

SKAMnanigans S1E16 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.

So, Logan, here we are. It's December 2024, and I think that we are at the end of the first season of "SKAMnanigans."

- I think so. We better be, anyway, 'cause we're running out of time to pump out more episodes after this one once we go on break, and you gotta stop somewhere for the year.

- Yeah, I guess this is the last episode for season one. We've churned out quite a lot of episodes since starting the show, more than I actually expected when we came up with the idea for the podcast.

- Yeah, it's been a busy year, and it's kinda gone by fast. I was looking at some notes, and April 9th is the first time we talked about a podcast in the staff meeting, and then we launched in June, at the start of June, and now it's December, and this is episode 16.

- That's pretty wild, and also, what a quick turnaround from April to June to making the podcast. I'm glad we did it, 'cause the summer's the time when we're doing so much at SKAM, and there's so much work happening for emerging artists, particularly in the city.

- Yeah, yeah, for sure, and looking back at all the episodes we've done, hitting that emerging artist focus has been great through Fringe, SKAMpede, the One Act Play Festival, and other things.

- Yeah, and it's really awesome to be able to provide a platform for artists who maybe wouldn't get the same kind of media attention. Not that we're the media, really, either, but you know.

- No, but we're doing something not new, per se, but new to Victoria, at least on the theatre performing arts side. The opportunity for people to talk about their work is great and share about it.

- Yeah, it's really great seeing the number of episodes we've been able to do in such a short amount of time, and we've got some big plans, hopefully pending funding for season two. So, yeah, if you haven't followed the podcast or subscribed to the podcast, please do, 'cause we've got really exciting stuff in the pipeline for 2025. But before we start looking at 2025, I think we should take the opportunity to look back at 2024 and reflect on all the great work that we got to see and all the great artists that we got to talk to.

- Yeah, it's been a busy year, like we were saying. This is episode 16, and so if this is your first episode, you've got 15 more to check out.

- Binge-worthy.

- It's probably what I'll do in my downtime, 'cause I haven't listened to them all, other than editing them.

- Yeah, you haven't listened to them all except for more than anybody else ever.

- Yeah, recording them, editing them, and improving them. But I haven't listened to them for pleasure, so maybe I'll do that. But looking at the stats, we had 45 guests this year.

- That's bonkers.

- 45 guests in 16 episodes. I don't know if that's a record, but it's, I mean, that's more than, I guess, yeah, averaging like two and a half guests an episode.

- Yeah, and we even had a fair number of artists that were on two or three different episodes in different capacities, so it's definitely great. It's been lots of fun.

- I think my favorites have been the interviews where we bring someone back onto the podcast for a second or third time and get an idea of how their process is the same or different between shows and the way that things are also different depending on the presentation mode of the show. Like the kind of show you're gonna make for the Fringe Festival is very different than the kind of thing you're maybe going to do at the SKAM Satellite Series or the Victoria One Act Play Festival or that kind of thing.

- Exactly, and you know what? I've definitely found that sitting kind of beside the microphones doing the tech and recording when we have a returning guest and they have a first-time guest with them, the fact that the person they're doing the interview with alongside you has already done it makes it way easier for them to open up and have a fun time a lot quicker than maybe an episode where we only have first-time guests.

- Totally, and also the episodes where we've had multiple guests have been so great because they're able to bounce ideas off of each other. My favorite thing that happens, a little bit of insider baseball for those of you who are listening to the podcast, is sometimes when we have two or three guests on, they'll just keep talking to each other and bouncing ideas off of each other, and then eventually they'll stop and go, "Branden, you haven't asked us a question in a really long time." And I'll just say, "Yeah, no, but your conversation's so interesting that it makes my job so much easier as the interviewer when I can just leave space for them to fill to continue going deeper on a topic."

Our conversation with Braggie Theatre, Nicholas Guerrero, and Annie Constantinova was the biggest example of that; they could just talk, talk, talk the whole time. And it was so great to hear their insights as people who don't maybe have the same administrative experience that I have in the indie theatre scene, but have lots of experience working with a variety of different companies presenting their work, and also have exposure to less traditional methods of creation.

- Exactly, and what I like about them, and we've had Cowboy on and Snafu, is showing non-traditional routes to creating performance that maybe you don't necessarily get exposed to at university or high school, and seeing that really, any way you want to make art, you can make art. It doesn't have to fit in the box that Shakespeare or insert generic playwright here does. You can do it however you want, and people do that, and they succeed, and they have a lot of fun and make great art that way, and that's great to expose that side of theatre.

- Yeah, I think you could totally see from the artists that were on the show this year the philosophy of making a show that you would want to watch, whether that fits in a box or a genre or anything like that or not. And also the idea that the most important thing you can do as an artist is not wait for someone to give you an opportunity to make something, but to just go ahead and start doing it, 'cause that's the best way to learn, is by trying things and failing sometimes. I saw a quote recently which was that "imperfect action is the key to making any kind of progress." 'Cause taking imperfect action will get you where you want to go much faster than sitting around and waiting to make the perfect plan of what action you need to take. And I think that the indie theatre community here in Victoria is such a testament to that, of people who just rent the satellite studio for a weekend and just put on a thing. They don't have big backers or funders or grants or anything; they just are a passionate group of people who got together to put on a show for their friends, family, and community.

- Exactly, and you speak of learning. I think we've definitely learned a lot on the podcast, so much from how we're setting it up to how we're editing it. That has changed a couple of times for me. And even things like when we started, I thought most of the interviews would be one-on-one, you and a guest. And we've hardly

done any of those; they're mostly two or three or group interviews, and that's been really interesting to kind of see the evolution of how we're doing it in practice as opposed to what podcast research hat Logan thought we'd do.

- Yeah, totally. And I'd be curious, actually, for those of you listeners who've listened to all 16 episodes or most of the episodes, what your kind of feeling is, 'cause obviously we have a certain experience of what recording these episodes has been like, getting to have these awesome conversations. I sort of joke that the podcast is my excuse to pick the brains of people whose work I really admire without having to buy them a coffee. But yeah, so if you have any thoughts about any particular episodes that were your favorites or any observations about the kinds of episodes that you want to see or hear more of in the future, feel free to reach out to us at podcast@skam.ca. We'd love to hear your feedback.

Okay, so 16 episodes, 45 guests. So how many shows have we covered on the podcast?

- Yeah, so I was counting it up, and we've covered 19 shows on the podcast this year.

- Wow, 19 is a lot of shows.

- It is. I was gonna say it's more than I've seen, but I saw more than that. And I think too, especially the mix of presentation avenues for shows that we've covered between shows at SKAMpede, shows that were part of our satellite series, independent productions, fringe shows, and one-act play festival shows. We've really kind of covered the gauntlet of where emerging artists can present and see work. And that's been really exciting for me.

- Yeah, 100%. And I think we've been very lucky to launch the podcast this year because I feel like 2024 was such a great year for independent theatre here in Victoria.

- It definitely was. And you say how quick the turnaround was from April to June, and it was, but I'm grateful. I think one of the reasons we did that is we knew that if we didn't launch at the start of June, we weren't going to feel confident in what we're doing and hit the start of that busy summer of work to see. And so that worked out well that we made that hard deadline.

- Yeah, yeah. The Victoria One-Act Play Festival was a really great opportunity for us to sort of get an understanding of what exactly the podcast is. It was a great opportunity also to, I think, expose the audience to some work that maybe doesn't have the same kind of platform elsewhere, you know, with like, fringe has such a specific kind of show that it's doing. And SKAMpede has a very specific kind of show

that works at SKAMpede that doesn't necessarily work elsewhere. I'm really excited to see what kind of shows they have at the Victoria One-Act Play Festival again next year and to see what the future holds for the shows that have been at the One-Act Play Festival already. 'Cause I think of the ones that I've seen, I think they have a bright future ahead of them if those creative teams want to continue developing them further.

- For sure. And you know, I think it's been special to give some spotlight to a group and organization that's trying to fill a void in the theatre landscape in Victoria, similar to how we're trying to fill a void with the podcast itself.

- We've been talking for quite some time. We don't want to overstay our welcome here in the sort of send-off episode for season one of SKAMnanigans. But Logan, I'm curious, what is a conversation that we had on SKAMnanigans that really kind of taught you something new that you didn't know before about the experience of being an artist here in Victoria or just about being an artist in general?

- Yeah, I think one thing I really appreciated was getting insight into the paths that folks have taken to kind of establishing their arts practice in Victoria. I obviously had a very specific path. I started at SKAM as a co-op student, and then we had a whole pandemic, and now I run the company, and that's very specific. I feel like when you're a student and starting out, you hear a lot about those very visibly quick establishments of kind of landing in a role or starting a company. And so, yeah, hearing about how people have kind of found what works for them in the current landscape has been really exciting, whether it's Braggie or having Time Theft on and kind of the way they've been forging forward. And even to some of the artists like Tor from Hamilton and Dave, just getting that insight into how people have kind of found their path, I think it's been good to show because there's kind of no right or wrong way to have your artistic journey play out. And so seeing the variety of ways people have progressed their artistry and their careers has been, I think, important to show and talk about.

- Yeah, yeah. And for me, I would say something that's been really illuminated for me through the episodes that we've done so far is the importance of mentorship for early career artists. And like, I've always looked at people who have a mentor who's like, they're just like joined at the hip, and I'm always kind of asking myself, how does that happen? How do you find that person? And it became really clear to me through doing all these interviews that like, there's no defined way, kind of as you said, but it also doesn't have to be like this. I always thought about it in my head, sort of like the way that elementary school kids will make friends. I'd be like, do you want to be my friend? And it doesn't have to be that way. Like you just need to be getting in the same room with like-minded people and of people who have skills that you want to have and develop and let those relationships develop organically. And I think that is sort of the recipe for a really strong mentorship is to let that sort of happen

organically. And that mentorship can be a two-way street. Even if one person's more established as an artist, there's always something that they can learn from an emerging artist who has a different way of approaching work and doesn't necessarily have preconceived ideas about the way things are supposed to be done because they've been doing it for 20 years.

- Yeah, exactly.

- Well, I think that is basically a wrap on season one of "SKAMnanigans." Thank you, Logan, for all the work you've done on the behind-the-scenes part of "SKAMnanigans." It's been really, really awesome just having the opportunity, having the excuse to talk to so many great people and have so many great conversations and hopefully to share this knowledge with our audience in season one of "SKAMnanigans."

- Yeah, and thank you, Branden, for going along with my "Hey, let's start a podcast" idea and being game for hosting and all the work you put into preparing for the interviews. And I know that that can be a lot harder to fit in of that deadline, whereas I have a little bit more leeway once we've recorded up to a certain point.

- Yeah, up until release day for sure. Folks, we're really excited about some of the plans we've got to bring you in 2025, so make sure to stay tuned. Logan, when can people expect us to be back?

- Yeah, I don't have an exact date yet, but at some point in the second half of January, we're gonna launch episode one of season two of "SKAMnanigans," the Theatre SKAM podcast. And at that point, we should have some more details to give you on what season two is gonna look like and what exciting things we have in store.

- Yeah, thank you so much, everyone, for listening to "SKAMnanigans" in 2024. We hope you have a happy holiday and a happy new year, and we can't wait to come back to you at the start of 2025.

- 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 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 Theatre SKAM. "SKAMnanigans" 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. Thank you so much for listening.