



Cast of *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*. Globe Theatre, 2016. Photo



## ***NEITHER HEROES NOR ORDINARY PEOPLE: A STUDY GUIDE***

***PRESENTED BY:***

**Listen to Dis'**  
community arts organization



# *TABLE OF CONTENTS*

<b>Play Synopsis</b>	3
<b>Director's Note</b>	4
<b>Writers' Note</b>	5
<b>The Company</b>	6
<b>A Note for Teachers</b>	10
<b>Curriculum Activities and Links</b>	11

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# PLAY SYNOPSIS

In *Neither Heroes nor Ordinary People*, those on stage tell their own versions of the truth about what it's like to live with a disability in today's society. Linked together with music, dance, song, poetry, beat box, and more traditional performance, The Other Ordinary presents an exhilarating, heart-wrenching, devised and inclusive performance that will have you laughing, crying and thinking at its conclusion.



Cast of *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*. Globe Theatre, 2016. Photo

Ammanda Zelinski & Maria Doyle in *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*. Globe Theatre, 2016. Photo by Chris Graham Photo



John Loeppky in *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*. Globe Theatre, 2016. Photo by Chris Graham Photo





# *DIRECTOR'S NOTE*

From the first conversation with the members of the company, I knew that they had a lot to say. Through our work at the University of Regina as part of a class facilitated by the then Theatre Department head, Dr. Kathleen Irwin, the members of the company were able to create a piece of theatre that they felt was true to their experience.

Their performance of that first version of the play led to later performances at the Cathedral Village Arts Festival, Saskatchewan Culture Days, The Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, The Regina Public Library's annual Conference and a sold-out run as part of the Globe Theatre (Regina's) 2016 Shumiatcher Sandbox Series Season

As we have built the show, the company has stayed committed to speaking their truth, to listening to what each other has to say, and have created a wonderful environment in which to work. I founded an organization named Listen to Dis' Community Arts Organization Inc. and have been able to see the growth and importance of disability arts in our community. Neither Heroes nor Ordinary People is a beautiful extension of that work.

This show has led to a member of the company becoming a theatre major, another becoming the first performer in a wheelchair to grace the University of Regina's main stage, and a third to become an MFA candidate

It has been a joy to work with this group as they continue to write, create and perform. We hope you enjoy watching it just as much as we did creating it.

Traci Kluk



Traci Foster in Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People. Globe Theatre, 2016.  
Photo by Chris Graham Photo



Photo Credit: John Loeppky

# WRITERS' NOTE

It's strange to think that two years ago none of us had ever met each other. Now we are proud to present *Neither Heroes nor Ordinary People* to you.

The main theme of the show is inclusion, but what we find really strikes our audiences, even those who have seen the show multiple times, are how much our voices come through in performance. This is a testament to those we have had the privilege of working with, and to each other. There are some images that stick out, the showing of images that run throughout the play, John taking his wheelchair apart, Natasha's dance moves, Nicole's swift movements across stage, but what we hope you come away with is a little bit more understanding or, as our very own Kelsey Culbert says, "Our take home message is don't get caught up in society's perceptions of disability and, in doing so, limit me!"

Lastly, none of this would be possible without the amazing work of our director, Traci. Her tireless work ethic and the beautiful space she creates for us so that we can create art is a true blessing. Without her, there is no us.

Once the show is over, please don't hesitate to come and chat with us. We are always willing to chat.

## The Cast

Cast of *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*. Globe Theatre, 2016. Photo





# THE COMPANY



Traci Foster in *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*.  
Globe Theatre, 2016.  
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## TRACI FOSTER | Director

CREDITS: Acting: *The Attic*, *the Pearls and Three Fine Girls* (Susan Ferly); *Room With Five Walls* (Curtain Razors); *Pretty Girl Ugly* (Lunacy); *Everything's In the Box*; *Tracing Steps* (Curtain Razors); *12 Crows – An excerpt* (Factotum). Directing: *Stuck in the Middle*, *If the Shoe Fits*, *Cassandra's Way*, *Roz* (Lunacy)

Film & Television: *Renegade Press*, *Corner Gas*, *Tideland*

Other: Traci Foster is a somatic artist, performer, instructor, and director, who was Canada's first certified Fitzmaurice Voicework™ instructor and is one of Canada's lead certified (2006) practitioners of the work. She explores and develops her work through somatic arts with breath/voice as a first impulse. Traci is the recent and humbled recipient of the 2015 YWCA's Woman of Distinction Jacqui Shumiatcher Arts Award. She has served as a Globe Theatre Conservatory Instructor

In addition to being the founder of Listen To Dis Community Arts Organization Inc., her latest area of focus is bringing heart to all through this disability-led disability arts organization.

For enjoyment, Traci enjoys love, life, nature, animals and all art; especially the stuff that makes her laugh, cry or squirm. For pleasure, she enjoys Ed, her beloved partner; and Cleo, Peep and Luna, her beloved cats.



Natasha Urkow in *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*.  
Globe Theatre, 2016. Photo by Chris Graham Photo

## NATASHA URKOW | Performer

Other Theatre: *The King's Stag*; *New Canadian Kid*; *ReMeasure*; *Spring's Awakening* (University of Regina); *Jekyll and Hyde: The Musical* (Sterling Productions); *Bad Blood* (Curtain Razors)  
Upcoming: *Spring's Awakening* (University of Regina)

Other: Natasha Urkow is an activist, writer, poet, and public speaker. She is a theatre major at the University of Regina. Natasha is a mover and shaker that strives to make a difference in the world. As a harnessed adrenaline junkie she perseveres to use her story to enlighten and help others through their struggles. Natasha continues to speak for The Rick Hansen foundation and SADD (students against him driving). Outside of numerous university shows Natasha has worked with companies such as Sterling Productions and The Other Ordinary.

# THE COMPANY



Nicole Bear in *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*.  
Globe Theatre, 2016. Photo by Chris Graham Photo

## **NICOLE BEAR** | Performer

Other Theatre: *New Canadian Kid* (University of Regina)

Other: Nicole is extremely proud to be a part of the cast of *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*. She has also collaborated to devise a piece for a recent production of *New Canadian Kid*.

Nicole lives in Regina with her husband, Nick, and their two cats, Mistoffellees and Bella. She would like to thank her friends and family for their support and to say, "To Natasha, Ammanda, Maria, Kelsey, John and our fearless director, Traci – I LOVE YOU ALL!"



Maria Doyle and Nicole Bear in  
*Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*.  
Globe Theatre, 2016.  
Photo by Chris Graham Photo

## **MARIA DOYLE** | Performer

Other: Maria grew up in northern Saskatchewan and is currently living in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. She has been a part of the of the Listen to Dis' Community Arts Organization Inc. ever since it formed and in 2015 joined The Other Ordinary, the organization's emerging professional company. Having her first performance of *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People* in May marks a great highlight in her performing career. In addition to performing Maria loves to travel (has been to Australia, New Zealand and Europe) as well as her work as a dog trainer. Whether on stage or not, Maria brings a tremendous amount of energy to everything she does.



# THE COMPANY



Ammanda Zelinski in *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*.  
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Photo by Chris Graham Photo

## **AMMANDA ZELINSKI** | Performer

Other Theatre: *The Producers*, *Once Upon a Mattress* (Regina Summer Stage); *ReMeasure*; *Spring's Awakening* (University of Regina); *Bad Blood* (Curtain Razors)

Other: Ammanda Zelinski is a singer, actor, and dancer who is pursuing a BFA at the University of Regina, focusing on theatre acting. Aside from performing with The Other Ordinary, Ammanda's credits include *The Producers*, *ReMeasure*, and *Once Upon a Mattress*. When Ammanda is away from the stage, she can be found searching for new ways to get back on it, such as playing the clarinet in band and singing with the University of Regina Choir.



Kelsey Culbert and John Loeppky in  
*Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*. Globe Theatre,  
2016. Photo by Chris Graham Photo

## **KELSEY CULBERT** | Performer

Other: Kelsey Culbert is an advocate for people of different abilities and a theatre student at the University of Regina through the Campus For All Program. She works with Spinal Cord Injuries Saskatchewan and The Big Sky Centre for Learning and Being Astonished! to make our society more inclusive.



# THE COMPANY



John Loeppky in *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*.  
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## **JOHN LOEPPKY** | Performer, designer, producer

Other Theatre: Stage manager: *Small Boy DREAMS* (Curtain Razors). Lighting technician: *The Philistines*, *The King Stag* (University of Regina). Lighting design: *ReMeasure* (University of Regina).

Other: John Loeppky is a writer, athlete, actor, designer. He recently began his MFA at the University of Regina. He enjoys competing, writing poetry, and filling his life with all manner of things that make his schedule an utter enjoyable, yet complete mess. His life goal is to have an obituary that is entertaining to read.

## **Acknowledgements**

Listen to Dis Community Arts Organization would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the many sponsors that have made the company's journey possible, including: The Saskatchewan Arts Board, Saskatchewan Culture and Lotteries, the Community Initiatives Fund, the City of Regina, the George Reed Foundation, Conexus Credit Union, and Affinity Credit Union.

We would also like to thank the following for their support in the creation of *Neither Heroes nor Ordinary People*:

Nikki Poncsak, Kelley Jo Burke, Dr. Kathryn Ricketts, Fides Krucker, Ann Kipling Brown, Ed Peck, Gabriela Garcia-Luna, and the members of Listen to Dis' VOICE.

Special thanks to Dr. Kathleen Irwin for creating the class at the University of Regina, devising inclusive theatre, which birthed our company and started us on this amazing journey.

Lastly, this show would not be possible without the support shown by Ruth Smilie, Chancz Perry, and the Globe Theatre team.



Cast of *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*.  
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# A NOTE FOR TEACHERS

Without a doubt, you have students with disabilities and school is one of places they (hopefully) feel safest. People with disabilities aren't just in your classrooms. They are at the park, in your reading group, part of whatever sporting organization you are a part of, they might be your grandparents, or friends, or coworkers.

This study guide is meant to provide you with information about the play and its subject matter, about the actors, and about what educational strategies we feel are best applied when using *Neither Heroes nor Ordinary People* as a resource. We would like to thank you for making the choice to bring your students to a performance. Seeing the disabled experience on stage is an excellent way to create an inclusive environment for your students.

In fact, the play was originally conceived as part of a university class, the goal of which was to create a more inclusive theatre department at the University of Regina. The move brought about a significant uptick in inclusive programs and work being created.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like some further support from our organization, please do not hesitate to contact us at [listenodis@sasktel.net](mailto:listenodis@sasktel.net).



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# GENERAL CURRICULUM LINKS

## DRAMA

### Acquire Understandings and Abilities in Group Processes

Given that the show was devised and so was created by the performance it is inherently a group process. Questions regarding how the show was created can (and are) brought up often after the show in our scheduled talkback sessions, which the students will have available to them.

### Exercise:

In this exercise students would create a set of questions that they would like to ask the performers at the scheduled talk back. Students would be asked to watch and critique a question and answer session with their favourite artist (whether that's a writer, dancer, singer, actor etc.) while keeping the following in mind:

What questions were you glad were asked?

What burning questions did you have that weren't answered?

Do you think your artist's responses were adequate? Why or why not?

From there, students would create a common set of questions that they would then have the opportunity to ask the performers after the show. This also an opportunity for some questions to be asked through this study guide, questions like if the performers are students, where the show has been presented before, and interesting facts about each of the performers that are available through the cast bios provided.



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# GENERAL CURRICULUM LINKS CONTINUED

## **Develop an Understanding of How the Artistic Purpose of each of the artists is served by the Use of Theatrical Elements**

Exercise:

In this exercise students will connect what they saw with many of the theatrical elements already studied.

Students would create -- individually or in small groups -- a shape of their choosing with five sections inside of it. At the top of each section they would write one of the following: sound, script, lighting, costume, and other.

Students would spend time filling this out with the play in mind. They would then come to a larger group discussion to combine their ideas, followed by a class discussion from a master list of what worked for them, what didn't, and what they might have done differently. Once this was completed a writing-based assignment, such as a review could be assigned, with examples being given of other theatrical reviews.

## **Understand that Theatre, Past and Present, Can Teach Us About Ourselves [and Others]**

Exercise: Ask the students what they knew, or could assume, about the actors/characters' identities, what they did not know prior to performance, what they want to know, and what they found out (after the show).



Cast of *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*. Globe Theatre, 2016. Photo



# GENERAL CURRICULUM LINKS CONTINUED

## **Understand that Theatre Can Influence the Society in which it is Created**

Exercise: The two able-bodied characters undergo quite a transformation from the beginning to the end of the play. Having students identify those shifts in tone, action, and voice at different stages of the play is a possible debriefing activity to link with other sections of your drama course.

## **CREATIVE WRITING**

The following is an excerpt from the Saskatchewan curriculum's creative writing resource:

"Portrayal of persons with disabilities in literature and the mass media has been varied and often negative. This has served to teach readers inappropriate information and has engendered attitudes ranging from feelings of pity or revulsion to expectations of superhuman powers of intellect or insight. It is critical that language arts teachers use materials that portray persons with disabilities realistically and fairly."



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# GENERAL CURRICULUM LINKS CONTINUED

## **Selected Arts Education Curriculum Outcomes and Suggested Activities**

CR9.2

Investigate and Identify Ways that Today's Arts Expressions Can Inspire Change

CR8.2

Investigate and Identify Ways that Today's Arts Expressions Often Reflect Concern for Social Issues

CH 8.4

Examine and Respond to the Work of Artists Who Incorporate More than One Art Form in their Work

CR6.2

Investigate and Identify Ways that the Arts Can Express Ideas About Identity

CH 8.1

Research and Share Insights about Arts Expressions that Incorporate Social Commentary

## **Other Curriculum Areas**

### **Health**

Challenges for disabled people abound in our health care system. Areas that concern the show, however, revolve around social interaction, activities such as social interventions in scenes from the play -- in order to stop the condescension being shown Nicole, for example -- are one way to model these outcomes. The social stigma that comes with disability is often more harmful than the physical challenges alone.

### **Social Studies**

The history of disability rights and disability activism has strong Canadian roots. The history of social change is also an area that *Neither Heroes nor Ordinary People* has an obvious link to..



# *SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES*

## **Post-Show Questions**

We've already discussed pre-show questions, but post-show debriefs are also important. Following the performance, have the students fill out one question that they want answered, whether that's about subject matter, the actors, themselves, the design, or something else. These questions can then be asked of the company or unpacked during the next class period.

## **Inclusive Area Discussion and Performance**

This exercise is aimed at getting students to identify areas of the school that could be made more inclusive and to do so through art.

First, students would be asked to create what they think is the perfect inclusive space through a drawing or writing activity. We want to focus not just on the physical space, but what can make an area accessible for those with invisible disabilities and creating an inclusive space for all.

Next, have students identify spaces in their school that model good inclusivity and areas that they feel require some work. Have the students document this through photography, drawing, or a site-specific performance (such as a tableau) that identifies the changes that should be made.

Finally, have the students present these good spaces, as well as the spaces that they feel require change, with a focus on how they can create the change.



John Loeppky in *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*. Globe Theatre, 2016.  
Photo by Chris Graham Photo

# *SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES CONTINUED*

## **Script Analysis Activity**

With a piece of the text that can be provided by the company, have students identify visually what they understood, what they want to know more about, and what confused them completely. Have the students then get into groups and move through the different sections of the activity. Next, move to a large group discussion and identify what is common to many in each of the categories. Debrief where possible and reach out to the company or into the community if there are any questions that you do not feel equipped to answer.

These are just some of the activities and outcomes that fit well with the *Neither Heroes nor Ordinary People*. This list is not exhaustive and the company may be available to workshop with your students. Please contact us for details.

Thank you so much for taking the time to consider our show for your school. Please contact us as [listen todis@sasktel.net](mailto:listen todis@sasktel.net)



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