

SKAMnanigans S1E15 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.

Running a podcast is kind of like producing a play. It takes a lot of team effort. Right about now, you're probably realizing that, wait a minute, this isn't Branden. Who is that? Well, folks, this is Logan, Theatre SKAM's artistic producer, and this week I'm flying solo while Branden's out of town. If you're catching up, he recorded the last two episodes by himself while I was out of town. And now he's in Vancouver recording his podcast, "Hey There, Mr. Moon," and well, this will get quite confusing if I keep rambling here, and I don't write a script. So I hope you enjoy some casual conversations with the next round of artists in the "SKAM Satellite" series.

Here's a conversation I had earlier this week with Kathleen Greenfield of Snafu, talking about her show, "Middle Child."

Hello, Kathleen. Welcome back to "SKAMnanigans." We're super excited to have you here to talk about "Middle Child," your upcoming show at the "SKAM Satellite" series. To start with, why don't you tell us a little bit about the show and how it came to be?

Hello, I'm Kathleen. I'm the co-artistic producer of Snafu Society of Unexpected Spectacles. "Middle Child" is a personal challenge for me because I usually spend more time behind the scenes helping to produce, direct, or helping a large group of community people devise. But this "Middle Child" is my personal challenge to create a solo clown show that is feature-length long enough to fit into programming for "SKAM." It really is just me looping together a lot of clown turns that I've done with "Atomic Vaudeville," or with "SKAM," or with "Impulse Theatre," and trying to find the common thread, the through line.

Amazing. Well, I'm excited. I know I was hoping you'd create a fun new show to do. I know, like me, you struggle to make your own art when you're helping everybody else. What's been the most challenging part of this endeavor?

Well, my clown, Supa, who is also a middle child, is the biggest thing about my clown. My clown really loves interacting with other human beings. So it's been a little bit challenging finding time to rehearse with other humans to get reactions and figure out how, basically, how the show is gonna go with audience volunteers and audience

participation. It's been really exciting, though, to be in the room building costumes and props with Loretto Espinoza, who's also my clown buddy, and yeah, and seeing how things will work. So creating magical, surrealist stage moments, but remembering that my clown is spontaneous and engages with the audience mainly.

That sounds super fun. So speaking of audience, say we're walking down the street and I bump into you and say, "Hi, how's it going? What do you have going on?" And you say, "Oh, I have this show." How would you pitch it to me?

My elevator pitch for "Middle Child" is that it is a solo clown show with lots of audience interaction and participation about a clown wandering through a surrealistic ritual trying to find their voice. It explores a lot of stuff about how the experience of a middle child is often being overlooked. It gives me the opportunity as a middle child to step into the spotlight. But as you'll see, I rely pretty heavily on the audience to join me.

- It sounds great. Is there anything else about the show, about your artistic practice, or about things Snafu has going on that you want to share today?

- Ingrid, right now, she's touring two solo shows. One's called "Epidermis Circus," which we premiered during the pandemic as a drive-in, and also the "Baby Tyler Show," which is kind of a spin-off for younger audiences, but it works for older audiences. Ingrid just got back from a tour up Island, and in the spring, she is going on a tour of BC. So tell all your friends in Kelowna, Oliver, I can't remember all the places, but she's definitely going to the Caribou region, I believe. (laughing) And then off to all kinds of other wacky places that we haven't signed the contracts for, so we can't tell you.

And also, Atomic Vaudeville, where I'm the co-leader, will be having a spring cabaret coming up soon that hopefully we'll have again at the First Met space, the Fellowship Hall. We're also gonna be exploring some more bouffant clown in the spring. So I'm really happy where I am actually in my creative life right now because I'm finally finding the balance between being a producer, being behind the scenes, being a director, being a divisor, and then having the time, thanks to Logan, to explore my own artistic practice. Even though I am absolutely terrified of being alone on stage, it has been so rewarding to think about something that is my baby because I'm used to getting everybody on board to collectively believe that it's all of our baby.

- Amazing, that's lots of great stuff going on. And speaking of great stuff, congratulations again on winning the ProArt Mid-Career Artist Award earlier this month at the Greater Victoria Regional Arts Awards.

- Thank you very much, Logan, and thanks to you and Sadie for nominating me. It was so nice to have so many people from the community come out and celebrate us

at that award ceremony. Yeah, it is such a huge honor. It was kind of like icing on the cake of having such a busy and successful year to then have that be acknowledged because I really do feel like I'm in my mid-career now. You know what I mean? I feel like I've established myself in this city as a leader, and yeah, and I have enough time now to actually turn my energy towards my creative practice.

- Well, congratulations again, and we look forward to sharing your show "Middle Child" with audiences at the Satellite Series this weekend and next. Thanks for joining us on "SKAMnanigans."

- Woo-hoo, thanks for having me again.

- It's always nice to have returning guests, and Kathleen was the perfect guinea pig for my solo interview debut, making a third appearance on the show. After finishing tech with Snafu, I knew I had just enough time left to catch Juvenis Productions before they went home. I ran through the back parking lot, burst through the front door, and raced into the ocean room, expecting them to be mid-scene. To my surprise, they were sitting on the floor eating dinner. Dinner's the perfect time to talk about Theatre, and here's my conversation with Juvenis Productions about their show "The Law of Gravity."

Welcome, Ez, is it pronounced Ez?

- It is, but--

- Amazing, welcome Ez and Nathan. Is it pronounced Nathan? (laughing) Great, welcome to "SKAMnanigans," the Theatre SKAM podcast. Thanks for joining me on your dinner break of your dress rehearsal before you open your production of "The Law of Gravity" at the Satellite Series tomorrow. Yeah, we're super excited to have you guys doing the show. Does one of you want to start by just telling us a little bit about what it's about?

- This story, I always say it's a queer, semi-surrealist queer coming-of-age story. It's really an exploration of queer masculinity and what it means to choose masculinity when that's so tied to toxic masculinity, and how can we as queer and masculine people create a safe space within that world.

- And I understand this is not the first time you've done the show. You did it at Vancouver Fringe in September, and not often in Victoria do we get to do a show a second time. How's that feel? Is it exciting, is it terrifying? Any thoughts?

- It's very strange. I think a lot of it is like it's in our bones. We've done this show so many times. We've hammered it out. It feels almost like this makes the Vancouver Fringe feel like a really awesome workshopping experience to get to work with an

audience and see how it's playing, and I'm really excited to bring it back. Even now, just rehearsing again, we're discovering new things about the text. I think it's gonna be really cool. I'm excited. It's scary, but I'm excited. (laughing)

- Great, and so you're both young compared to me, even though I'm still young at 28 years old. Your company is all about young people doing young people's stories. Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

- So I started the company when I was 16 because I was frustrated by the idea that I had to wait to start doing interesting work. I wanted to be a director from a young age, and I was in acting for a really long time, and I was like, this isn't really what's making me happy. What I think will make me happy is directing. So I started the company to sort of give myself a space to explore and learn, and not lie about the fact that we're all learning, we're all young people, and that's just how we have to do it. Now I'm 20. It's been four years, and it's just been such an incredible experience working with people aged 15 to 22 over the last few years, and just giving a space for young people to explore more serious work. It doesn't necessarily have to be like, oh, I'm doing musical theatre, da-da-da-da-da, giving a space for artists to really grow.

- Great, and Ezra, maybe you can talk about what it's like working with a company as a young person that's there for young people to work.

- I mean, I really don't think I would've been involved in this project if it wasn't with Juvenis because I really think that it brings such a needed kind of presence to the scene in Victoria, and I really, really love that. I've admired Nathan as an artist and as a director for a long time, and that was a big part of why I wanted to be a part of this. It's been really cool to also just feel free to be like, yeah, I have no idea what I'm doing most of the time, and we're all figuring it out and learning from each other, and that's been really cool.

- So say we're walking downtown Victoria, and I bump into you and I go, hey, how's it going? And you say, I have a play, but my bus is coming, and I see it coming down the road, and you have 30 seconds to convince me to come see the show, what are you gonna tell me?

I'm gonna say, were you ever a queer 14-year-old? And if yes, do you want to experience that again, and the awkwardness of that, and all that? And if no, do you want to know what queer 14-year-olds go through and how it feels to be, to not know what the world is like for you?

- Amazing, anything to add?

- Oh, that was way better than what I was gonna say. It's very tender, it's sweet, it's earnest, it's awkward. They're kind of like, they suck as people because they're 14, and I feel like that's so genuine to how it feels to be 14. I feel like when I'm in the character, I feel 14 again, and that is terrifying and also really cool to experience and share with people.

- Awesome, before we wrap it up, anything else either of you would like to say or add? Anything else going on, any shout-outs, et cetera, et cetera?

- This weekend, you can go see my sister, who produced the first version of this show in "Sweeney Todd" at the Victoria On Stage Society at the McPherson. So if you want to see that show and our show, that'd be cool.

- Yeah, I would love to, yeah, shout-out Abby for being awesome, and also Val, our stage manager/set maker/set carrier, and everyone who's been so wonderful in helping this project get where it is. Yeah, it's been a community effort.

- Great, well, thank you both so much for joining me, and we'll see you on stage tomorrow.

- Thank you so much.

It's always great to sit down with young Theatre makers and hear more about what makes them tick. Juvenis Productions is so infectious in the way they do their work and how they talk about art, and it's just a treat to have them as part of the Satellite Series. I hope you've enjoyed these conversations. Special thanks to Kathleen, Ez, and Nathan.

The SKAM Satellite Series runs November 28th through December 8th at the Satellite Studio, 849 4th Street. Head on over to SKAM.ca/SKAM-satellite-series to learn more.

As 2024 comes to a close, so does the first season of "SKAMnigans." We have one episode left, launching December 19th. Join us as Branden and I sit down to chat through the first year of the podcast, what we've had going on in our community, and reflect on the year. And hey, if you have anything you want to hear us talk about, shoot us an email at podcast@SKAM.ca.

We hope to see you this week and next at the Satellite Series. 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.

"SKAMnigans" is hosted by me, Branden Sugden. Our producer is Logan Swain. Special thanks to our guests. Our marketing materials and graphics are by Janine

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