

# SKAMnanigans S2E18 Transcript

Hello and welcome to SKAMnanigans, the Theatre SKAM podcast. SKAMnanigans brings you into the world of Theatre in Victoria, BC. I'm your host, Branden Sugden. Let the SKAMnanigans begin. Today is Friday, July 10th, and SKAMpede officially begins tonight. As you listen to this, the performers are warming up and preparing to see your smiling faces along the Galloping Goose Trail.

Speaking with today's guests, Bragi Theatre always brings a smile and often a chuckle to my face. Please enjoy this conversation as we discuss their latest SKAMpede offering, *\*Vorvox and Zorzo Visit Earth.\**

So Annie and Nicholas, you're back with Bragi Theatre in SKAMpede yet again with *\*Vorvox and Zorzo Visit Earth.\** Can you tell the audience a little bit about what the show is all about?

Yes, so last year in the One Act Festival, Annie and I did a play called *\*Consider the Dongfish,\** which is about fish and also scientists and also aliens. It was super fun; people really liked it. It won Best Production in the festival, which was shocking because it was probably the silliest piece of Theatre we've ever done. The aliens in it in particular really sort of stuck in our heads. We were thinking, well, what's the next thing that these aliens are going to do after the end of the show? We thought, well, they're probably gonna visit Earth. And we were thinking, well, what's a great place to do that? SKAMpede seemed like a natural fit. We already have the alien prostheses, if you can call it that. They've got a sort of bulbous noggin, some special fingers, and various cybernetic enhancements. So we thought, what does it look like when aliens with those features go on vacation to our cool planet?

Nice, that's so much fun. And I think the audience overlap between SKAMpede and the One Act Play Festival is probably pretty decent. So that's kind of fun to be seeing the sequel to a show from the One Act Play Festival in some way.

Something I'm just sort of realizing, so Bragi's done a lot of shows at SKAMpede, but Nicholas, have you ever performed in SKAMpede, or are you usually only like directing and writing?

That's a great question, Branden. I have not performed in SKAMpede. I've been involved in a lot of different shows behind the scenes in various capacities as playwright, stage manager, director, or some combination of those three, but I've never actually been on stage doing it. So I'm really looking forward to doing that. And having Annie by my side, she was in *\*King of Soup,\** which we did a couple of years

ago, so she's more experienced than me. So she gets to be the captain, team captain.

Annie, do you have any tips for Nicholas for getting through the long days of 12 performances?

You sort of just have to embrace how uncomfortable and chaotic it is. I've never been more overheating, in pain, uncomfortable, hungry, or dehydrated. There's something about just being thrown onto the street or onto a trail to do a show that I feel brings a certain energy. I find it's chaotic and energizing for me. \*King of Soup\* was hysterical. Some of my best Theatre memories are from that, especially when you're interacting with people. I feel like sometimes when I do other types of shows, I want to feel so very in control, but with SKAMpede, there's so much less control given the venue, and I think you just have to really accept that and let it, I don't know, just let it take you wherever it takes you, especially with a show like this, like a comedy. I think that it's suited towards chaos, for sure. So I don't see why we can't just embrace that.

So what you're saying is I don't need to learn my lines?

Yeah, no lines, no blocking. Don't bother coming in costume. It's uncomfortable. (laughing) You already look alien enough.

Oh gosh, oh wow. See, this is what I get. This is what I get.

Yeah, behind the scenes, when we're not being recorded, it's just me abusing him all day.

That's not true. We're good friends.

Just bullying.

We get along great. We have a very respectful partnership. There's no bullying.

One question that I'm kind of curious about, and that we haven't really ever had the chance to ask anyone about, be that on the podcast or just in my life, I guess. I'm really curious about what it's like to work on a sequel or a spinoff of a previous work. How did you approach that? Did you give it any kind of special consideration for the fact that it's based on something in the first place?

Well, I think when we were writing, we wanted to make sure that the piece works for first-time viewers who stumble across it, but it is still within continuity with the first piece. So if people have encountered Vorvox and Zorzo before, it'll be consistent with what they remember; everything that you need to know is recapped within the

show and all of that. But I know Annie and I have spent a lot of time in rehearsal trying to revive the voices.

The voices are very hard.

Yeah.

Because when we originally made \*Vorvox and Zorzox\*, I was sick.

Yeah.

And my voice sounded very different, and it sat very differently. Now I constantly ask you, I'm like, is this even the same as last rehearsal?

I have a question for Vorvox and Zorzox. Could I ask one to them? One second, we're gonna bring them in. They're outside.

Hello.

Hello, humans.

My name is Vorvox—no, Zorzox. I'm Zorzox; my apologies.

Vorvox.

We get confused with such human when we're speaking in English.

Hello, I am a human called Zorzox.

And I am also a human called Vorvox.

I have two eyes, two ears, a nose, and a single mouth. And I have a job at work.

I also work at a job.

My job is working.

Yes, and we're definitely not aliens that learned how to speak English on Duolingo.

We definitely did not come from the Andromeda Galaxy.

We are annihilators.

We are not.

An alien species from the Andromeda Galaxy devoted to destroying all life with our murder gems.

Vorvox, we're in disguise, Vorvox.

Hi, Vorvox, hi, Zorzox. Thank you for coming on the podcast. We're so glad to have you.

Yes, new salutations. Oh, that's a new word for you.

Yes, I like that word. So I'm curious, what excites you guys about checking out the Galloping Goose Trail next weekend?

Well, of course, we want to see the greatest parts of the earth, all of the wonderful creations, and we have heard much marvel about the Galloping Goose, and we want to see it. During the magnificent SKAMpede, we hear SKAMpede is the most important festival in Canada, and there are rodeo clowns and bulls.

I had never heard of a goose that had hooves for galloping.

That's 'cause it's SKAMpede. I thought it was in Calgary, but apparently it's here, so we thought we'd come over here and see the chuckwagon races and get a cowboy boot deep-fried in butter.

I think you might have us mixed up with another festival, but we can't wait to host you guys.

Yeah, SKAMpede is not—there's no rodeo at SKAMpede. I mean, who knows? You never know what's gonna happen. It can be a bit chaotic as a—I don't know. Have you met Annie and Nicholas, who were just in the studio a moment ago?

Those humans?

Strange fellows.

Yes, yes, weird looking, small heads.

So pink.

Okay, well, how long have you been on Earth now? And I'm curious, what is your favorite thing you've seen so far?

The 16th chapel.

The 16th chapel.

The 16th and best of the chapels.

Have you been? No?

No, I haven't been. But what's it like?

There were a bunch of cardinals in there, and they were trying to—they were talking, and they're all in red, and they're like, "Should it be this guy or this guy to be the new poop?" And we didn't know what they were talking about, about the new poop.

That must be like, hmm, like their bejeweled queen?

Must be like their bejeweled queen, yes.

To lead their army.

Yes, and to conquer across the galaxy.

Mm-hmm.

I did not know that humans were the conquering type.

Well, it sounds like you've had an action-packed visit so far, and we can't wait to welcome you to our audience next weekend at SKAMpede. Vorvox, ZorzoX, thank you so much for coming on the podcast.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Just got back from the bathroom.

Yeah, yeah, how'd it go in here?

Yeah, yeah, welcome back. So my final question for you guys before we let you go is why—prepare yourselves—it's a little bit profound, I guess. Why, at this moment in time, does Theatre matter to you?

I feel like when I first went into Theatre, I was very interested in the pursuit of telling very big monumental stories. And as I've gotten older and as I do this more, that's obviously still something I want to do; it's still a priority. But I think the priority to

create joyful Theatre is more important to me now. I used to want to be one of those really edgy theatre artists that made really serious work, but I am a very not edgy, unserious person in most aspects of my life. So I think right now, given our political climate, economic climate, and our climate climate, we need to have joyful Theatre. We need to have moments where we feel good.

I think that, like, consider \*The Dongfish.\* What was so beautiful about it was I still remember the exact audience members' faces and their smiles. I remember people coming up to me, and their feedback on the show was how happy it made them. Outside of this, I do quite a bit of political activism, and I find that that's where I am deeply, deeply serious about life. But as somebody—like any human—but as somebody who, I always say, one of my favorite hobbies is laughing. I find that with Theatre, I don't want to do it unless it makes me laugh in some way, even if sometimes the work or the scene is quite serious. Like \*Hawk Lover\* at the One Act Festival was on the more serious end, but I laughed so much during the process.

The team did, and people who watched it left having really had a good time 'cause they watched something really interesting and something fresh. I cannot overstate the value of making people laugh right now. We have every reason to be unhappy for some reason. I mean, I'm navigating the world right now as a queer Israeli Jew; I'm not exactly stoked on when I open the news. But it is through laughter I'm able to connect with people that I have otherwise really struggled to connect with—people that I have been told should be my enemies or not because we share joy together.

I'm almost sort of tired of the very, very serious artsy-fartsy work sometimes. It has to be really, really good for me to enjoy it. I think that sometimes humor cuts to the point of the serious subject matter. Sometimes when a play takes itself too seriously, it takes a really roundabout way to make its point, and sometimes it's easier to just make a joke about it, and you can fit so much more into it. It's easier for folks to digest it, and it gives them a way to tackle that serious subject matter. \*Vorvox and Zorzo,\* this isn't the most serious subject matter.

I think it's—

It has to be among the least serious of subject matters.

I mean, even consider \*The Dongfish.\* The thesis of it was about, at the end of the day, love is what matters. You know, they say every song is a love song. Every good story has some form of love in it. Love is the strongest force in the universe. It is what propels us every day. And I think this is a show not just about two aliens visiting the 16th chapel or whatever, but it's also about two beings who love each other very, very, very much and want to declare that love, even though it is widely unconventional and, at times, unserious.

I think the question of what type of Theatre is worthwhile Theatre is one that people who really care a lot about Theatre talk about a lot. It's like, oh, is that play worth the effort of it? Does it deserve? Is it worthy? Does it make its case? I don't know. I think sometimes, any show, any communication you make, any attempt to reach an audience and share a story or a moment or a feeling is, I mean, it's a wild swing in the dark. All Theatre is hope, right? You're hoping that someone's gonna hear it and see it, and it'll matter to them in some way, and it'll mean something, and they'll understand some idea you've got rattling around in there.

Especially the kind of Theatre that—we can be honest here—we're not on Broadway.

What?

We're not—I know, sorry. Sorry, we're not gonna transfer \*Vorvox and Zorzo\* to the Schubert Theatre on 49th Street. So it's people in our community that we're talking to—people that are our neighbors and our friends and that live down the street and that work in the deli and all those people that are part of the community.

People in your postal code.

Exactly. I think doing something for them, for that community, where it's like, okay, you see this person on the street, and they're a barista or a tour guide or whatever kind of job people have. But in this moment, oh, they're aliens or they're kings or they're villains or they're heroes or they're lovers. It's like, okay, the people in your community, they are who they are, but they can also be more. There's this sort of potential for reaching across divides and expanding what we are in a way that I think is fundamentally hopeful and fundamentally worthy, even if it's just a silly little frippery that doesn't mean anything or tries to tear down the structures of power in society or remake the world. Something that's just trying to make you feel something.

And that can be laughter; Annie's spoken at length about the virtues of laughter.

At length.

At length. But I think it can also be other feelings as well. The most recent show that we did that Annie referenced, \*The Hawk Lover\*, which was an anthology of playlets based on medieval French poetry. Some of them were funny. There were some that were scary. We made audience members jump and yelp 'cause there were scary moments. There were moments that were sad. There were moments that were just weird and made you feel kind of strange inside. But we were all just looking for those strong feelings, those strong reactions—things that break you out of the mold of every day and make something a little bit different, a little bit odd.

And I don't know. You go and see shows in the community. I just saw \*Romeo and Juliet\* at the Shakespeare Festival, and I saw \*L'Idéal D'Ante\* do \*Anne of Green Gables.\* These are classic stories that we've told a million times. But you get to see these people in this moment create something brand new. And these are people in your community, and they're doing something for you.

I just think I find it hard to be anything but grateful.

To jump off of that, I think there's a lot of conversation right now about community building. Everyone's always like, "Community, community." Yet, I don't know, maybe this is a gentle call out to people in Victoria, but I feel like sometimes we forget how to get in a room together and have these moments, especially in a city so temperate. Weather-wise, we don't really have a reason—like a life-and-death reason—to lean on each other all the time.

I think that it's starting to feel crazy out there. And I think that those strong feelings, we all feel them, but we feel them alone. Theatre provides an outlet for us to feel those publicly in a safe way, to relate to people and to tell people, you are not alone in these feelings. Or even just to say—I mean, Nicholas spoke about how it's people in your community. I think that's what makes Theatre so different from pulling up music on Spotify or streaming a movie, right?

You can go up to the artist and thank them after, or you can ask them a question after, and they probably live down the street from you. I think in a climate that is begging for community, Theatre is sort of this obvious yet forgotten antidote that is underutilized—mostly due to a lack of funding to make it more accessible for people.

I could continue going on about that, but I will not, unless you want me to.

I mean, I would love to, but I have to eat dinner, so we don't have time. But we should—

I love eating dinner; that's my second favorite hobby.

We should definitely continue that conversation.

First favorite hobby, laughing. Second, eating dinner. Third, sleeping.

I love sleeping. I took a nap right before this.

Sleeping's so good.

It was epic.



Ugh, ugh. You know what makes me laugh? The fact that people will listen to this and have no idea that we're all wearing sunglasses. (laughing)

Except Logan.

Yes, it's true. That's our scene.

Okay, to be fair though, this lamp that you've put in here is really bright.

No, no, the sunglasses are great.

It's actually kind of evil and sinister that you put that light.

Try to tip it out.

No, the thing is I'm just so sensitive and frail, and I don't have the constitution for—it's like to be exposed to these elements.

For context, before we started recording, we had a bit about, I don't know, being like British musicians.

Yeah, cool British rock band.

You know, like, all right, we're getting the band back together and we're doing this podcast, and yeah. We love modern music, you know, like Chapel Roon and Harry Styles and all of them. They're doing really interesting work, and yeah, so we're making some groovy new sounds. We were just sort of doing bits, and we put on these sunglasses, and we never took them off the whole time.

I only took them off for ZorzoX.

ZorzoX doesn't wear—

'Cause ZorzoX doesn't wear sunglasses.

No, but yeah, for the whole time, we've been wearing sunglasses, so—

ZorzoX is immune to the sun.

New lore just dropped. If you've been imagining us not wearing sunglasses, you have to re-listen to the episode and hear all the ads again, but with us wearing sunglasses and fix your imagination.

But you also have to figure out what shape, right? 'Cause we're all wearing different shapes of sunglasses, and that's sort of the mystery of this piece—this piece, this podcast.

Nicholas, Annie, thank you so much for coming on \*SKAMnanigans.\* We're so glad to have you.

I'm so sorry. (laughing)

What a treat it was to have Bragi come by the studio, not to mention our surprise guests, Vorvox and ZorzoX. You can see \*Vorvox and ZorzoX Visit Earth,\* or should I say Earth, tonight, tomorrow, and Sunday at Site 5 of the Selkirk Tour of SKAMpede. Visit SKAM.ca to pre-book your preferred tour time or show up at one of our tour launch points if you're more the laissez-faire type.

There is one goose we weren't able to wrangle for an interview, but I still want to give them a shout-out as they hit the trails this evening, and that is Vocal Components, the team behind \*The Ballad of One-Eyed Mike.\* \*The Ballad of One-Eyed Mike\* is a tale of history and strange happenings in the land of the midnight sun. The piece is two shows wrapped together. First, a look at the Bard of the Yukon's life and history in Victoria. Second, a dramatic reading of his classic poem of the same name. Entertainment and education rolled into one. Who could ask for more?

Thank you so much for listening to this episode of \*SKAMnanigans.\* We here at Theatre SKAM can't wait to see you out on the trails in a few hours' time. Make sure to say hello to our artistic and managing director and the producer of this podcast, Logan Swain, if you see him along your SKAMpede journey, and tell him how much you love the show. Now, enough talk. It's time to touch some grass at SKAMpede. Have a great weekend, everybody.

Theatre SKAM lives, works, and creates on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen people. We acknowledge and respect the Songhees Nation and the Kosapsum Nation, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

\*SKAMnanigans\* is hosted by me, Branden Sugden. Our producer is Logan Swain. Marketing materials and graphics are by Janine Rzeplinski. 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. Transcripts for our episodes can be found at SKAM.ca/podcast. \*SKAMnanigans\* can be found wherever you get your podcasts. Subscribe to get notified when new episodes drop. Thank you so much for listening.