

STUDY GUIDE

IT'S A GIRL

tnb THEATRE NEW BRUNSWICK
young company

SEASON 2019-2020

CREATED BY MICHELLE RAINE AND ALEXIS MILLIGAN

About TNB Young Company

Since its founding in 1974 by New Brunswick playwright Paul Hanna, the TNB Young Company has been introducing school-age audiences to the magic of live theatre. Each year, the Company travels from one end of the province to the other, from Grand Manan to Campbellton, performing in public schools for students grades 1-12.

For most students, TNB Young Company is their first introduction to live, professionally produced theatre. In many of the smaller communities in which TNB Young Company performs, it is also students' only access to theatre.

All shows are carefully selected for their relevancy, high educational content and themes. They also serve to showcase a host of talented actors, designers and production staff, many of whom are from New Brunswick.

After more than 40 years' experience touring and performing, it is estimated that TNB Young Company have shared the theatre experience with more than 500,000 New Brunswick students.

Supporting Cast

TNB Young Company's 2020 tour is made possible thanks to the generous support of:



55 Whiting Road, Fredericton, NB, E3B 5Y5
506.460.1381
tnb.nb.ca

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Questions? Comments?



Contact us

youngcompany@tnb.nb.ca

The Basics

Cast & Creative Team

Written by Michelle Raine and Alexis Milligan

Directed by
Alexis Milligan

Featuring
Michelle Raine, Robbie Lynn and Rebecca Wolfe

Set Designer
Steve Lucas

Composer & Sound Designer
Ian Sherwood

Costume Designer
Sherry Kinnear

Stage Manager
Alex Rioux

Assistant Director
Sharisse LeBrun

Artistic Director
Natasha MacLellan

General Manager
Julie Friddell

Director of Development and Communications
Matt Carter

Operations Manager
Joanna Bryson

Production Manager
Nikki Vigenault

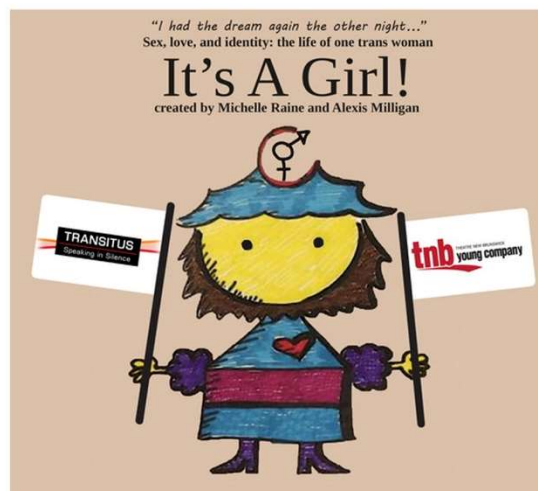
Theatre School Director
Sharisse LeBrun

Head of Carpentry
Jamie Atkinson

Head of Props and Scenic Painting
Elaine Bellefontaine

Head of Wardrobe
Sherry Kinnear

Props and Paint Assistant
Billy Doucet



About The Play: It's A Girl!

How do we perceive differences and how do these perceptions relate to personal identity, gender, and stereotypes? Following the true story of a child struggling with gender identity, *It's A Girl!* creates a safe environment where people can ask questions, have conversations, discuss identity and what it means to be perceived as different.

TRANSITUS
Speaking in Silence

On Stage

Meet the Cast



Michelle Raine | Actor and Playwright

Michelle Raine has been a creative-junkie her whole life. She has completed acting training at the Fountain School of Performing Arts and has had the opportunity to work with Luna Sea Theatre, Transitus Creative, Xara Choral Theatre, and other companies to create performances that educate and change the way we think about the world. "I think it's important for everyone to think critically about their own life, what we know and why we know it, and to make sure that we are never living by someone else's script. It is truly an honour to be presenting two shows with Theatre New Brunswick that deal with subject matter that is so personal to me."



Rebecca Wolfe | Actor

Rebecca is an emerging actor-dancer and aspiring director-writer. Specializing in devised theatre, she is a recent graduate of Humber College's Theatre Performance Program. Rebecca is the Artistic Producer of Alinea Theatre, which recently premiered her new play, Penny. Direction: Elf The Musical Jr. (Halifax Regional Arts), Zomblet (Asst. Director/Choreographer, The Villains Theatre), Down the Line (Nostos/KiDanCo), The Little Prince (Ryerson YCP). Stage: Penny (Alinea Theatre), PEACE Project (Transitus), Infinity Machine, Sycorax Brood, U.R.U., High Point Fields (Humber Theatre), Four Hours (Alumnae Theatre), The Nutcracker (Symphony Nova Scotia). Film: Diggstown, Trailer Park Boys, Mr. D. A passionate arts educator, Rebecca is overjoyed to be combining her love of acting and working with youth during this tour with TNB!



Robbie Lynn | Actor

As an alumni of TNB theatre school, Robbie Lynn is thrilled to return to the rehearsal halls of his youth and tour two shows with Theatre New Brunswick this winter. Last year, he toured two original plays with Calithumpians Theatre Company: Many Hands! and Centennial Sentinel. He loves being on the road and exploring this beautiful province. His favorite role from high school was Freddy Trumper in the underrated musical called Chess. He believes that the arts are for everyone and encourages you to get involved if you're not already. Enjoy the play!

Behind the Scenes

Meet the Creative Team



Alexis Milligan | Director

Alexis Milligan is the founding director of Transitus Creative, an interdisciplinary arts organization specializing in Art Communication and public engagement through the arts transitus.ca. She has been a project partner in knowledge translation and exchange with The Dalhousie University School of Nursing (Palliative Education through Art Communication and Engagement), the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (Touchstones), and with gender consultant Michelle Raine (It's A Girl!).

Alexis is also an acclaimed actor, movement specialist and director with a number of awards and nominations to her name. She is currently in her fourth season as Movement Director at The Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. As a noted artistic collaborator she has created choreography and movement for many theatre companies across Canada including Two Planks and a Passion Theatre, Eastern Front Theatre, Mermaid Theatre, Off The Leash Ltd., OneLight Theatre and Theatre Gargantua. Other credits include movement and puppetry director for the sold out run of The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe at The Stratford Festival, as well as En Julefortelling (A Christmas Carol) with the National Theatre of Norway in Bergen.

She is a recurring guest teacher at NYU Tisch School for the Performing Arts, and has been on the faculty of the Fountain Academy of the Sacred Heart, and Neptune Theatre School. For more information about Alexis and her work please visit her website: alexismilligan.com



Steve Lucas | Set Designer

Since 1987 Steve has designed award winning sets and lighting for more than 500 productions of theatre, dance and performance art.

His work has run the gamut, Starting with his design debut at the the Poor Alex with See Bob Run [also Daniel Macivor's Toronto Debut] he has done everything from family Christmas pantos to radical eastern European avant garde. Working in Large venues to Storefronts, from Off Broadway to The woman's washroom at Buddies in Bad times. From Tokyo to St Petersburg to Port Dover.

His work has toured extensively and has been seen all across Canada, the United States, the UK, Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, Australia, and Asia. 25 countries so far!

Steve's work in theatre has mainly been focused on new and original plays; he has designed the world premieres of literally hundreds of shows, many of which have gone on to further acclaim. These include: 2 Pianos 4 Hands, Never Swim Alone, The Drowsy Chaperone, Time After Time: The Chet Baker Project, The Ballad of Stompin' Tom, Stag and Doe, bloodclaat, Revolutions in Therapy, 7 Important Things, and The Drawer Boy.

Behind the Scenes

Meet the Creative Team



Sherry Kinnear | Costume Designer

Sherry is the costume designer for the TNB Young Company and TNB Theatre School as well as the Head of Wardrobe for all branches of the company. Sherry most recently designed costumes for *The Boat*, *The Snow Queen*, *A Sunday Affair*, *Marion Bridge*, *Vigil*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *The Eighth Fire*, and *The Net*, as well as *Guys & Dolls*, *West Side Story*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Les Miserables* and has created costumes for *A Christmas Carol*, *Frankenstein*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Gifts of the Magi*, *The Dollar Woman*, *Treasure Island*, and many other TNB productions over the past ten years.



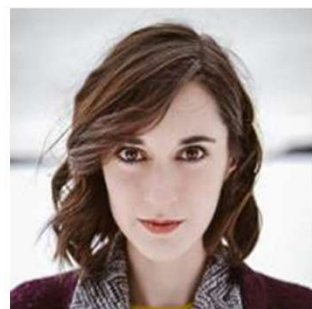
Ian Sherwood | Composer and Sound Designer

Armed with a saxophone, guitar, looping pedal and a voice that won him a Canadian Folk Music Award for contemporary singer of the year, Sherwood has charmed his way across the country and UK with his unique brand of genre-shifting music and stage show. A natural storyteller with a timeless sound, his influences are some of the best folk/pop/country singer-songwriters; from Bruce Springsteen to Tom Waits and Blue Rodeo.



Alex Rioux | Stage Manager

Alex Rioux is an emerging theatre artist based in Fredericton who has worked with a multitude of local companies. He recently debuted his first original work *Fruit Machine* as the main stage production at the Notable Acts Theatre Festival. He is also the producer for *The Plain Site Theatre Festival*, a new queer works project that aims to give platforms for aspiring queer artists.



Sharisse LeBrun | Assistant Director

Sharisse LeBrun is an educator, director, performer and director of the TNB Theatre School. She has long been involved with the local theatre community with companies including Theatre St. Thomas, Theatre UNB, Bard in the Barracks, TNB Next Stage, Notable Acts, Hot Garbage Players and Solo Chicken. After years of attending the theatre school as a student she developed a passion for theatre education and began teaching for many of the junior programs as well as the summer theatre school. Having completed her MA in drama, theatre, and performance studies, she is thrilled to find herself back home teaching and creating with Theatre New Brunswick.

Identity

What makes us who we are is different for every person. Each person is on their own journey of self discovery and it is never ending. In psychology the word "identity" is used to describe qualities, beliefs, personality and the appearance or expression of a person or group. The categorization, or labeling, of individuals or groups can be positive or destructive.

Below is an excerpt from the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression.

Trans people and other gender non-conforming individuals are often judged by their physical appearance for not fitting and conforming to stereotypical norms about what it means to be a "man" or "woman." They experience stigmatization, prejudice, bias and fear on a daily basis. While some may see trans people as inferior, others may lack awareness and understanding about what it means to be trans.

"The notion that there are two and only two genders is one of the most basic ideas in our binary Western way of thinking. Transgender people challenge our very understanding of the world. And we make them pay the cost of our confusion by their suffering."

Bias and prejudice, or simply ignorance, can lead to isolation, vulnerability, disadvantage and discrimination at school, at work, in stores and other services, or even where people live. Trans people living in smaller towns or rural communities may even be more isolated.

Stereotyping

Stereotyping is when assumptions are made about individuals based on assumptions about qualities and characteristics of the group they belong to. When people stereotype others, they do not see the real person. Stereotypes are often unfounded generalizations that come from misconceptions and incomplete or false information about people. Anyone can stereotype and not even realize it, even those who are well meaning.

There are widespread stereotypes about trans people in society that often go unquestioned. These include wrong ideas that trans people are "abnormal" or "unnatural," that they are "frauds," deceptive and or misrepresent themselves. They may be seen as more likely to take part in criminal activity, be pedophiles, or have mental health problems. Some believe trans women to be a threat to other women.

Anyone who engages in illegal activity including threatening or harassing behavior or assault should be dealt with accordingly under the law. This should not detract in any way from the rights of trans people.

False and harmful stereotypes are rooted in fear and uninformed attitudes and can lead to discrimination against trans people because of their gender identity or expression.

Transphobia

“Transphobia” is the aversion to, fear or hatred of trans people and communities. Like other prejudices, it is based on stereotypes that are used to justify discrimination, harassment and violence toward trans people.

Many trans Ontarians experience transphobia according to a transpulsecanada.ca survey:

- 98% of trans Ontarians reported at least one experience of transphobia
- Nearly 75% of trans people have been made fun of for being trans
- Over 25% have experienced physical violence because they were trans
- Nearly 25% reported being harassed by police
- Trans women experience transphobia more often than trans men.

Cisnormativity

“Cisnormativity” (“cis” meaning “the same as”) refers to the commonplace assumption that all people are “cisgender” (not trans). In other words, their gender identity is in line with or “matches” the sex they were assigned at birth, and everyone accepts this as “the norm.”

The term is used to describe stereotypes, negative attitudes and prejudice towards trans people that are more widespread or systemic in society and its institutions. This form of prejudice may even be unintentional and unrecognized by the person or organization responsible, making it all the more entrenched and difficult to address.

Expression

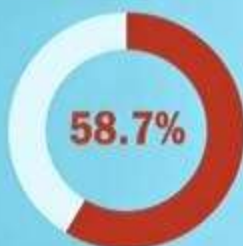
“Cisnormative assumptions are so prevalent that they are difficult at first to even recognize... Cisnormativity disallows the possibility of trans existence or trans visibility. As such, the existence of an actual trans person within systems such as healthcare is too often unanticipated and produces a social emergency of sorts because both staff and systems are unprepared for this reality.”

WHY TRANS PEOPLE NEED MORE VISIBILITY

With more visibility comes more understanding. These statistics can and will get better as trans people become more visible in our society.



80% of trans students felt unsafe at school because of their gender expression



of gender non-conforming students experienced verbal harassment in the past year because of their gender expression, compared to 29% of their peers



of trans people reported physical abuse in a 2007 survey

The Gender, Violence, and Resource Access Survey found that



of trans people have been raped or assaulted by a romantic partner

30%



of trans women have been incarcerated



of trans people have attempted suicide



Trans women have a **1 in 12** chance of being murdered...



...or a **1 in 8** chance for a trans woman of color

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For more information,
go to transstudent.org/graphics

TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources

Infographic Design by Landyn Pan

1 classroom discussion

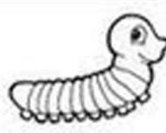
How do we learn what different is?

What's the Difference?

Sorting objects with one different attribute



Help the Queen Bee figure out what is different about her friends. Color the pictures that are alike. Draw an X on the one that is different.



2 classroom discussion

Number the following in the correct order:

- a. Gargle | Brush | Put toothpaste on | Spit | Floss | Put Water On
- b. Get married | Date people | Date people | Have sex | Get engaged | Fall in love
- c. Get hormones | Come out to friends | Come out to family | Get bottom surgery | Get top surgery | See therapist | Come out at work | Outward identity expression

Is there a “right” order? Why or why not?

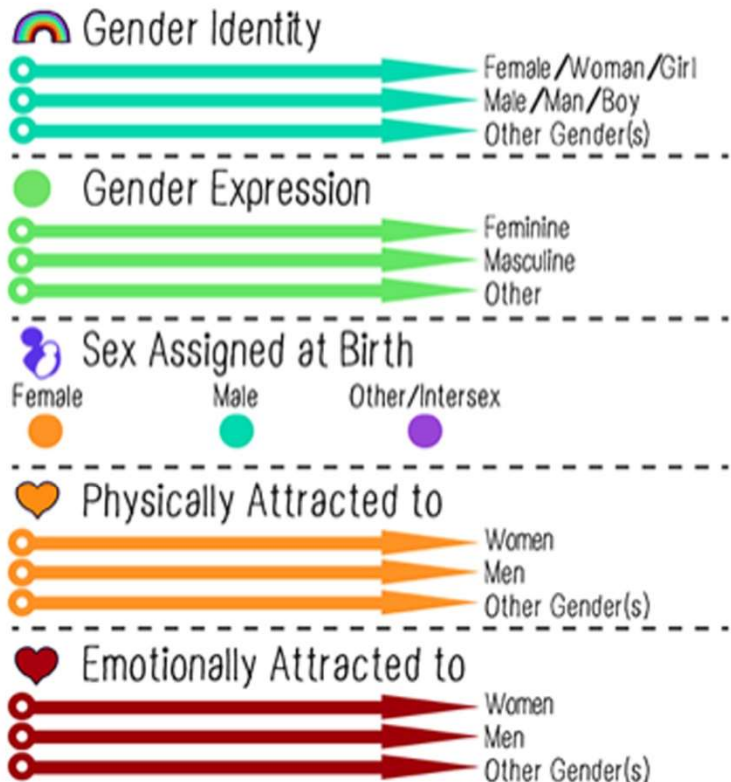
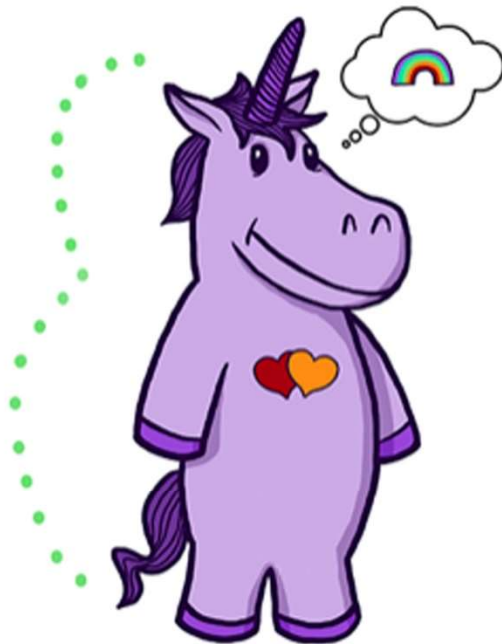
3 classroom discussion

How do you get to know someone? For example, what are questions you ask when/if you are on a first date?

4 classroom discussion

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

What is your reaction to the Gender Unicorn?

Do you have your own tools to help you understand gender identity?

The Basics

Terms to Know

Summary and basic terminology c/o transstudent.org

Cisgender/cis

Term for someone who exclusively identifies as their sex assigned at birth. The term cisgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life.

Gender Expression/Presentation

The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. (typically referred to as masculine or feminine). Many transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth. Someone with a gender nonconforming gender expression may or may not be transgender.

Gender Identity

One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or other gender(s). Everyone has a gender identity, including you. For transgender people, their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity are not necessarily the same.

Queer

A term for people of marginalized gender identities and sexual orientations who are not cisgender and/or heterosexual. This term has a complicated history as a reclaimed slur.

Sexual Orientation

A person's physical, romantic, emotional, aesthetic, and/or other form of attraction to others. In Western cultures, gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Trans people can be straight, bisexual, lesbian, gay, asexual, pansexual, queer, etc. just like anyone else. For example, a trans woman who is exclusively attracted to other women would often identify as lesbian.

Transgender/Trans

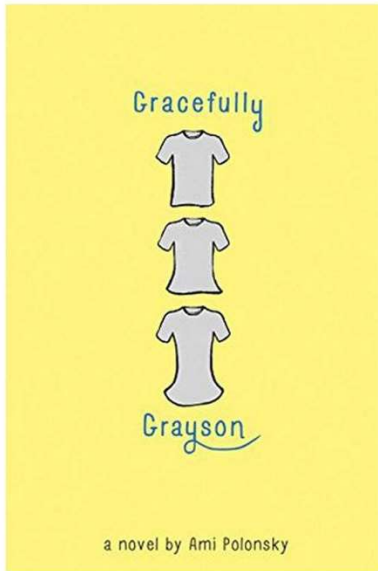
Encompassing term of many gender identities of those who do not identify or exclusively identify with their sex assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life.

Transition

A person's process of developing and assuming a gender expression to match their gender identity. Transition can include: coming out to one's family, friends, and/or co-workers; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) some form of surgery. It's best not to assume how one transitions as it is different for everyone.

Beyond the Play

Further Reading



Gracefully Grayson

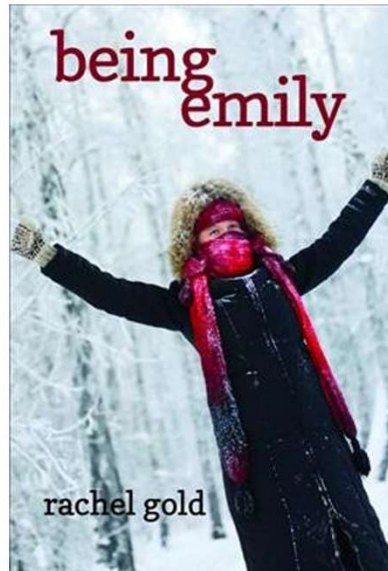
by Ami Polonsky

Alone at home, twelve-year-old Grayson Sender glows, immersed in beautiful thoughts and dreams. But at school, Grayson grasps at shadows, determined to fly under the radar. Because Grayson has been holding onto a secret for what seems like forever: “he” is a girl on the inside, stuck in the wrong gender’s body.

Debut author Ami Polonsky’s moving, beautifully-written novel shines with the strength of a young person’s spirit and the enduring power of acceptance.

2014

Fiction



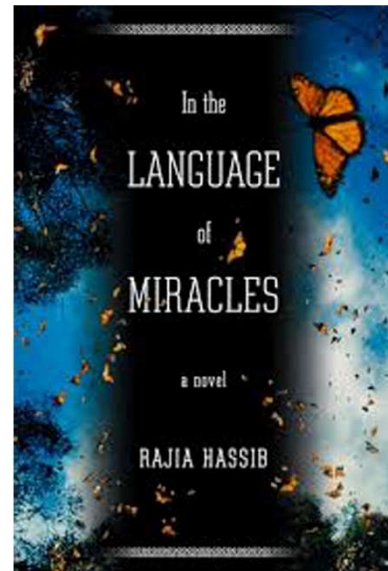
Being Emily

by Rachel Gold

They say that whoever you are it’s okay, you were born that way. Those words don’t comfort Emily, because she was born Christopher and her insides know that her outsides are all wrong. They say that it gets better, be who are you and it’ll be fine. For Emily, telling her parents who she really is means a therapist who insists Christopher is normal and Emily is sick.

2012

Fiction



If I Was Your Girl

by Meredith Russo

Amanda Hardy is the new girl in school. Like anyone else, all she wants is to make friends and fit in. But Amanda is keeping a secret, and she’s determined not to get too close to anyone. But when she meets sweet, easygoing Grant, Amanda can’t help but start to let him into her life. As they spend more time together, she realizes just how much she is losing by guarding her heart. She finds herself yearning to share with Grant everything about herself, including her past. But Amanda’s terrified that once she tells him the truth, he won’t be able to see past it.

2018

Resources

Want to learn more? Of course you do!



The Province of New Brunswick's Education and Early Childhood Department has a number of resources available online to assist students, teachers and parents/guardians including:

- GSA Guide for Middle and High Schools
- Questions and Answers from Students, Educators and Parents/Guardians
- LGBTQ Role Models and Symbols
- Information and Resources for Educators (K-12)
- Information and Resources for Education Support Services Teams
- Information and Resources for Administrators
- Information and Resources for Parents and Guardians
- Terms and Concepts
- New Brunswick Policies and LGBTQ Resources

Simply search for New Brunswick LGBTQ Inclusive Education Resource to assess.



Trans Student Educational Resources is a youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender nonconforming students through advocacy and empowerment. In addition to our focus on creating a more trans-friendly education system, our mission is to educate the public and teach trans activists how to be effective organizers. We believe that justice for trans and gender nonconforming youth is contingent on an intersectional framework of activism. Ending oppression is a long-term process that can only be achieved through collaborative action.

transstudent.org



Opening young minds to the
power of creativity. Proud to support
Theatre New Brunswick.

Theatre New Brunswick is one of Canada's oldest and longest running regional theatre companies. Our mission is to create extraordinary theatre that inspires and entertains our audience while celebrating New Brunswick's best theatre content and artists; and to provide outstanding theatre training and performance that educates and awakens the imaginations of our youth and emerging artists.

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life

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