



**2019-20 SEASON
for Young People**

PERFORMANCE GUIDEBOOK **The Code**

Green Thumb Theatre

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REGIONS



Green Thumb Theatre creates and produces plays that explore social issues relevant to the lives of children, youth and young adults. We provide theatre that celebrates the language and stories of today's generation and culture to stimulate empathy, debate and critical thinking.

TPAC gratefully acknowledges permission to adapt and reprint original material from Green Thumb Theatre's Study Guide for THE CODE.

THE CODE

By Rachel Aberle

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Green Thumb Theatre is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional Artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for choosing to bring your students to Green Thumb Theatre's production of THE CODE, by Rachel Aberle. We believe that theater, and all arts, can be a powerful influence to address challenging cultural and social themes, especially with student audiences. TPAC is proud to bring Green Thumb's timely production of THE CODE to the HOT Season for Young People.

At the forefront of socially engaging theater for young people, Green Thumb Theatre is committed to telling stories that spark thought and provoke dialogue. We share the belief that a really successful show gets people talking. We hope you will enjoy the performance, and gather with your community - whether in school, a family dinner, or a coffee shop- to reflect in thoughtful conversations prompted by artistic expression.

In this guide you will find pre- and post-show questions, activities and discussions to help you explore the main topics of THE CODE: Healthy relationships, social responsibility, online bullying, and consent.

TPAC Education

THE CODE photos of Elizabeth Barrett, Nathan Kay and Mason Temple by Leah Gair with Chickskratz Productions

Performance Guide for

THE CODE

Adapted from Green Thumb Theatre's Study Guide

by Amanda Cantrell Roche

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SHOW ETIQUETTE & TIPS FOR STUDENTS

TIPS for ATTENDING PERFORMANCES

When young people attend a live theatrical performance for the first time, they often don't realize how different it is from watching a movie or TV show.

Please remind students:

- Use the restroom before the show
- Excessive movement can be distracting to the actors and to others watching the play
- It is rude and disruptive to talk during the play
- Photos or recordings of any kind are not allowed

THE CODE - PLOT AT A GLANCE

When Moira organizes a protest at school that results in the spring dance being cancelled, students lash out at her online and in-person – so she turns to her best friends Simon and Connor for support. But when Simon reveals his romantic feelings for Moira and she doesn't return them, the two fight about whether she misled him or he misinterpreted her. Feeling “friend-zoned”, an angry Simon goes too far and joins the barrage of Moira's online abuse with a post that ends up going viral. Stuck in the middle, Connor is forced to consider where his loyalties lie.

ACTIVE VIEWING

To make the most out of watching this live performance, please encourage your students to focus on more than just the story. Remind them to pay attention to things like the set and costumes. These aspects are an important part of a live performance and will enhance later discussions about the play and the students' experience while watching it.

Use the pre- and post-performance questions to deepen understanding and reflection.



PRE-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

- What do you think is appropriate to post online? Of yourself? Of others? Is there a difference?
- Do you ask your friends permission to post photos of them on your profile? Why or why not?
- What does consent mean to you?
- How do you define a romantic relationship? A friendship?
- What does a healthy relationship look like to you? How would you handle a disagreement/misunderstanding in a healthy relationship?

POST-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

- Have you ever been in a situation where you've been stuck between two of your friends who are fighting? What would you have done if you were Connor?
- If your friend had feelings for another friend, would you tell them? Why or why not?
- Have you ever done something you regretted when you were hurt or angry? If you could go back in time, how would you have handled that differently?
- How is posting something online different from saying the same thing in person?
- How would the response to Moira's protest and speech at the school have been different if there were not smart phones used to record it? In what ways do responses on social media shape our own opinions about something?
- Who would you reach out to if you saw something inappropriate online? Would you ever go to the police? How bad would it have to be?
- What would someone have to do online to make you report or block them?



THE CODE – SYNOPSIS

From Green Thumb Theatre's Study Guide

SCENE 1: Best friends Moira and Connor are joking around on their lunch break at school. Their other best friend, Simon, an aspiring videographer, enters the filming with a gift for Moira. Moira gets a text from the dance committee saying there has been a 'dance committee crisis' and jets off. When she's gone, Simon and Connor talk about the romantic feelings Simon has developed for Moira.

SCENE 2: Moira discovers that the school has implemented a strict dress code for the spring dance, and wonders how to best address the situation since she's in charge of planning school dances. Making matters worse, it's clear that many students think Moira came up with the new dress code, and they are now venting their feelings about her online. In an effort to try to cheer her up and assure her that the dance will still be fun, Simon suggests they go to the dance together, offering to take her for dinner and a limo ride beforehand. When Moira agrees, Simon is over the moon, and loses sight of the problem at hand. Meanwhile, Moira is still blind to Simon's actual feelings for her.

SCENE 3: Connor and Simon meet up early before school the next day, summoned by Moira, who has yet to arrive. Simon tells Connor that Moira said she'd go to the dance with him, and he starts day-dreaming about his 'new girlfriend'. Moira arrives and reveals their task for the morning: distributing fliers to promote a school-wide walk-out in protest of the new dress code. After a night of reading mean comments about her online, Moira is convinced this is the best way to make her classmates understand she is not responsible for the new rules. The three set off to distribute the posters, and we hear the speech Moira makes at the protest. She rallies their support and everyone begins chanting "Our bodies, our clothes, stand up, break the code." Simon proudly films it.

SCENE 4: Immediately following the speech, Moira and Simon meet up on their way to class and talk excitedly about how well it went. The two depart to their separate classes; Moira still buzzing from the success of her speech and Simon thrilled to see his 'new girlfriend' so happy.

SCENE 5: Simon and Moira meet up at lunch to celebrate the successes of the morning, but their good mood is quickly spoiled when Connor arrives and tells them that the school dance has been cancelled because of the protest. Moira's social media platforms are quickly swarmed with hateful and hurtful comments blaming her for the cancellation. Moira believes she did the right thing by standing up for the people that the dress code affected, but she's frustrated that no one else sees it that way, not even Connor, who storms off enraged. Simon tries to cheer her up by offering other plans to replace their dance date, and quickly realizes that Moira didn't think it was a date. Hurt, Simon lashes out at Moira who is left even more confused and upset.

SCENE 6: Before school the next day, Simon and Connor meet up and discuss a hurtful video that appeared online overnight, using footage of Moira's speech from the protest cut together to make fun of her. Connor expresses anger at the video and concern about Moira's well-being, and prods Simon about who he thinks might have done it. When Simon doesn't have an answer, Connor confronts him, saying that he figured out it was Simon based on the angles in the video. The two argue about whether or not Simon needs to come clean to Moira about the video's origins. Moira enters, upset about the video, and a number of additional videos made by other classmates who have recut the first one. Connor leaves Simon to explain himself to Moira, and while he apologizes for the argument they had the previous day about the dance, he doesn't bring up the video. Thinking that Simon has come clean about everything, Connor re-enters and inadvertently reveals the truth to Moira. Moira demands an explanation from Simon, who brushes the video off as 'just a joke' and something he did because his feelings were hurt. Moira expresses how deeply the video has hurt her, how far-reaching it has been, and how toxic and threatening the additional recut videos have become. Moira makes it clear that this has damaged their friendship beyond repair. Simon departs, realizing that his rash action has cost him his two most important friendships. Connor comforts Moira and the two of them head into school to face a still angry student body together as friends.



NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Rachel Aberle

It feels to me that we are in the middle of a global conversation about consent. About what it is, how you define it, how one obtains it, and the intense and dire ramifications of what can happen when things happen without it. I think this is good – it's an important conversation, especially for young women and men to have as they begin to engage in their own relationships – romantic or otherwise.

What strikes me about the current conversation however, is that it feels reactionary. It feels like something we talk about after something bad has already happened – like a report of harassment or assault. With *THE CODE*, I wanted to roll that conversation back earlier in a relationship, to before anything irreversible has taken place. Specifically, I wanted to look at how seemingly healthy and positive relationships can fall apart when communication breaks down. So I wrote a show about friendship, and what happens when people have different ideas about the nature of their friendship. Our main characters, Simon and Moira, are best friends – but Simon has been secretly hoping that they will become more. When Simon suggests that he and Moira go to the Spring Dance together, and she says 'yes', Simon is over-the-moon to be going on his first official date with Moira. But when it becomes clear that she thought he meant they'd go as friends, their friendship starts to break down. The two of them fight over whether she misled him or he misinterpreted her, and it becomes clear that everything he's put into their friendship, the energy and care, has been – in his mind – an investment. When he doesn't receive a return on that investment, he feels like it's all been a waste of time.

I can't tell you the number of times in my life I've heard someone complain about feeling like they've been stuck in the 'friend-zone'. But is romance ever a fair thing to feel entitled to? How do we deal with rejection when it comes? In a situation where one person feels led on, but the other feels misinterpreted, who is right?

It is important to note that I don't think Simon is wrong to feel hurt. Handling rejection is really hard, and finding out that someone you like doesn't feel the same way about you is painful. The question is – what do we do with that pain? How do we navigate the bumps in a relationship without doing things we regret?

The questions this play prompts are tricky. There is no easy answer to any of them, but I think that's the point. It's only by having these complex and sometimes uncomfortable conversations that we can begin to move forward.



ONLINE BULLYING Research and Discussion

Time: 45 minutes. Activities Suggested for Pre-Performance

Materials Needed: Online access for research in small groups

CLASS DISCUSSION: 10 minutes

- Is it legal in the US to post a photo of someone on social media without their permission?
- Is it socially acceptable to post a photo of someone with the intent to harm that person?
- What is cyberbullying?

RESEARCH: 20 minutes

(Suggested time: 15 minutes for research, 5 minutes for sharing findings with the whole class.)

Divide class in thirds and assign these research assignments to do in small groups of 3-4 students per group. Groups should be prepared to report their findings to the whole class. (See suggested resources for research.)

Research Group A: Research the laws in the US regarding posting original photos or videos (photos or video you take) of people without permission. What is allowed? What is not allowed? What are the consequences of posting something that is determined to be illegally used?

Research Group B: Research the laws regarding **reposting** photos or video from someone else's social media site, or **altering** someone's content and sharing it. Under what circumstances is this legal? When is it illegal?

Research Group C: Research the impact of cyberbullying in schools. How does it impact attendance? Mental/emotional/physical health? Suicide rates or drop out rates? Use of or deletion of social media accounts?

CLASS DISCUSSION: 15 minutes

Taking into account the research findings, discuss the ramifications of cyberbullying. Why is it so prevalent? What is the difference between what is legal and what is socially acceptable?

SNOWBALL EXIT TICKET:

Anonymously, students answer these three questions on a piece of paper, wad it up, and throw it into the center of the room before leaving class.

1. Have you ever been cyberbullied?
2. Have you ever cyberbullied someone else?
3. How has this discussion and researched changed your thoughts about cyberbullying?

Suggested Sources

Legal issues of posting or reposting photos: <https://lawsoup.org/legal-guides/internet-social-media/>

Photographing and posting photos: <https://legalbeagle.com/8608636-laws-being-photographed-permission.html>

Impact of Cyberbullying: <https://www.broadbandsearch.net/blog/cyber-bullying-statistics>

<https://www.ditchthelabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Annual-Bullying-Survey-2017-1.pdf>

Research Examples:

Guide to Laws about the Internet, Social Media, and Email in the United States

What can or can't I post online? Can I post someone else's picture, video, or writing on my social media?

In general you can't use or distribute someone else's content without their permission. But simply retweeting, or clicking "share" under a Facebook post or other social media is most likely fine, as most social media Terms of Service say that by posting something, a user grants others a license to share it.

If someone has NOT put their work on a social media, it's probably not OK to do it for them.

For more on this topic, please visit:
<https://lawsoup.org/legal-guides/internet-social-media/>

Findings from the Annual Bullying Survey 2017

From those who have experienced cyberbullying...
What impact did it have on you?

- 41% developed social anxiety
- 37% developed depression
- 26% had suicidal thoughts
- 26% deleted their social media profile
- 25% self-harmed
- 24% stopped using social media
- 20% skipped class
- 14% developed an eating disorder
- 9% abused drugs and/or alcohol

Findings from the Annual Bullying Survey 2017, conducted by Ditch the Label.org.



FRIENDSHIP, ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS, & HOW WE COMMUNICATE

Discussion and Activities for before and after the performance

Time: Part One: 15 minutes – suggested for PRE PERFORMANCE

Part Two: 15 minutes – suggested for POST PERFORMANCE

Materials: Copies of TEXT MESSAGES ACTIVITIES page (1 per small group)

Smart phones (1 per small group)

PART ONE - DISCUSSION: Punctuation and Perception

In THE CODE, Simon takes Moira’s constant texting and use of emojis to mean that she likes him. Moira sends Connor emojis as well, but somehow Simon still thinks that she is flirting with him. How does our use of specific words and punctuation change the way that something is perceived?

Take this well-known example (project or write on board):

“A panda eats shoots and leaves” VS “A panda eats, shoots, and leaves.” The commas completely change the meaning of the sentence.

Discussion Questions:

- This may work best as a “pair share” between partners. Consider projecting these questions for all to see, or giving a written copy to each pair of students. Students can alternate with their partner asking and answering the questions:
- When you send a text, how aware are you of others’ interpretations of your messages?
- Do you ever re-type a text, realizing the earlier texts might not make your point clear?
- Do you take responsibility for the interpretation, based on the way you communicated your message?
- When you receive a text, how closely do you analyze the messages you receive from others to interpret their meaning?
- Have you ever sat with a friend and dissected a text to try to find its hidden meaning? What did you do when you felt like you couldn’t figure it out?

PART TWO - ACTIVITIES

NOTE: The following page can work as a handout to share with discussion groups. Laying ground rules about appropriate classroom language before these activities would be advised.

Deciphering Texts

Look at the text conversation (on the next page) between Simon and Moira where they don’t use punctuation. Show these three texts to the class saying roughly the same thing. Ask students to respond to the discussion questions in small groups.

Creating and Analyzing Texts

In small groups, students will create three different texts to respond to this situation described below. At least one of the texts has to include only words and at least one has to include only emojis. Students then share responses in small groups. The following page can be copied for students to read instructions in small groups.

Two friends are at a school dance. One friend gives the other a ride home when her ride falls through. One of these friends has romantic feelings for the other. This text is a response to the ride home.

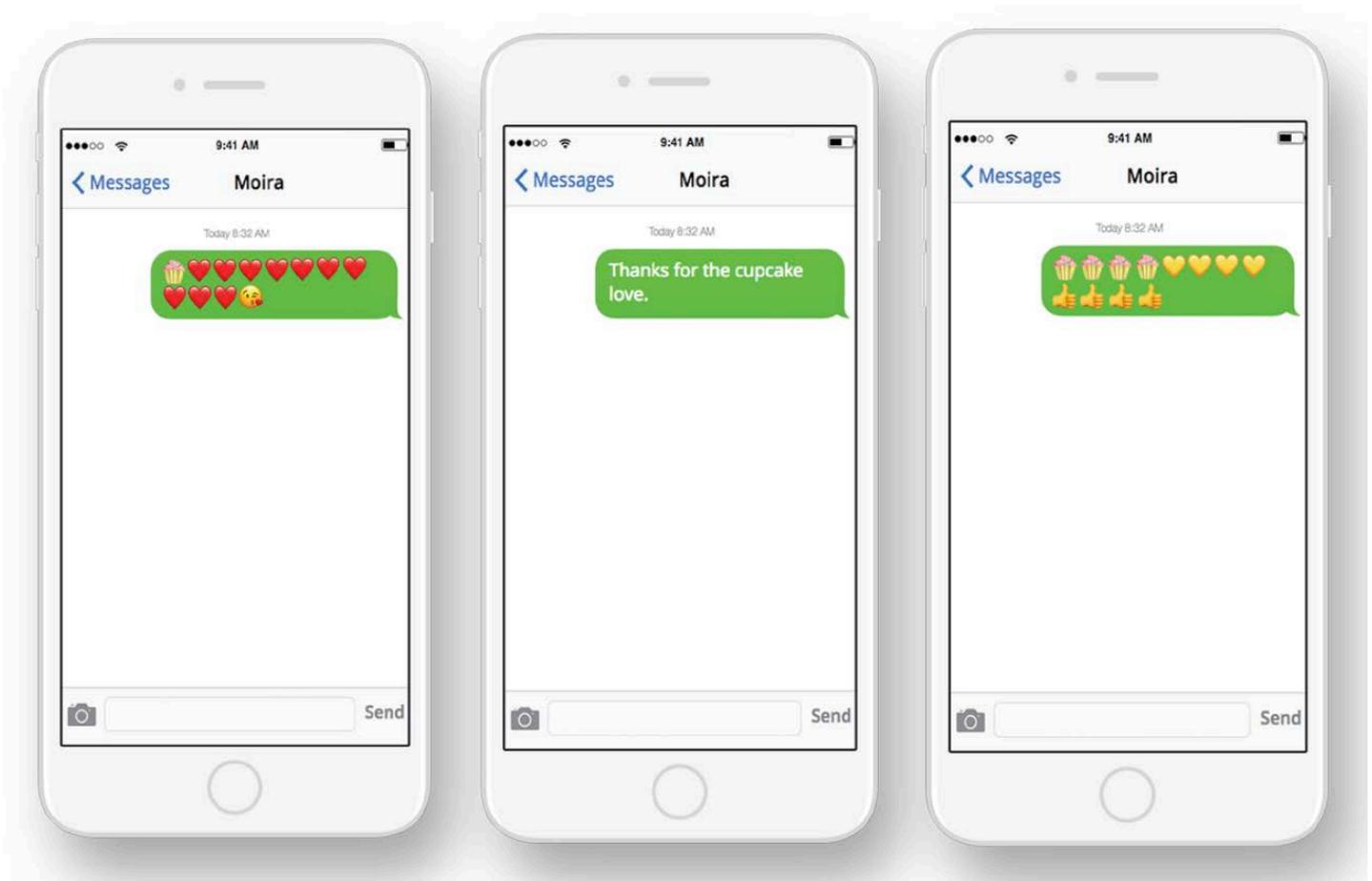
Teacher note: Depending on your ability to project texts to the whole group or not, either choose one or two groups’ texts to project and analyze them, or have groups swap texts and analyze each others’ texts.

Text Messages Activities

□ Deciphering Texts

Discuss the following questions in small groups:

1. How do you interpret these messages? Do they have different tones or meanings? If so, why?
2. How would the use of a comma or other punctuation change the meaning of the second text?
3. What is the most effective way to get your message across? Why?



□ Create & Analyze Texts

In small groups, create three different texts to respond to this situation (below). At least one of the texts has to include only words and at least one has to include only emojis:

Two friends are at a school dance. One friend gives the other a ride home when her ride falls through. One of these friends has romantic feelings for the other. This text is a response to the ride home.

Discuss:

1. Do any imply a romantic relationship, and if so, how?
2. Was your message interpreted as it was intended?
3. Which is the clearest message of the three? Why?

SOCIAL CHANGE AND SCHOOL How much does it cost?

Time: 45 minutes - Post Performance

MALALA YOUSAFZAI: AN EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL CHANGE



Malala, a 15-year-old Pakistani school girl, was shot in the head in 2012. She survived and was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work at the age of 17. To this day, she is still the youngest person to be awarded the world's most prestigious title. (The average age of a Nobel Peace Prize winner is 62). While Malala's story is an extreme example, that doesn't mean that each of us doesn't come up against social injustice in our own lives as well. In *THE CODE*, Moira sees that her fellow female students aren't being treated fairly when a school-wide dress code is implemented, and she sees that as an opportunity to make a change in her school. When her plan backfires, she is forced to solely take the brunt of the accusations and hateful comments directed towards her.

Personal Reflection Questions:

- How far are you willing to go to stand up for what you believe in?
- How can we gauge when something is hard to do but still important, and when something is hard to do but isn't our right or responsibility to take on?

Discuss with the class how Moira went about dealing with a dress code she found to be unfair.

What did she do that worked?

What did she do that didn't work?

Were her actions fair to the student body at large?

Was she ready for the consequences of her actions?

What would you do in the same situation?

These are questions with no easy, or right answers. What one student may deem to be a reasonable sacrifice, another may not.

Allow students a forum to dig into how they think they should go about making positive changes in their communities.

We are never too young or too few to create social change. Take Malala Yousafzai for example. Born in Pakistan during the Taliban occupation of Swat, her life was far from easy. But, she believed that every child, especially girls, should have a right to a free and accessible education and she advocated for that, even though she lived in a country where women don't have the same rights as they do in North America. When Malala was 14, she wrote a blog under a fake name, which was then featured in the *New York Times*. Though it was written under a pseudonym, this article gave a platform to her voice and the issues she was trying to resolve. Unfortunately, life became dangerous for her after it was printed.

ACTIVITY: Implementing social change

This activity is designed to help students initiate social change in a responsible, respectful way. Be a social change maker in your school. What are some things you want to change in order to create a more positive school environment? How would you change those things, and what roadblocks can you anticipate you might run into on the way? Structure the process and decisions as outlined by the examples in this chart:

CHANGE	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES	HOW TO FIX THE NEGATIVES
Implement a 'no dress code' dance at school.	Everyone can wear whatever they feel comfortable wearing.	<p>People might use this as an opportunity to dress inappropriately or feel like they have to.</p> <p>The school might be worried students may dress in a way that they deem disrespectful.</p>	<p>Have a costume themed dance instead.</p> <p>Educate students about empowering themselves through self-expression.</p>
Healthier food in the cafeteria.	<p>Everyone will feel better and have more energy after lunch break.</p> <p>More people will be exposed to balanced meal options.</p>	<p>These options might be more expensive and therefore might deter people.</p> <p>How will the school get access to these options?</p>	<p>Talk to local politicians and get a funded community garden to grow vegetables.</p> <p>Have the cooking class/ environmental club take care of it.</p> <p>Talk to local grocery stores to see if they'll donate a portion of the ingredients.</p>

CAST



Elizabeth Barrett - Moira:

Elizabeth is thrilled to be coming back to play Moira for a third season in a row. Her previous credits include Belle in *A Christmas Carol* (Western Canada Theatre); Hattie Bomber in *Law of the Land* (Caravan Farm Theatre); Flaca in *The Refugee Hotel*, Maggie in *42nd Street*, and Harper in *Angels in America* (Studio 58); Ensemble in *The East Van Panto* (Theatre Replacement); and Moira in *The Code* (Green Thumb Theatre), for which she was nominated for a Jessie Richardson Award. Elizabeth is a graduate of Studio 58.



Teo Saefkow – Simon:

Teo is an actor, dancer, musician, and songwriter living in Vancouver. Recently he played Milo in Green Thumb Theatre's production of 'What If' that toured to elementary schools across BC and Alberta. Other recent theatre includes: Godfrey in 'Slime' (The Only Animal) Evan in 'The Aliens' (Sticks and Stones), Fred/Young Ebenezer in 'A Christmas Carol' (Gateway), Touchstone in 'As You Like It', Joselito in 'The Refugee Hotel', and Troilus in 'Troilus and Cressida' (Studio 58). When he's not acting, Teo creates and plays music as the solo artist 'Scalawag', and just released his debut album this year. Teo is originally from Smithers, British Columbia, and is a graduate of Studio 58.



Joe Rose – Connor:

Joe Rose was born and raised in Richmond BC, and currently is in the middle of his training at Studio 58 where he has starred in *I Know What I Saw* (2018), *Mortified* (2018), *Cabaret* (2019) and *Hot House* (2019).

CREATIVE TEAM

Rachel Aberle – Playwright

A graduate of Studio 58, Rachel is a playwright, director, performer and the Associate Artistic Director of Green Thumb Theatre. As a performer she has appeared with companies including The Arts Club, The Vancouver Playhouse, Chemainus Theatre Festival, Caravan Farm Theatre, Prairie Theatre Exchange, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, and she toured The Firehall Arts Centre's hit show *Chelsea Hotel: The Songs of Leonard Cohen* across Canada for over four years. Her debut script *Still/Falling* (Green Thumb Theatre) has played to audiences across North America, and received the Jessie Richardson Theatre Award for Significant Artistic Achievement. Her second play *The Code* (Green Thumb Theatre) was recognized with a Jessie Award for Outstanding Production, the Sydney J. Risk Prize for Outstanding Original Script by an Emerging Writer, and was included on Tapeworthy's Best of Stage 2018 – selected out of almost 200 shows worldwide. Directing credits include Green Thumb's 2017 revival of *Not So Dumb*, and most recent tour of *Celestial Being*, and *I Know What I Saw* at Studio 58's professional theatre training program. Rachel was selected for the 2017 Playwrights Lab at the Banff Centre and was one of only 15 international artists selected for the ASSITEJ Next Generation Program at the 2018 ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering in Beijing.

Patrick McDonald – Director

Patrick McDonald has been the Artistic Director of Green Thumb Theatre since 1988; prior to that he was the Artistic Director of Great Canadian Theatre Company in Ottawa. He has directed over 80 productions for Green Thumb and has overseen the commissioning and development of more than 50 new plays for children, teens and young adults. He has directed across the country at theatres including The Belfry, The Grand Theatre, Alberta Theatre Projects, National Arts Centre, Vancouver Playhouse, Gateway Theatre, Manitoba Theatre for Young People and Arts Club Theatre. During his tenure Green Thumb productions have won numerous Jessie Richardson Awards, several Betty Mitchell Awards, and three Canada Council Awards for Outstanding Production for Young Audiences. McDonald has been nominated for many awards and has received Jessie Richardson Awards for both directing and 'continued excellence in the field of theatre for Young Audiences'. In 2009 he received the Jessie Richardson Award for Career Achievement and in 2013 was awarded the Vancouver 'Mayors Arts Award' for Theatre.

Bronwyn Carradine - Assistant Director

Bronwyn Carradine is a theatre artist and educator currently based in Vancouver, Canada whose work has been seen on stages across North America. In 2013 she moved to the West Coast to go back to school and study Theatre at Studio 58, and since has been working with companies such as The Arts Club, Bard on The Beach, Zee Zee Theatre, The Chop Theatre, Resonance Theatre Collective, Solo Collective, Intrepid Theatre, The Livery, Studio 58 and Green Thumb Theatre, where she now works as the Education & Outreach Coordinator.

Ruth Bruhn – Set Designer

Ruth is the Production Manager for Green Thumb Theatre in her hometown of Vancouver. Ruth graduated from Studio 58 in production and worked as a Stage Manager in Vancouver before finding her permanent home at Green Thumb where she has designed sets for *THE CODE*, *WHAT IF*, and *NEW CANADIAN KID*.

Elizabeth Wellwood – Costume & Sound Designer

Elizabeth is a theatre creator working in western Canada. Some of her favourite credits include *The Code* (Green Thumb Theatre, Costume and Sound Designer); *Not So Dumb* (Green Thumb Theatre, Set Designer); *Alone Together* (Green Thumb Theatre, Sound Designer); *9 Dragons* (Vertigo Theatre, Assistant Costume Designer); *To the Light* (Alberta Theatre Projects, Apprentice Stage Manager); *Refugee Hotel* (Studio 58, Costume Designer); *Sonic Elder* (The Chop Theatre, Production Designer); *The Occupation of Heather Rose* (A Stone's Throw, Set Designer); *4 Play* (Studio 58, Assistant Costume Designer); and *Comedy of Errors* (Bard on the Beach, Apprentice Set Designer). Elizabeth is a graduate of Studio 58 and splits her time between Vancouver and Calgary.

Melissa McCowell – Stage Manager

Melissa is a Vancouver-based theatre professional who enjoys tackling stage management, costume and props design. She has had the pleasure of working with a number of incredible companies including After Party Theatre, Bard on the Beach, Caravan Farm Theatre, Carousel Theatre for Young People, ITSAZOO Productions, Presentation House Theatre, Ruby Slippers Theatre, The Elbow Theatre, Théâtre la Seizième and Touchstone Theatre. Recent credits include: *Cabaret* with Studio 58 and *The Code* with Green Thumb Theatre. Melissa is a graduate of Queen's University and Studio 58.

Special Thanks

Tennessee Performing Arts Center's nonprofit mission is to lead with excellence in the performing arts and arts education, creating meaningful and relevant experiences to enrich lives, strengthen communities, and support economic vitality. TPAC education programs are funded by generous contributions, sponsorships, and in-kind gifts from our partners.



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*A fund of the Community Foudation of Middle Tennessee

Additional Acknowledgements

Cover photo by Leah Gair, featuring Elizabeth Barrett





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