Blind Spot

BY MEGHAN GARDINER
DIRECTED BY PATRICK MCDONALD
PRODUCED BY GREEN THUMB THEATRE
**LIVE THEATRE IS AN ACTIVE EXPERIENCE!**

**Ground Rules:**

As members of the audience, you play an important part in the success of a theatrical performance. Please review the following theatre rules with your students prior to your LKTYP visit.

- Food, drinks, candy and gum are not permitted in the theatre.
- LKTYP is a nut-free zone. Many children have severe life-threatening allergies; NO PEANUTS or NUT products may be brought to our theatre.
- No electronic devices are permitted in the theatre because they affect our sound system. Photography, audio and video recording during a performance is prohibited by the Canadian Theatre Agreement.
- Students are not permitted to leave the theatre unless they are accompanied by an adult.

**Theatre is a two-way exchange:**

Actors are thrilled when the audience is engaged and responsive. We want you to laugh, cheer, clap and really enjoy your time at the theatre. However, please be considerate audience members. Talking, whispering and excessive movement during a live performance is distracting for the actors, and disruptive for other audience members.

Enhance your visit by encouraging your students to look at different aspects of the production. Before the show, identify tasks for your class. Have one group of students looking at the set, another listening for the music and sound effects, a third watching the lighting and a fourth, the costumes. Compare notes after the show about what they observed. Your students will be more informed and they’ll be surprised by how much they noticed. Ask them to be prepared with one question for the actors after the show. Brainstorm with them about possible topics to get the most out of the experience!

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**Bank Financial Group**

**EDUCATION PARTNERs**

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**SBC Foundation**

Additional support for our Study Guides is generously provided by the J.P. Bickell Foundation.
**The Study Guide**

**Thematic Overview**

*Blind Spot* from Green Thumb Theatre in Vancouver is a play about three teens who encounter a difficult and dangerous social situation and must deal with complicated aftermath. The story shows how miscommunication and alcohol impairment can set in motion a situation that quickly spirals out of control.

Finding appropriate and engaging ways to approach sensitive issues such as date rape, alcohol abuse, and drugs in the classroom can feel uncomfortable for both teachers and students. Our *Blind Spot* resources are intended to help mitigate this discomfort by delving deep into the issues while still maintaining boundaries to help ensure the personal safety of those involved. To this end, we have prepared exercises that ask students to consider a variety of social situations in the form of case studies to determine the best possible outcomes through sound decision-making practice. Of course, we realize that many variables will compromise the decision-making process and recognize that some of the situations may not be realistic to adolescents. We have therefore included debriefing questions that prompt students to think critically about the scenarios that are presented, and share their point of view on the assignments themselves.

Oscillating between comfort and discomfort is a natural space for theatergoers. Good art can at once affirm and challenge our beliefs. The *Blind Spot* study guide creates a space for young people and their teachers to discuss how a play like *Blind Spot* fits into this model. On first view it looks as though the “lesson” *Blind Spot* is trying to teach is clear but once students engage with the material critically, it becomes evident that there is much more to consider. As usual on pg. 14 you will find Jon Kaplan’s *Introduction to Student Reviewers* to help students consider the form of the play along with the content.

On November 11th, LKTYP in partnership with The Centre for Urban Schooling, OISE/UT is hosting an event for teachers to explore the tension between comfort and discomfort and how to find the learning opportunities within this space. Find the invitation on pg. 11 and join us!

This season, LKTYP is exploring the theme True Character. *Blind Spot* challenges audiences to think about what happens when our true character is compromised either by social pressures, mistakes in judgement or circumstances beyond our control. We invite you and your students to engage deeply in this challenging play and the questions it poses.

**Strands and Curriculum Connections**

**Curriculum Connections:** Health and Physical Education, Social Studies, and The Arts.

**Character Development Connections:** Integrity, Respect, Empathy, Honesty.

In addition to Drama and Language Arts, *Blind Spot* directly relates to student development in the areas of:

**Health and Physical Education:** substance use and abuse, growth and development, healthy growth and sexuality, personal safety and injury prevention, analysis.

**Social Studies and The Humanities:** individual development, relationships, decision making and problem solving.

**The Arts:** reflecting, responding and analyzing, creating presenting and performing, exploring forms and cultural theory and creation.
The Company

The Cast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tyler</td>
<td>Devin Estes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrie</td>
<td>Meghan Kinsley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Damien</td>
<td>Ash Lee</td>
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Creative Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Patrick McDonald</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage Manager</td>
<td>Rachael King</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Manager</td>
<td>Alex Currie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set Designer</td>
<td>Julie Martens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sound Designer</td>
<td>Corbie Fieldwalker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lighting Design</td>
<td>Ian Giles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costume Design</td>
<td>Naomi Sider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tour Manager</td>
<td>Nadine Carew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>Ivan Habel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guest Artistic Resident</td>
<td>Sara Masters</td>
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</tbody>
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Synopsis

Carrie and Tyler, bright young friends who have grown up together, are now being forced to face the facts that their friendship is changing. Tyler has developed a crush on Carrie and finds out one night at a party that Carrie has her eye on his cousin, Damien. As the evening goes on, Tyler reveals his feelings to both his cousin and Carrie. The aftermath of his admission leads to dire results as miscommunication and deception leads to actions which change everyone’s life.

Glossary

Consent: (as a verb) express willingness, give permission, agree. (As a noun) Voluntary agreement, permission, compliance.

Date Rape: sexual activity without consent during a voluntary social activity.

Impair: damage or weaken.

Perception: an interpretation or impression based on one’s understanding of something.

Sexual Assault: sexual activity involving a person who has not soberly and explicitly agreed to participation.
UNITs OF STUDY

pre-ShOw DISCUSSION QUeSTIONS – all GraDeS

Curriculum Expectations:
By participating in the following activities students will:
• Apply living skills (Example: decision-making, assertiveness, and refusal skills) in making informed decisions, and analyze the consequences of engaging in sexual activities and using drugs
• Apply steps of a decision-making process to address age-specific situations related to personal health and well-being in which substance use or abuse is one of the factors.
• Engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on examining multiple perspectives and possible outcomes related to complex issues, themes and relationships from a wide variety of sources and diverse communities.

Discussion Questions:
• What is consent? (How did the class come up with the definition. If using the definition in the glossary, discuss the clarity of that definition. Example: how can the phrase “express willingness” be problematic?)
• What are values? Where do our values come from?
• What makes a decision hard? How does one go about making decisions?
• Have you ever made a wrong decision? What did you do afterwards?
• What might sway the decision-making process?
• What events may change our perception of certain situations?
• Who may affect the way we view certain situations?

pre-ShOw ACTIVITY – all GraDeS

Activity 1: Understanding the Importance of Appropriate Decision-Making
DirectionS:
• Write the I-BEAR decision-making guide (see pg. 6) on the board or chart paper.
• Go through the guide with your students, making sure they understand each step, and using examples when necessary.
• It is essential that students realize how important making the proper decisions can be when faced with a difficult situation.
• Refer to the case study ideas on pgs. 7-8 and chose one to talk through with the students. The rest of the case studies will be used for the students to act out a solution themselves.

Activity 2: Using I-BEAR to Evaluate
DirectionS:
• Divide students into groups of four.
• Hand out one case study per group. Don’t worry if some groups have the same case study; different groups will likely come up with different solutions.
• Before students begin working through the case study, ask them to decide if they will approach the problem from a male or female point of view and whether they feel such a decision is necessary
• Have the students read the case study and, using the I-BEAR guide, create a short scene or report on how they would deal with the situation at hand.
I-BEAR

I
Identify the problem.

B
Brainstorm for possible solutions.

E
Evaluate the possibilities and choose one.

A
Act on your decision.
  a) Resist
  b) Keep repeating
  c) Reverse pressure
  d) Leave the situation

R
Re-evaluate the situation if necessary and choose another alternative.
**CASE STUDY IDEAS:**

**Grades 8&9**

Sue is new in school and is having a difficult time making friends. After math class, a group of classmates approach her and invite her to a movie followed by a party on Friday night. The party is at Mike's and his older sister may or may not be there to chaperone. Some of the boys suggest that they may end up going into Mike's dad's liquor cabinet again to liven up the party. A few of the girls laugh when this suggestion is made. Sue wants to make friends, but it seems there may be some problems to solve.

James has just moved to a new city. There are several boys about his age in his neighborhood. One day, a group of boys from his area tell James about a private club they have formed. James is very happy when they ask him to join since he doesn't know many people in the area and the club sounds exciting. At the first meeting someone brings out a six-pack of beer. Everyone but James takes one and starts drinking. James is told that if he does not go along with the group he can no longer be a club member.

You and your best friend are playing in a park near your home. You hear voices from behind a group of trees. You both go to see who is there and see your older brother and two friends drinking some hard liquor. They offer you and your friend a drink. Your brother says, “Don’t be such a baby. All the other kids do it.”

You are over at a friend’s house for lunch. Your friend’s parents work so you are alone in the house. After lunch your friend goes into the liquor cabinet and pulls out a bottle that has already been opened. He has seen his parents mix drinks before and offers to be your ‘bartender’. He says, “There is nothing wrong with it. Lots of people drink casually.”

**Grades 10,11&12**

It’s six o’clock Friday evening and you are at home. Tonight your older brother is having a party and you plan to be part of it. Your parents are out of town for the weekend. They reluctantly agreed that your brother could have a party while they’re away - he’s a mature 18-year-old after all. Most of the people coming to the party will be older, but you’ve invited a few friends too. Tons of people end up showing up to the party. It seems like everyone has brought alcohol with them. Your brother brings out a case of beer and in the spirit of the moment he offers you one. You think, “Why not?” and drink it down. Feeling no effect, you grab another beer just as your friend Matt shows up. You finish off your second beer and grab yourself another and one for Matt. You feel pretty relaxed and start talking to a few people. You and Matt decide to go down to the rec room and see what’s going on. As you weave your way downstairs you hear the noise of people partying. At the base of the stairs you see a keg of beer. People are having a drinking contest. The first person to throw-up loses. They want you to join in the next round.

It’s Friday night and you are heading out to a party. You see your Dad downstairs and tell him that a friend of yours, Jason, is having a party, and you and Ronnie want to go. Your dad is actually pleased that you’ve got other friends besides Ronnie, although he’s surprised you never talked about Jason before. You tell your father he’s a new friend. Ronnie arrives and Dad tells you to be back by midnight. You and Ronnie walk over to the party. When you get to the house, loud music, and a lot of other noise, is blaring from inside. You and Ronnie aren’t sure if you should just walk in. You figure the polite thing to do is to knock on the door. No one can hear you. Meanwhile you see some older people arriving. They’re carrying cases of beer and are just walking right in, so you follow. The music is loud and there seems to be hundreds of people everywhere. You’re feeling a little nervous. You and Ronnie are just about to leave when some older girls come along and invite you to sit down with them on the sofa. You are surprised when Ronnie pulls out a joint, and passes it around.
Your boyfriend is on his way to pick you up for his friend's party. You are a little worried about the people who are going to be at the party. It is an older crowd and you are hoping that you'll fit in. Your dad asks you where you are going. You tell him you're sleeping over at a friend's house. You figure a little white lie won't hurt, and now you don't have to worry about heading home on time. Your boyfriend is at the house. You run outside and get into his car. You're so happy to see him, but he smells of beer. He's not allowed to drink at home so you wonder where he has been. He tells you to 'hurry and buckle up,' so you can get going.

De-briefing questions:
- How did the case studies conclude when played by a male or a female character?
- Would there be a difference if the situation was played with a character from the opposite sex? Why or why not?
- Does the classroom environment dictate how the group responded to the case studies?
- Were students concerned with the perceived "right" and "wrong" answers?
- Would their approach to solving some of the issues in the case studies change if a teacher was not present? How?
- Do the case study situations represent an accurate portrayal of "teen life"? Why? Why not?
- Are stereotypes still prevalent in our communities today?
- Do these stereotypes affect our perceptions on making various decisions?

POST-SHOW UNIT – ALL GRADES

Curriculum Expectations:
By participating in the following activities students will:
- Construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to social concerns at both the local and global level.
- Identify major factors that contribute to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- Demonstrate and use both decision-making and assertion skills with respect to media influences and peer pressure related to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – ALL GRADES

Discussion Questions:
- What can impair decision making?
- How might media portrayals of life and society, especially in the context of peer groups, affect the way teenagers react in various pressure situations?
- Reflecting on Blind Spot, ask students which decisions they think could have been changed or reversed?
- How does Carrie feel she will be perceived when she decides to dress up for the party? Why does she feel this will benefit her at the party? Is this an accurate portrayal of a girl Carrie's age? Why? Why not?
- Why was Tyler suggesting that Carrie just have a soda water with a lime at the party? Is this a good idea? Why or why not?
- What type of pressures were the characters being faced with at the party?
- Describe the types of characters in Blind Spot. Are they familiar? Stereotypical?
- What would students change about the characters and how they behave in Blind Spot?
- Describe the role of a patriarchal society in a play like Blind Spot.
POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES – ALL GRADES

Activity 1: Introduction to Working with Consent
Directions:
• Set up the classroom with different obstacles that the students will have to navigate through. (i.e. a turned-over chair, clothes, pylons, balls, etc.).
• Have the students get into pairs. One student will be A and the other will be B.
• This round have the A's navigate the space blindfolded and listening to the commands of partner B. The goal is for partner A to successfully navigate the obstacle course with partner B's instructions and guidance.

NOTE: Have Partner B follow closely behind Partner A so their voice can be a heard a little better.
• Repeat this activity switching the roles of partner A and B.

Extensions:
• Repeat the activity, but have the partner who is dictating the instructions stay at one end of the classroom. The partner blindfolded will have to listen carefully to the instructions that are being given.

CHALLENGES:
• Play loud music or provide other distractions while students are working through the activity.
• Turn the blindfolded participant around in order to disorient them.
• How do students work with these impairments?

NOTE: Make sure to scan the classroom as this activity is taking place to ensure that no student gets hurt.

De-Briefing Questions:
• When was communication clear?
• When did it get more difficult?
• What could have made the communication process easier?
• Did this activity make you feel comfortable or uncomfortable? Why?

Activity 2: Blind Spot Case Study
Directions:
• Similarly to the activity in the pre-show unit, use the Blind Spot case study situations (on pg. 10) to discuss the decisions that were made by the characters.
• Break the class into groups of 2 - 4 and hand each group a different case study situation.
• In their groups, have the students refer back to I-BEAR (pre-show unit) as they review the decision making process.
• Have students create a short scene depicting some possible alternatives or have them report back to the class with some ideas of what the characters could have done to protect themselves.
Case Study Situations:

- **Scene 5 – Carrie and Damien**
  Damien: Yeah, hurry up. It’s 35th and Dundas. You don’t want to miss this one. Ok, I gotta go. *(Hangs up)* It’s Carrie right?
  Carrie: Yeah… wow – I didn’t think you knew… I mean –
  Damien: Didn’t. Tyler just … whatever – So what’s up. That coke not strong enough for you?
  Carrie: Well, that’s just the thing. Like, I totally told Tyler to get me a rum an coke, and obviously he didn’t hear me, so I’m back for some booze. Can you pour a shot in here?
  Damien: Absolutely.
  Carrie: Well thank you.
  Damien: You’re welcome.

- **Scene 8 – Carrie and Damien**
  Carrie almost runs directly into Damien.
  Damien: Whoa hey, Catie…
  Carrie: Carrie
  Damien: Carrie… What’s up?
  Carrie: Nothing, really – I’m just going to get my sweater and…
  Damien: Well that would be a tragedy…
  Carrie: What would?
  Damien: Covering up.
  Carrie: Excuse me. *(tries to exit)*
  Damien: Whoa, whoa, whoa. Now what would I do if the prettiest girl left the party. How would I go on?
  Carrie: I’m sure you’d manage.
  Carrie: Nothing – just, some guy…
  Damien: A lot of guys are silly, Catie, you need to watch out for them. Let me get you a drink.
  Carrie: Uh, well – okay.
  Damien: Come on, my treat.
  Carrie: You bought all this booze?
  Damien: It was nothing.

- **Scene 17**
  After a heated confrontation with both Damien and Carrie, Tyler is feeling down on himself. Tyler wanders into a park, drinking beer. He is repeatedly trying to call Carrie and discuss the events that had happened on the weekend.
Blind Spot Study Guide

De-Briefing Questions:
• How did groups decide on different solutions to the problems presented in the scenes?
• How plausible were the solutions students created? How plausible are the situations presented in Blind Spot?
• Is Blind Spot consistent with students’ current social experiences? Why or why not?

Activity 4: Writing in Role
Directions:
• Review and discuss the end of the play with your class. Why does the playwright choose to end the play the way she does?
• After the students have reflected on the end of the play, have them return to their desks or find a comfortable spot in the classroom.
• Have the class write from the point of view of any character for two minutes. The students may want to write an ending to the play, a journal entry, the discussion between Carrie and her father, or a statement from another character’s point of view.

Note:
Reading aloud in a group works well when done in the round. Have students sit in a circle and tap a student’s shoulder when they are to begin reading. After a few sentences tap another student’s shoulder and have him or her begin reading. This technique creates an interesting and dramatic soundscape.

Extensions:
• Students can read their work aloud (they have the right to pass if they do not feel comfortable).
• Have students memorize their work and present it as a monologue.
• Have students perform scenes incorporating their writing into the scene.

PEDAGOGICALLY SPEAKING
TEACHER EVENT November 11th, 2009. Join Us!

Lorraine Kimsa
Theatre for Young People

Between Comfort and Discomfort: exploring the opportunities to engage with issue-based theatre in your classroom.

Invitation to civic dialogue: You are cordially invited to be part of an extended conversation about the issue of youth sexual health addressed by the two plays: Blind Spot by Meghan Gardiner, and In This World by Hannah Moscovitch, both part of the 09/10 Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People season.

When: The first of the two events focused on Blind Spot, will be held on November 11, 2009 from 6:30pm-8:30pm
Where: Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, Nathan Cohen Studio, 165 Front St. East.

What and Why: Cast members from Blind Spot will be performing scenes from the play. In between scenes, teachers, sexual health workers, addiction specialists, and scholars will discuss themes from the play and strategies for teaching and learning. The second part of the evening led by Kathleen Gallagher and Anne Wessals from OISE/University of Toronto, will invite teachers to engage in drama work they can bring back to their classrooms.

Who: Hosted by Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People and the Centre for Urban Schooling, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/ the University of Toronto.

Light refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP to 416.862.2222 by November 4th, 2009.
**HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WHEEL**

**SAFETY**
- No physical or emotional abuse
- Feeling comfortable to talk about your thoughts & feelings

**RESPECT**
- Having an equal say in the relationship
- Appreciating the ways you & your partner are different

**COMMUNICATION**
- Being able to talk & listen to one another
- Talking about problems & working on them together

**TRUST**
- Being there for one another
- Following through on promises
- Believing in one another

**INDEPENDENCE**
- Being able to have time with yourself
- Being able to spend time with friends & family
- Having interests & activities that you do on your own

**FUN**
- Having some of the same interests
- Enjoying time you spend together
- Sharing affection & admiration for each other

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**Healthy Relationship Wheel**
By: Dr. Elizabeth Bannister
Safe Dating Tips

- Make the first few dates take place in public or with friends of yours.
- Tell someone where you are going and let that person know when you will be back home.
- Trust your “little voice.” If it tells you that something’s wrong, listen to it.
- If you feel uncomfortable, be polite but firm and... LEAVE!!
- Always have a back-up plan in case things don’t go well and you need to leave – make sure you have cash on you (e.g. for a taxi), just in case.
- Know the address of where you are in case you need to be picked up.
- Be prepared to pay for your half of the date. That way you can avoid the possibility of being made to feel that you “owe” the person back.

LETTER FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

In May of 2001, I was at a house party and my drink was spiked with what I now believe to be GHB. I lost about thirteen hours of my life, and let’s just say I didn’t wake up alone. However nor did I wake up thinking I was going to write and perform a play about my experience... but that’s exactly what I did. Since premiering the show in 2003, I have performed Dissolve hundreds of times at high schools and universities throughout North America. After each performance, I facilitate a Q&A, and it was during those conversations I quickly learned that while the use of rape drugs is on the rise, the most common drug used to facilitate sexual assault is alcohol. But the problem was that no one seemed to view alcohol as a drug. In fact, the mentality seemed to be: if you’ve been drinking and someone takes advantage of you, then it’s pretty much your fault. This got me thinking about consent and how blurry those lines really are. I know I’ve participated in conversations in which teen and adult males and females haven’t been able to actually define consent, or rape for that matter. I began to hear the term “just drunk” in a different light, and realized it was time to tackle another play. Green Thumb Theatre expressed interest in an adaptation of Dissolve for younger audiences, and so Blind Spot was born, as was a partnership with an incredible company. I hope this play will make audience members stop and think before engaging in sexual behaviour when alcohol is involved. Through this script I hope to warn potential victims, but I also hope to educate potential perpetrators on when they have consent, and when they don’t.

Thank you for realizing the importance of this message.

Meghan Gardiner
www.meghangardiner.com
**JON KAPLAN’S “WRITING A REVIEW”**

**A Short Introduction to Student Reviewers**

Theatre is, for me, an art form that tells me something about myself or gets me thinking about the world in which I live.

Whether going to the theatre as a reviewer or simply an audience member, I think that watching a play is an emotional experience and not just an intellectual one. I always let a show wash over me, letting it touch my feelings, and only later, after the show, do I try to analyze those feelings.

That’s when I start to think about some of the basic questions you ask when you’re writing a review – what did I see (story, characters, themes); how did I respond to what I saw; what parts of the production (script, performances, direction, design and possibly other elements) made me feel and think what I did; why was I supposed to respond in that fashion? When you go to the theatre to review, take a few notes during a show if you feel comfortable doing so, but don’t spend your time writing the review during the show; you’ll miss what’s happening onstage.

Writing a review doesn’t mean providing a plot summary. That’s only part of the job; you have to discuss your reaction to what you saw and try to explore some of the reasons for that reaction.

I don’t believe that there’s any such thing as a totally objective piece of criticism. We are all individuals, bringing our own backgrounds, experiences and beliefs to a production. In some fashion, every one of us sitting in the theatre is a critic, no matter whether we’re writing a review or not; we all react to and form judgments about what we see on the stage.

When I go to a production, I always keep in mind that the people involved in putting it on have worked long and hard – weeks, months, sometimes years – getting it onto the stage. Even if I have problems with the result, it’s important to respect the efforts that went into the show.

**Jon Kaplan is senior theatre writer at NOW Magazine, where he’s worked for the past 29 years.**

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**WORKS CITED**


RESOURCES

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
1001 Queen St. West
Toronto, ON M6J 1H4
(416) 535-8501
www.camh.net

Kids Help Phone
439 University Avenue, Suite 300
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 1Y8
Tel: 416-581-8969
Toll free: 1-800-268-3062

Planned Parenthood Toronto
36B Prince Arthur Ave
Toronto, ON M5R 1A9
(416) 961-0113
www.ppt.on.ca

Sunnybrook Hospital Party Program
www.partyprogram.com

Teen Relationship Project
5022 TEL Building
4700 Keele Street
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M3J 1P3
Fax: (416) 736-5647

Sexuality and U
http://www.sexualityandu.ca/teachers/resources.aspx

Arts Impact: Making a difference in the lives of students

LKTYP is proud to have **Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life** as lead sponsors for its Arts Impact program, which provides opportunities for schools in low-income areas of Toronto to participate in quality arts education. Arts Impact’s goal is to deepen students’ understanding of theatre, allowing them to be inspired by the material presented on stage and to think in ways that challenge their own perceptions.

Connections: Addressing the pattern of poverty

There is empirical evidence that children who live in poverty are at greater risk of dropping out of school. Studies have also proven that exposure to arts improves scholastic ability and attendance. Thanks to the generosity of **CIBC World Markets Children’s Foundation**, LKTYP can offer special subsidized tickets to qualifying schools.
Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People (formerly Young Peoples Theatre) is the largest Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) company in Canada and a significant institution in the Canadian professional theatre community. Over our 44-year history we have produced many of the most important works that now form the canon of plays for young audiences in this country. At the heart of founder Susan Rubes’ idea for Young Peoples Theatre (YPT) was a belief that children deserve a theatre of their own – with resources and standards no lesser than those for adults. She believed – as we do today – that young people deserve good theatre because theatre is good for young people.

Through the communal experience of the theatre we create for them, children can receive indications of what is important, funny, trivial; positive, negative, wrong, right, rightish, wrongish; frightening, reassuring, empowering, unavoidable; familiar, new, eternal …. We strongly believe that even through the most playful of plays, we are speaking powerfully to children about the community and the world in which they live.

Therefore, at the centre of the artistic policy of LKYP is a desire to have a positive and lasting impact on the emotional, social, and intellectual development of young people. We want children to be imprinted with experiences that will increase their access to the world, in order for them to grow into the unique and wonderful people they were born to be. To do this, our programming is drawn from the world classics of children’s stories, from contemporary works, from the new plays we develop, and from productions showcasing the most innovative and accomplished theatre for young audiences by other Canadian and international theatre companies.

At LKYP, because we are serious about child development through theatre art, children can experience our work as either audience members or theatre creators. We extend the learning opportunities of our professional productions through our substantial Education & Participation Department. The Department’s services for teachers and students helps connect curriculum objectives and learning outcomes to the content of our professional productions; its Community Participation projects link our theatre skill with the educational aspirations of partners who are dedicated to the growth of young people; our interest-based Drama School offers young people the chance to engage deeply in the excitement of theatre art; and our Community Volunteer programme offers everyone who wants it, the opportunity to participate in the mission of LKYP.

LKYP is not only a professional theatre for young audiences but a vital community-based centre of arts education.