all things technology. So when I have more time, I like to kind of keep up on all the trends and whether it's computers or photography or video, definitely technology. So I guess lately it's AI and the way that it's kind of shifting fast and into actual productive uses as opposed to making not good art.

Great. Well, thank you so much for coming on to the podcast. I really appreciate you taking the time out of your day.

Yeah, thanks for having me.

Before we go though, I feel like you need to answer these questions too.

(upbeat music)

Hello, and welcome to SKAM Nanigans with Logan Swain, your co-host here to interview Branden Sugden. So Branden, thank you for joining us on this podcast that you host.

Thanks.

The first question is, what do you do at Theatre SKAM in addition to co-hosting SKAM Nanigans, the Theatre SKAM Podcast?

In addition to co-hosting SKAM Nanigans, the Theatre SKAM Podcast, I am the interim managing director here at Theatre SKAM, which is a bit of a broad title. Basically, it means I look at the financial management of the company and oversee a lot of the operations, both in the day-to-day and in the bigger picture. So as you would know, Logan, we work together on things like grant applications and finding funding sources. And then I also take a lot of responsibility when it comes to logistical things like bookkeeping and accounting and paying our taxes and all that really fun, exciting stuff.

How did you first get involved with Theatre SKAM?

I had first heard of Theatre SKAM in the first year of my degree at the University of Victoria when Matthew Payne came to do a lecture in a class called Fine Arts 101. And he gave us this presentation that he called the 10 most dangerous moments in Canadian theatre history. And it was 10 different stories from the history of Theatre SKAM. I distinctly remember him talking about doing a play in the back of a vehicle and doing plays in his living room and in back alleys and that kind of thing. And I find immersive theatre experiences really, really fascinating. So as soon as I saw this presentation, I knew that I wanted to work with Theatre SKAM. So I was kind of just keeping my eye open for opportunities to get involved. Then this little thing called COVID happened, which really changed the work landscape, obviously, in the theatre industry. But in 2021, I interviewed for a job to be a producer for SKAMpede. And I got the job, and that was my first time ever being paid to do the administrative side of running any kind of theatre event, really. And since then, I've been coming back on and off to do administrative work, both for SKAMpede and for other projects. Then in January, I started as the interim managing director, and I'm very excited to be taking on leadership opportunity at the company now that I've got several years under my belt. And arts leadership is something that I'm very passionate about. So I'm excited to get to exercise and develop those skills here.

What's your best theatre memory?

I can distinctly remember the moment that I decided I wanted to pursue theatre professionally. And that's the first time I ever saw a professional play. When I was in high school, I was 16 years old. I got a part-time job as an usher at a company called Alberta Theatre Projects in Calgary. And part of the reason I got the job as an usher was just because I could get paid to watch plays. And I thought that was a great thing to do, and I wanted to get more involved in the theatre community now that I had just started to get involved in high school theatre. And I watched this play called "Waiting for the Parade" by John Murrell, a Calgary playwright. And the play was so fascinating. It was the first time I'd ever seen professional actors on stage, and it just blew my mind how nuanced and complicated of a performance they could give, and the lighting transitions, and the way that everything just flowed so beautifully on stage. The play's about the women who are staying behind in Calgary during World War II. And so they're stuck at home being part of the war effort from home. And the very last moment of the play is after the war has ended, and they're all gathered at the train station, and they see their boys coming home. And one of them sort of reaches out and waves to her husband, who she hasn't seen for years now. And just as the play's coming to an end, they're all stood downstage facing the audience. And there was a sound effect in the theatre where you could hear the train passing behind the auditorium. And that moment, that immersive moment in the theatre of hearing the train go by and hearing it go from my left to my right was the moment that I was completely hooked about theatre as a storytelling medium, and was the reason, especially that I wanted to get involved in theatre as opposed to working in film and TV.

It's always great to see what kind of inspires people to choose this life of an artist. And with that, I'm gonna throw it back to you for our outro.

(upbeat music)

Thank you for joining us for the first episode of SKAMnigans. We have lots more interesting and informative episodes coming your way. In our next episode, we talk to Kurt Archer, the man behind the second annual Victoria One-Act Play Festival. In the meantime, if you want to learn more about us, you can find us @TheatreSKAM on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. You can also check out our website at SKAM.ca to get information about our upcoming programming, including "SKAMpede", which runs July 12th to 14th, 2024. Tickets go on sale this Monday, June 10th. You can also learn more about our summer camps, which run from July 22nd to August 16th. To get in touch with us, or if you want to chit-chat about this show, you can direct your chits and chats to [podcast@SKAM.ca](mailto:podcast@SKAM.ca). Thanks again for listening to our auditory aperitif for SKAMnigans. We'll see you next time.

(upbeat music)

Theatre SKAM is grateful to live, work, and create on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen people, now known as the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations. SKAMnanigans is hosted by me, Branden Sugden. Our producer is Logan Swain. Our marketing materials and graphics are made by Janine Jablinski. We would like to acknowledge the support of our operational funders, the BC Arts Council, and the Capital Regional District for their support of Theatre SKAM. SKAMnanigans can be found wherever you get your podcasts. Subscribe to get notified when new episodes drop. Thank you so much for listening.

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