

# SKAMnanigans S1E6 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. Let the "SKAMnanigans" begin. Can you smell it? That mix of ocean breeze, imagination, and litter vanishing from the landscape? That's right, the smell of SKAMpede is in the air. Oh, silly me. Of course, you can't smell it with podcasts being an audio-only medium. If you do want to help us present "SKAMnanigans" in smell-o-vision, consider donating at [SKAM.ca](http://SKAM.ca).

Now, you may have heard that there was a 6.4 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Vancouver Island last week, and we do have to apologise. In our excitement to kick off the festival, the stampede of folks rushing down the trail at our dress rehearsal did get a little out of hand. Fortunately, we toned the stomping down for the weekend. It might have caused quite the issue for our artistic producer, Logan Swain, who was on the trails this weekend, mic in hand, to give the listeners of "SKAMnanigans" a taste of what SKAMpede is all about. So sit back, relax, and enjoy the beautiful sounds of nature, creativity, and play, plus the occasional seaplane taking over the Inner Harbor.

My name is Danielle. And my name is Isabella.

Great, and I know that you come to SKAMpede every year, so can you tell our audience what about SKAMpede keeps you coming back? I love everything about it. I love that it's open to the community, it's by donation, really makes it very accessible to big families like mine and people who might be struggling. I love that it's outside. I love that it's different every year, it's very creative. And I specifically love SADEFOX, the Sustainable Fox, participation and all the work, and how, I think last year as well, maybe every year, there's always one or two plays that are themed around trash collection or recycling or cleaning beaches. There's always that environmental side to it, and I love to see that.

And I really like the part where they use cans and cardboard to make the characters. And my favourite part was the doctor coming back and going and going. And those are my favourite parts.

I think that "Defending the Planet" is one of my favourite plays too with Tamarack on the Songhees Tour. Anything else you wanna say about SKAMpede? Everybody should come and watch and join. If you haven't yet, it's so cool. And another thing that I really love is how some of the plays are always connected to the land. So we

saw "Little Red Riding Hood." That's a, it's a tongue Twister there. And yeah, yeah, you speak English. I'm still learning. And it was, she was going to Sook to see her grandma. And you know, just those little Easter eggs like that is always fun to watch. So yeah, thank you to your camp.

And if you want to come and see it, you don't have to, but you can bring chairs 'cause we're gonna be sitting for a while.

Yeah, foldable chairs, right? 'Cause you sit down and you get up and you sit down. It's good that you get your exercise in.

True.

Great, thank you so much.

Thank you.

(upbeat music)

So if you can introduce yourself, that'd be great to start.

Yeah, sure. My name is MJ Connelly. I use he and him pronouns and I'm a site manager on the Song He's Tour.

To hear your perspective on SKAMPede, you're one of the site managers that's been back, I think every year since we added them in during the pandemic.

Yeah, 2021, you had some sort of call out and I joined up and I've been here every year since then. I absolutely love it. It's my favourite part of the summer.

Why do you think that audiences or tech and arts administrative personnel should engage in SKAMPede as either an attendee or a worker or a volunteer at the festival?

I mean, attending as an attendee is important because we should all be supporting local theatre. I know it's rich for me to say that 'cause I know I could do a much better job of actually going to shows myself. So, you know, there's that, but yeah, attending is great just to support your local arts and also to see, there's been some amazing pieces I've seen done at SKAMPede that just couldn't be done anywhere else because a lot of the pieces are site specific. They're designed for the particular site that they're on. They can have a sort of connection to the land that a lot of other theatre that happens on a stage can't have. And then as far as engaging as, you know, a volunteer or a staff member or whatever, I've had nothing but pleasant

experiences working with the SKAMpede staff, with the SKAMp, Theater SKAMp staff in general. It's just a really nice way to perform labour that benefits the arts.

Is there anything else you'd like to say about SKAMpede or theatre in Victoria in general?

I would say, please do come to SKAMpede and please do reach out to Theater SKAMp, well, when they post that there's jobs, please do apply to those jobs or volunteer opportunities, support your local arts. And when you come to SKAMpede next year, please make sure you bring water and sunscreen so you can have a good time.

Thank you so much.

Thank you.

Thanks for being on SKAM Nanigans, the Theater SKAMp podcast. What do you have to say about SKAMpede?

Well, look, I'm having a great time down here. My name's Cam and I do theatre around town with some of these folks and it's just fun to see everybody doing such exciting, innovative work in such a great setting.

What is your favourite part about SKAMpede?

Well, I think I really love to see every year, I've come, I haven't missed it, I don't think a season, I just love the way they use the space so innovatively. But I also love to see how, like I've travelled to countries like Brazil and countries that have theatre in the main part of life in the weave of the daily life. And I think this is getting close to that. People are joining in as they come along and a couple of families that walked past us sang along to the chant in the last show. So I just love the way that the audience can become sort of spontaneously involved and not even know they're audience.

Amazing, is there anything else you wanna say about SKAMpede or theatre and arts in Victoria in general?

No, I just think keep SKAMpede going. It's so great to see emerging artists out here and writing plays and trying it out from an audience. That's a wonderful experience for everybody, for both the audience and for those performers who wanna try out new work. So just keep it going every summer, make it longer.

(upbeat music)

My name is August Elzinga and I'm here with Alektoria Productions of "Birds of a Feather".

Amazing, so have you done SKAMPede before?

I have, I got to do SKAMPede last year with Salty Broad, which was so much fun. I got to shove my head through some teddy bears. So this year, very different vibe, very sweet. Get to play a raven, which is super exciting. But yeah, like last year and even this year, especially with less time, it's been so fun getting to work with SKAMPede and getting to throw things together even last minute. So hopefully again, I can be back next year and just keep on rolling.

I hear that you had three and a half hours of rehearsal time to throw this show together, saving our buns at Theater SKAM, the week of the festival. Can you tell us what that experience was like?

Yeah, absolutely. So I got a phone call saying, "Hey, what are you doing this weekend? Do you want to be in SKAMPede?" And I said, "Sure." And then we SKAMPpered together to read the lines and figure out what our blocking was and what we were wearing and we showed up and it was actually such an enjoyable experience and it's been so wonderful to get to be back at SKAMPede. And just to see what we can create in this amount of time and hopefully we can be back next year with even more time to make something even more magical for Theater SKAM again.

Fantastic. So for those audience members out there who didn't come to SKAMPede this year, what would you say to make them come to SKAMPede next year?

There's so many great things about SKAMPede. It's pay what you can. So it's super accessible in that sense. You get to see a bunch of shows from a bunch of different groups of people, so many different storylines, so many different people at different levels of their career and you can really see some amazing work in such a short amount of time. I always like to say that SKAMPede is like almost like a mini fringe where you get to see so many different shows at different levels, but all in like the span of an hour. And I can't think of a single negative to say about that.

Before I let you go, is there anything else you would like to say about art in Victoria? Any plugs?

Yeah, absolutely. There's so much art going on in Victoria. I'm a part of a few things right now. So I'm working on a show called "There Will Be Bugs" with Other Guys Theatre, which is gonna be happening at 910 Government. We're starting on July 20th, I believe. And then that's runs like every single weekend until the last week of August. And then I get to work with Alec Toria again on a show called "Nothing

Crazy's Gonna Happen." Super interactive, super immersive house party show that's gonna be happening at Victoria Fringe. Victoria Fringe this year runs from August 21st until September 1st, I believe, give or take. So come check those things out and make sure that you keep track of all the things that Theatre SKAM is doing.

(upbeat music)

My name is Jackson Waldie. My pronouns are he/him and I am a site manager at SKAMpede 2024.

So what's it like being a site manager at SKAMpede?

It is a blast. I get to watch one show all day, every day for the entirety of SKAMpede. But it's so much fun hanging out with the artists, getting to know everyone, introducing people to theatre and talking to passersby and convincing them that it's worth watching.

When this podcast comes out next week, SKAMpede will be over. So what would you say to all the people who missed it this year to convince them to come next year?

You never know what you're gonna get with SKAMpede. I would come to SKAMpede every single year if I could.

I would say that you're supporting local theatre and that's one of the best things you can do in this day and age. Come to SKAMpede. We'll make your dreams come true.

(upbeat music)

My name is Amancio. I'm in Fast Bus, Cowboys Fast Bus for SKAMpede this year.

Great, so what's it been like working with Cowboy and Fast Bus at SKAMpede?

It's been a huge honour. I mean, Cowboy is one of the premier local theatre operations that I've been privy to witness in Victoria. It's been an honour to be able to work with them. I think they've put on an incredible production and I'm really excited to be a part of it.

What would you say to any artists contemplating doing site responsive outdoor theatre, maybe that might wanna apply to SKAMpede for next year?

I would say go in with an open mind. We have had, first of all, the privilege of having a really amazing site and we went and ran with it. There's a lot of usage of the site that we couldn't do if we were at, say, another site. So, I mean, obviously construct

your production before you come into the show, but once you're in it, be open to change it and make use of the site that is made available to you. I think that's what makes for really interesting site-specific theatre.

Is there any other theatre or art-related things that you wanna share with our listeners?

Not much other than support your local scene, go out and see local theatre, go out and catch local music, support local venues. There's definitely a dearth of them, but they are around and they are all, unfortunately, largely struggling and they can only get by with your support. So, go on out, be involved, meet new people, start new projects, create new things, and support local.

(upbeat music)

Hi, Logan. My name is Ciaran Volke, and I'm performing in Cowboy's Fast Bus on the Central Tour.

Amazing. So, what can you tell us about Fast Bus?

Fast Bus is a wild ride. As the name implies, you start somewhere and you end up somewhere completely different. It's a fun experience where the audience and the performers are all in the same space together. So, we're really in the thick of things. Because it's improvised, it's all crazy and magical stuff happens, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

What is your favourite part about SKAMpede?

My favourite part about SKAMpede is the community aspect. I find that when you're doing this quote-unquote endurance theatre, site-specific theatre, all the different sites, all the different groups kind of support each other, and SKAM is really supportive as well. There's so many activities that we do together that I find that it just creates such a wonderful bond. And I feel like I'm doing this show, not just for us, but for everyone involved.

I'd like to give you the opportunity to plug any other things that you're doing or Cowboy is doing, or if there's anything else relevant you wanna say to our listeners. Now's your chance.

Okay, yeah. Cowboy is in the Victoria Fringe this year. We've got a show called Ciaran and Islay Make Coffee. We are in the unconventional venue lottery. So you won't see us in a regular theatre, but you will see us in a coffee shop, and it'll be lots of fun, and you should check it out.

(upbeat music)

Hi, I'm Ira Cooper of Spec Theatre.

Hi, I'm Keith Williams or Keith Sonic.

Thanks for joining me on SKAM Nanigans, the Theatre SKAM podcast. So we're here live and in person at SKAMpede, and you two are artists in the festival at the last minute. What do you have to say about that? What's it been like?

It's been very beautiful, actually. I like doing the rapid shows one after another.

Yeah, and there's something about having it be like last minute and very alive. It's like meeting and discussing the beats and just kind of putting your work out there. That kind of work ethic and that kind of like Andy Kaufman-esque experience really interests me.

So Ira, would you say that this show is very in your style of performances? I'm familiar with some of your friend's shows, Mr. Coffeehead, which audiences may have seen. Is this your normal style show or is this a different type of work for you?

Usually I'm like in a theatre space and like have a couple months or a month to write. I usually like write my shows and then we do a collaborative process as Spec Theatre. And it is quite different. Like they are full hour long shows, but they're still absurd. They're still Dada-esque. They're still weird. There's still like a kind of a fire quality to them that you don't know what's gonna happen next. So yes and no. I wanna get more into this style more. So that's why I like hit up Keith 'cause he is the master of this.

So Keith, what is your kind of typical performance or artwork like?

I have stuff written and anytime I think of something, I'll write it down. And then when I approach the stage, I try to clear my mind and just recall different things that I've written and it can go either any way. A lot of time I have no idea what I'm gonna do when I hit a stage. And I perform everything like burlesque, comedy, do poetry, I do live painting. I do a lot of live painting and improv with that.

And so what's it been like to create an outdoor show and perform outdoors in the blazing hot summer sun?

Well, we wrote it inside and we brought it outside for the first time when it was time to do it. And so it's been really, Keith, you described it being like, it doesn't feel as weird outside. Like when we do our weird stuff, 'cause I met Keith through Bean Juice Cabaret and started doing this kind of performance when I saw actually Keith and I

was like, "Oh man, I wanna get into that type of style." And so being outside, you're right, it doesn't feel as weird.

Yeah, I did a similar show at Otherworld this year where I tried to rob the audience. So it was outside and at an event where there was no money in exchange. So trying to rob people that I knew had no money. Yeah, it didn't go as well as it's going here.

Is there anything else you'd like to say about your show or about SKAMpede or anything you'd like to plug while we have you here?

In a time of logic that equals war, I think the world needs a little bit of escapism and Dadaism and surrealism to have that escape and to have that space to actually dream up something new. So I think that our show might be weird and strange, but it also gives space for that, for strangeness and weirdness in the day, like in the daylight, we're bringing the weirdos. They say the freaks come out at night, but we want them to come out during the day. I've got nothing upcoming. I'm gonna be in the Edmonton Fringe, which is a show called Forest of Truth with Peter Gumbo out of Japan. And then I'm going to Bangladesh in November with the show Mr. Coffeehead, which is called Everything is Super Wow Now for one performance at an international festival. And that's all I'm doing this year. I have a show coming up called Bean Juice Cabaret, July 21st at the Mint. And it's just a weird variety show and there's burlesque, but we don't just do traditional burlesque. We have live musicians playing and it's all improv'd and the music's all improv'd. I also do another show called Wet Monkey, which is a live art game show where we get people to come up and paint and I kick them out for no reason. Has nothing to do with their art. And yeah, that's what I have coming up. And lots of comedy shows.

Thank you both for pulling together a fantastic SKAMpede show. A couple of days before the festival, you really came through for us, and I know audiences are really enjoying the show. So we look forward to hopefully having you at more SKAMpedes in the future.

Thank you for reflecting on the 16th annual SKAMpede Festival with me. I know SKAMpede is a highlight of the summer for many families in Victoria. And I hope those of you who weren't able to join us this year, keep your eyes peeled for our goose-laden posters next July. If when listening to this episode, you thought to yourself, "I have an idea for a show that would be just perfect for a certain spot on the Galloping Goose Trail or Songhees Walkway and would love to perform it 12 times a day in the blazing sun," follow us on Instagram or Facebook @TheaterSKAM to be the first to find out when our next call for SKAMpede applications opens. Until next time, keep your sunscreen locked and loaded when out enjoying the beautiful scenery Vancouver Island has to offer.



TheaterSKAM is grateful to live, work, and create on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen people, now known as the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations. SKAM Nanagans is hosted by me, Branden Sugden. Our producer is Logan Swain. Special thanks to everyone who contributed to this episode, including Danielle and Isabella, MJ Connelly, Cam Cullum, August Elzinga, Jackson Waldy, Amancio Leroux, Ciaran Volke, Ira Cooper, and Keith Williams. Extra special thanks to Spec Theatre with Keith Sonnick and Alektoria Productions for embracing the spirit of SKAMpede and joining our festival at the last minute. You seriously saved our bacon, and we deeply appreciate your work on this year's SKAMpede. Our marketing materials and graphics are by Janine Rzeplinski. We would like to acknowledge the support of our operational funders, the BC Arts Council, the Capital Regional District, and the City of Victoria for their support of TheaterSKAM.

SKAM Nanagans can be found wherever you get your podcasts. Subscribe to get notified when new episodes drop. Transcripts for our episodes are available on our website, [SKAM.ca/podcast](https://www.skam.ca/podcast). Thank you so much for listening.