

**STEPPENWOLF
FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

October 2 – 19, 2019
By ensemble member **Tarell Alvin McCraney**
Directed by **Monty Cole**



THE BROTHERS SIZE

Study Guide

HOW DO YOU NAVIGATE FAMILY HISTORY WHILE TRYING TO WRITE YOUR OWN?

Dear teachers,

Tarell Alvin McCraney, Steppenwolf Ensemble Member, Academy Award winner, MacArthur “Genius” Grant recipient and playwright of *The Brothers Size*, believes theatre can change lives. He is, himself, living proof of this idea. Growing up in the public housing projects of Miami, McCraney was exposed to theater at a young age through an arts education program that allowed him to tour halfway houses and drug rehabilitation centers to tell stories through drama. To him, theatre demonstrated its transformative capacity to reach directly into communities and breathe life into untold stories, to bring people together by presenting stories that reflected their experience. McCraney wrote *The Brother Size* while he was still in college, and it later become part of his celebrated three-play cycle, *The Brother/Sister Plays*, about a community in the bayou and how the lives of its people intersect.

Of the trilogy, Hallie Gordon, Artistic Director of Steppenwolf for Young Adults says:

“When Steppenwolf produced all three of *The Brother/Sister Plays* in repertory almost 10 years ago, I was thunderstruck. I deeply felt then, and have remained convinced over the intervening years, how important and valuable it would be to bring these stories to a wider audience of young people.

The Brother Size in particular stuck with me for many reasons: the haunting beauty of its language, the intimacy and authenticity of the family relationships at its center, the universal need for

comfort and closeness, and the agonizing legacies of incarceration, not only in the life of the individual in prison, but for the people closest to them, as well. In the way of great artists, McCraney has an uncommon ability to transform the pain and despair of his own past into deeply human and compassionate stories that connect us all.”

As a society, we must reckon with our history of systemic racism, of which the mass incarceration of people of color is one of its most devastating legacies. McCraney has found a poetic way for us to share in the emotional costs of incarceration, and its lasting effects on two brothers, Ogun and Oshoosi. This play demonstrates how incarceration can last forever, even after one is released from prison, and illustrates the ways in which the incarceration of an individual can have lasting and rippling effects on entire communities. This play also reminds us of the powerful and lasting love of family and siblinghood that exists even against the backdrop of life’s challenges.

Thank you for joining us this season and for bringing your students to our campus. If you are interested in learning more about our programming, or how to get your young person, school, or organization involved with future Steppenwolf Education programming, please don’t hesitate to reach out to Education Manager Jared Bellot at jbello@steppenwolf.org.

See you at the theater!
The Steppenwolf Education Team

Index

- 2 The Cosmology Behind the Story
- 4 *The Brothers Size* Play Synopsis
- 7 The Car Shack: Characters in *The Brothers Size*
- 8 Welcome to the Distant Present: The Three Pillars of *The Brother/Sister Plays*
- 10 Ogun’s Brother is Missing: An Interview by Playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney
- 14 Action in Language (*Classroom Activity*)
- 20 Don’t Stand Still and Don’t Run: The Ripple Effects of Mass Incarceration
- 22 I am... Freedom (*Classroom Activity*)
- 28 Resources
- 29 Acknowledgements

RELAXED/SENSORY FRIENDLY PERFORMANCE
Saturday, October 19 at 3:00pm – public performance

**AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE-INTERPRETED/
OPEN CAPTIONED PERFORMANCE**
Friday, October 11 at 7:30pm – public performance
Friday, October 18 at 10:00am – student performance

**AUDIO-DESCRIBED PERFORMANCE AND
TOUCH TOUR**
Saturday, October 19 at 1:30pm (touch tour),
3:00pm curtain

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THE COSMOLOGY BEHIND THE STORY

By Former Young Adult Council Member and Chicago Public High School Student Tyra Smith

Tarell Alvin McCraney's *The Brothers Size* incorporates Yoruba cosmology to tell the story of two brothers, Ogun and Oshoosi. In this article, we will explore who the Yoruba people are and the mark they've made on not only this play, but other contemporary influences as well.



Who Are The Yoruba And What Is Their Modern Influence?

Yoruba is an ethnic group composed of over 40 million people who reside in present day Benin, Togo and southwestern Nigeria and share a common language and culture.

Due to the Transatlantic Slave Trade, many Yoruba people were forced to come to North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean between the 16th and 19th centuries. This forced migration of Yoruba people has led to a blending of multiple religions and cultures representing a fusion of African, indigenous, and European traditions such as: voodoo (practiced in Haiti) and Santeria (practiced throughout Latin America). Today, a number African Americans in the United States practice iterations of Yoruba spiritual practices and Yoruba imagery has appeared in popular culture such as: Beyoncé's "Hold Up" music video, author Tomi Adeyemi's young adult fantasy series *Legacy of Orisha*, and rapper Princess Nokia's Santeria-inspired music.



Yoruba inspired imagery is a common trend among present day artists including (from top to bottom) musical icon Beyoncé, author Tomi Adeyemi, and rapper Princess Nokia

Yoruba Culture and The Brothers Size

Playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney has noted that *The Brothers Size* draws on elements, icons, and stories from the Yoruba cosmology most notably through the names and traits of its characters. The names of each character (Ogun, Oshoosi, and Elegba) are derived from and inspired by Yoruba gods and deities. For example, the deity Ogun is the god of iron, and in the play the character Ogun Size is an auto mechanic. Similarly, the deity Oshoosi, who is tied to hunting, has an innate connection to survival. In *The Brothers Size*, the audience experiences what survival means for Oshoosi Size as he lives as a formerly incarcerated person on parole. Yoruba religion associates Elegba with deception and crossroads and the character Elegba appears beside Oshoosi—literally and in his dreams—and drives the action at the heart of the play.

The Power of Storytelling

We also see parallels between *The Brothers Size* and the importance of griots and oral storytelling in Yoruba culture. Griots are people whose role in society is to remember the histories of their people and be able to relay the history verbally. These historians also use music to preserve the past—a technique that is also utilized in this play. Oshoosi is described as having a sweet and powerful voice. He has the gift of singing songs that touches others in their soul. In the play, Oshoosi sings songs by prominent black icons like Prince and Otis Redding, a nod to popular songs that help define modern-day African American history and represent the African American experience.

Immersive in Nature

The Brothers Size constructs an immersive experience that breaks conventions of Western theater. In most Western theater, the fourth wall is present—an imaginary boundary between the performers onstage and the audience in the house.



An Egungun Festival photographed in Nigeria

Performances from the Yoruba tradition are more immersive. An example of this is the annual Egungun festival, where a select group of Yoruba people don masks and garb (the Egungun) in order to embody the spirits of their ancestors and communicate between the living and the dead. Upon request, the Egungun can embody a deceased person's voice or reenact former arguments the deceased person partook in for a living relative. The festival is not performed on the stage. Rather it takes place mostly outside where townspeople can interact with the Egungun and are able to watch from any angle they choose.

Experiencing The Brothers Size

When you see *The Brothers Size*, you are experiencing a unique piece of theater resulting from McCraney's creativity and the mixing of Yoruba, African-American, and European cultures. These elements are employed to compose a distinct story reflective of our modern times.

As we continue to explore *The Brothers Size*, we can ask ourselves:

How can ancient traditions and stories help inspire modern pieces of art?

How does learning about different cultures enhance our ideas about what theatre is?

THE BROTHERS SIZE

Play Synopsis

By Teaching Artist Peter Andersen

1 Ogun Size is living with his younger brother, Oshoosi Size, who is recently out of prison. Oshoosi is always oversleeping and needs to find a job per his parole agreement. Ogun, who owns an auto-mechanic shop, offers to hire Oshoosi. Oshoosi accepts, because he needs the job, but is annoyed at his older brother for always being so hard on him.

2 At the auto shop, Oshoosi is visited by Elegba. The two met while they were in prison and became "like brothers." Ogun expresses that he doesn't trust Elegba. In private, Elegba encourages Oshoosi to ask his brother for a car.

3 Later, at the dinner table, Oshoosi asks his brother for a car. Ogun refuses and reminds Oshoosi he is still on probation. Oshoosi is extremely upset and accuses his brother of always reminding him that he went to jail. Oshoosi tells Ogun that he doesn't want to be treated "like he's locked up no mo'."

4 That night, Oshoosi dreams of Elegba singing and comforting him. In the dream Elegba asks Oshoosi "can you walk with me?" Oshoosi wakes from the dream realizing he is very late for work.

5 Oshoosi arrives to work late, upset at his brother for not waking him. Elegba enters sweating and out of breath after pushing a car he found at his cousin's dump all the way to the shop. When asked why he didn't drive the car instead, Elegba explains that the other day, a police officer ran into him and harassed him for loitering. Because his license is suspended, Elegba decided to play it safe and not drive the car. Instead, he gives the car to Oshoosi as a gift, hoping Ogun can fix it up and make it run.

6 Ogun dreams about his brother and Elegba together. In the dream, Oshoosi and Elegba can't seem to break free from one another. The dream ends with Elegba dragging Oshoosi away with him. Ogun wakes from his dream drenched in sweat and shouting his brother's name.

7 The next day at work, Oshoosi is thinking about his future. He tells Ogun that he wants a job that he's passionate about, and is considering going back to school. He shares that he started thinking about school and traveling the world while he was in prison and saw a picture of a man from Madagascar who looked just like him. Elegba interrupts the scene and Oshoosi and Elegba leave to go to the outlet to party and try to pick up girls.

8 The next morning Elegba is outside Oshoosi's bedroom window trying to wake him, but wakes Ogun instead. Elegba tells Ogun a story about a night in prison that Oshoosi cried for his brother in the dark and the whole wing of the prison fell quiet because the sound was so heartbreaking. Before leaving, Elegba states that he could never replace Ogun as Oshoosi's brother, and warns that the cops will be coming by "looking for a Size."

9 Ogun is upset with Oshoosi and feels that since their mother died, the community has been blaming him for his younger brother's mistakes. Ogun confronts Oshoosi who reveals that while he and Elegba were driving to the outlet, cops approached them and found a bag of cocaine in the trunk. Oshoosi ran away from the cops, leaving Elegba behind. Oshoosi shares that he doesn't know what to do now.

10 Later that night, the two brothers are reconnecting over shared memories. Ogun realizes that everyone gives his little brother a chance because he's so nice, and that he passes his niceness onto everybody he meets. They sing a song together but Oshoosi stops after seeing Elegba in the window. He heads to bed, leaving Ogun alone.

11 The next morning, Ogun gives Oshoosi all his money and the keys to the truck so he can flee town and travel to Mexico. He wants to know his brother is out in the world and not in prison. Oshoosi takes the gifts and leaves his brother alone.

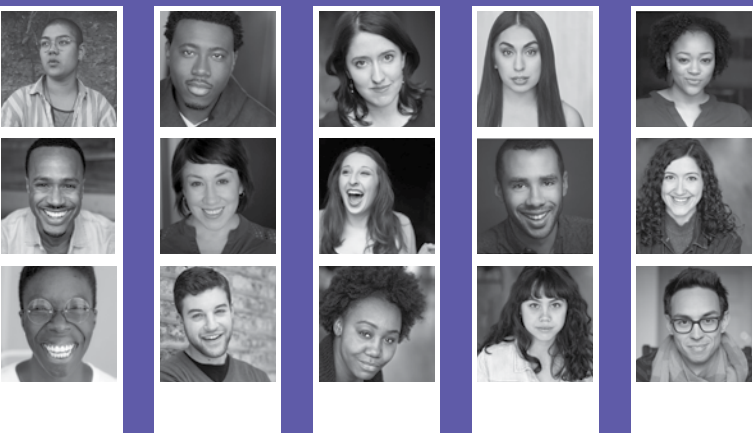
STEPPENWOLF EDUCATION

IN-SCHOOL RESIDENCIES

Steppenwolf Education reaches 2,500 students each year through its in-school residency work, pairing teaching artists and classroom teachers to enrich students' experiences of the Steppenwolf for Young Adults plays on our stages.

"I am thankful to have this relationship with Steppenwolf because it is so student centered. The students' faces light up as they are talking enthusiastically about the plays, and the workshops. They are sharing their experiences and gaining self confidence well after our workshops are complete!"

- Mary Rossi, Residency Teacher, Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences



TEACHING ARTIST COHORT

Steppenwolf Education Teaching Artists partner with classroom teachers, exploring the themes of the Steppenwolf for Young Adults season in workshops with thousands of students across the Chicagoland area.

COST TO PARTICIPATE IN RESIDENCY

\$0

PER SCHOOL

THE CAR SHACK

Characters in *The Brothers Size* By Education Intern James Kenna



The characters of *The Brothers Size* take their names and inspiration from Yoruba deities and real people from the playwright's life. Below are descriptions of the characters and the mythology that inspired them.

Ogun Henri Size

★★★★★ (OH GOON) · 0.25 mi

played by Manny Buckley



The elder Size brother. Had dreams. Ogun works as an auto mechanic, his younger brother Oshoosi calls him the "King of Cars." Though stern on his exterior, Ogun cares deeply—especially about his brother.

The deity Ogun is the god of iron working and the patron of all those who use metal in their occupation. He protects all people who use tools: from mechanics with their wrench to surgeons with their scalpel. He is known as a mighty warrior who presides over deals and contracts.

Oshoosi Size

★★★★★ (O Chew See) · 0.25 mi

played by Patrick Agada



The younger Size brother. A dreamer. His carefree, sometimes reckless, nature frustrates his older brother Ogun, but brings him and his best friend, Elegba, closer together. After spending a year in prison, Oshoosi returns home to San Pere, Louisiana on parole.

The deity Oshoosi is the divine hunter embodying the human struggle for survival. He is cunning, intelligent, and cautious. In many Yoruba myths, he is the brother of Ogun.

Elegba

★★★★★ (eh Leg Bah) · 0.25 mi

played by Rashaad Hall



Best friend of Oshoosi. The dream. Packed full of charm, it's easy to see why Oshoosi loves him—and Ogun mistrusts him. Formerly incarcerated, Oshoosi's prison mate. Tied to Oshoosi.

Elegba is inspired by the deity Elegua, the guardian of the crossroads of life. Elegua is best known for representing chaos and trickery. He often leads mortals to dangerous temptations in order to teach them a lesson and cause them to mature.



How do the characters from the play mirror their Yoruba deity? How do they deviate?

MYTH, CHARACTERS AND SYMBOLISM IN THE DISTANT PRESENT

The Three Pillars of *The Brother/Sister Plays*

By Education Intern James Kenna

The Brothers Size is one of three shows by playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney from *The Brother/Sister Plays*: a trilogy of three plays all set within the fictional projects of San Pere, Louisiana. The plays exist in conversation with one another, especially since many of the characters appear in more than one story. Although the plays connect, each can stand alone as an individual piece of theatre. These plays utilize myth, character, and symbolism to create a unique, epic trilogy that use the past to make relevant the themes of today.

The Trilogy

In the Red and Brown Water—Fast, spirited Oya is a promising young athlete who is offered a scholarship that could jump-start her future. Forced to choose between her dying mother and her own dreams, she makes a life-changing decision. Oya's subsequent path to womanhood leads her to a crossroads where she finds herself torn between settling down... and just settling.

The Brothers Size—When Oshoosi Size is released from jail he goes to work in his brother's car repair shop. When his best friend from prison also shows up, a tense tug of war results. A fierce and honest look at the complex bonds of brotherhood.

Marcus; Or the Secret of Sweet—Marcus is sixteen. He is also coming to terms with his sexuality while uncovering the mysterious secrets of his family's past. An entrancing coming-of-age story about the difficult quest for identity in an out spoken and strong-willed community.

Myth

Myths are foundational stories of a culture, laden with symbolism and the supernatural. All over the world cultures have created distinct mythologies. As culture evolves, sometimes stories and traditions don't fit together neatly. Instead of a puzzle, mythologies are often more like scrapbooks. It's important to consider each myth like we would one of the trilogy's plays: in conversation with one another. While the characters and settings may cross over, each story has something individual to say. Collectively, the fragments tell an epic story, but alone highlight a single moment.

All three of *The Brother/Sister Plays* occur in the "Distant Present," described as sometime between "now" and "then." In creating the "Distant Present" McCraney invokes myth into his plays. McCraney knows that a play occurs in two different points of time: the time when he wrote it and every time after in performance. Each time someone picks up the text it and says the words, it lives presently in that moment, in a way that's never been done before.

What are other examples of modern-day mythologies that are a part of our culture? How are these examples similar to/different from *The Brothers Size*?



Characters

The characters in *The Brother/Sister Plays* take inspiration from the Yoruba deities and real people in McCraney's life. These characters possess a duality of identity. Their experiences are simultaneously American and Yoruba, representing people of now and then. To trace the connections between the characters and the Yoruba deities they are drawn from, please see page 7.

One example of the past colliding with the present is in the relationship between Elegba and Oshoosi. In *The Brothers Size*, Elegba and Oshoosi have a deep connection, but the details of their intimacy are murky (do they just share a deep friendship? Something more intimate? They obviously love one another and consider one another 'brother' but what does that mean to each of them?). Due to circumstances that surround their relationship, these two young men avoid directly speaking about their feelings—not even to each other. Despite this, their connection is clear to the outside observer. In this way, McCraney uses existing characteristics of two familiar Yoruba deities but builds fictional circumstances to surround them.

What books, movies, or entertainment mediums do you know that derive modern stories based on mythological characters?

Symbolism

A common thread within myths are motifs and symbols, which McCraney weaves into his plays. For instance, in *The Brothers Size* the car Elegba gives to Oshoosi represents something larger than a vehicle. The car is the promise of freedom, and the danger that comes with wielding it.

The most recognizable motifs within *The Brother/Sister Plays* are prophetic dreams. Dreams allow characters a glimpse into the future, past, or present of people they care for. Below is an excerpt from a scene in *The Brothers Size*, Oshoosi dreams of his brother Ogun working and of Elegba, visiting him in his cell while they were incarcerated.

OSHOOSI SIZE Oshoosi Size is sleeping, that night, dreaming. And in his dream is his brother Ogun. Oshoosi can hear him, in this dream, working On something, on what?	ELEGBA Oshoosi Size. OGUN SIZE Huh ELEGBA Cell number ... OGUN SIZE Huh ELEGBA Inmate number. OGUN SIZE Huh ELEGBA Oshoosi Oshoosi Size. You remember? Don't you? Those late nights ...	So hot. When the walls come closer Closer ... At night. Night ... OGUN SIZE Huh ELEGBA Deep night ... That's when it most dangerous ... 'Cause sometimes in the night ... OSHOOSI SIZE Night. OGUN SIZE Huh ELEGBA You don't know what come for you, wei?
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What is an important motif or symbol you recognize as central to a piece of contemporary art (a song, a poem, a well-crafted YouTube video) you admire?

OGUN'S BROTHER IS MISSING

An Interview with Playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney

Transcribed by Education Manager Jared Bellot



In the lead up to *The Brothers Size*, Education Manager reached out to playwright, Academy Award winner, MacArthur “Genius” Grant recipient and Steppenwolf Ensemble Member Tarell Alvin McCraney. The two spoke about the origin stories, language and the passing of time alongside *The Brothers Size* and McCraney’s hopes for the play.

JARED BELLOT: Tarell, thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me about our upcoming production of your play, *The Brothers Size*. I’m curious, what is the origin for this story?

TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY: *The Brothers Size* is one of the first plays I ever wrote. I’ve been a writer most of my life, but it is one of the first full pieces of mine that wasn’t just a one act or a sketch of something. It is also one of the few pieces that I wrote while I was in Chicago. I wrote it my last year at The Theatre School at DePaul University alongside *In Moonlight*, *Black Boys Look Blue* (the source for the film *Moonlight*), so the two are sort of companion pieces. Both represent moments in my life when I was trying to understand both who I was as a person in the world, and also who I was as the oldest brother of two younger brothers.

The Brothers Size is based on a kind of raw form of theatre that I had been learning about at school and getting to experience at various theaters around the city. I was lucky enough to have seen August Wilson plays at The Goodman and Peter Brooks’ *Hamlet* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, and I had the opportunity to work with director Tina Landau on *Theatrical Essays* here at Steppenwolf. Through these experiences I was able to witness what it meant to engage with theatre in a way that broke out past the fourth wall. I was able to witness theater where characters spoke directly to the audience, engaging them in the story that they wanted to tell.

“ I wanted to explore what it meant to be a part of the American Dream ”

JARED BELLOT: What questions or themes did you want to explore when you set out to write this play?

TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY: The play is based on a lot of stories that happened in my life but that also happened in a larger way. I wanted to explore what it meant to be a part of the American Dream. I was being launched out into the world with this college degree into a place of milk and honey, and yet I felt a great responsibility to take care of my younger brother, who was incarcerated. I felt a great responsibility to make sure the generational poverty that had plagued us all our lives didn’t consume us. And I knew that no amount of degree or professional training was going to shield me from the onslaught of racism and patriarchy that were going to find me as a black person.

More than anything, I think the play was there to explore something that I couldn’t put words to at the time—and probably still can’t—which is that the prison industrial complex destroys families and changes lives forever. And not just the lives of the people who are incarcerated, but the lives of all of the people around them as well. My brother came out of jail completely changed, and there was no way to help him. I did not have the tools, the resources, the access—and still don’t—to make his life better. And that haunted me. That haunts me still. To have to watch him suffer—I have no words for it. So all I could do was write about it. Write about the resentment and the guilt and all of those things.

“ I know what it’s like to miss my brothers. To not know where they are. And then make a way to find them. *The Brothers Size* was my way to find them. ”



JARED BELLOT: Can you speak a bit about your decision to ground your personal experiences in the world of Yoruba cosmology?

TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY: The piece had been in my heart and in my mind for a while, but I didn't write it down and it didn't become a play until I came across a simple two line Yoruba poem that basically says: "Ogun's brother is missing. Ogun builds tools to find him." When I read that I thought: That's my life. I know that life. I know what it's like to miss my brothers. To not know where they are. And then make a way to find them. *The Brothers Size* was my way to find them.

JARED BELLOT: The language of this play is so beautiful. Something that may be surprising about experiencing this play for audiences is how characters often speak aloud their actions, alongside their dialogue. Can you talk a bit about how/why language operates the way it does in this play?

TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY: I like to describe *The Brothers Size* as a fable told in the now. In the script, I refer to the setting as the "distant present." Which is my way of indicating that this story happens somewhere between now and then. When you tell a story it's always in the past, but this past can be repeated. It can be made new in front of you. Each time the actor tells you where they are, what they are doing, they are reminding you that the story is being unfolded for you in a new way that has never happened before.

JARED BELLOT: This play first premiered here in Chicago at Steppenwolf almost a decade ago, in 2010. What is it like thinking about this play 10 years later? Has anything changed?

TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY: It terrifies me that this play is almost 20 years old, yet its themes remain wildly relevant. My brother, to this day, still has a hard time finding or keeping a job. There are people who are being let out of jail right now that are dealing with the same issues, there are still families being torn apart by the prison industrial complex in my home state of Florida, and across the country.

As an artist, you always want to make sure that you have work that is relevant. But at the same time, when you write about themes like these, you also wish that you had a period piece. That you made something that was about a time that happened a long time ago and now we can do a play where the world doesn't look like that anymore. That is just not the case with *The Brothers Size*. The same issues that plagued those three men in the play plague them now.

JARED BELLOT: You've spoken a lot about how others' perception informs your work as an artist and the importance of creating stories that amplify our authentic selves. How do you see *The Brothers Size* fulfilling this mission of amplifying your story and the stories of your communities?

TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY: I think most young people can relate to the notion of being presented with the options of what our lives can be. In school environments, we are constantly being pointed or pushed in a particular direction based on how we learn, and whether that learning style is deemed "good" or "bad." And if a young person doesn't fit our mold, we exclude them from the conversation. And then they have to go home, to generations of poverty, and figure out what to do with their lives. And often times, the answer is a life that looks like crime. I've said often, I had way more opportunities or invitations to join what people would think of as organized crime than invitations to join the gifted program. I got one invitation to the gifted program, I had constant invitations to be the lookout boy, to be a drug mule, to help around the "neighborhood." And there's a community there. So what is a person to do? Is a person to shun their community in order to engage in this one opportunity at a place that barely pays attention to them in the first place?

It's necessary that we think of these young people, particularly in this story, these young men, fully, in terms of the pressures that they are getting. And I think that is one of the reasons this play is so important to me—because it's not about trying to take on the entire system, it's about the intimate moments that these people do in response to that system. What is the best thing that you can do for a person who feels caught or caged? What can you do? I think that the play tries to answer that.

"This play asks large questions. It asks, "What do we do? How do we free people who feel caged? How do we provide some sort of freedom and life for those people who feel like they've been stripped of that?"

JARED BELLOT: Thousands of students from across the Chicagoland area will be seeing the show. What do you hope that they will take away from it?

TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY: I hope it effects change. I hope the play gets people thinking about their loved ones and other people's loved ones. I hope that people see the play and think more sensitively about people who are convicted of crimes, especially non-violent crimes. We need to figure out what our justice looks like because those people, those non-violent offenders who are convicted, go into a prison system that doesn't rehabilitate them, and more than likely, hinders them. They receive a trauma that is worse than what they have before and then they are pushed to rely on the system to eek out some sort of existence, which destroys the potential they could have had for a life.

This play asks large questions. It asks, "What do we do? How do we free people who feel caged? How do we provide some sort of freedom and life for those people who feel like they've been stripped of that?" And I bet our audiences will have answers. I bet those young people will have lots to say about that. And we better be ready to listen. We better be ready to pick up and understand, and even implement their thoughts. Because if not, we've wasted an incredible opportunity.

Embodying Tarell Alvin McCraney: ACTION IN LANGUAGE A Classroom Activity

By Teaching Artist Peter Andersen

ACTIVITY TIME: 45 minutes; to be conducted before students see the show.

Typically, characters' actions are written into the text in the form of stage directions—a brief description that gives the reader a sense of what action is happening in the play. Stage directions can also be used to describe an environment, the mood, or the inner emotions of a character. In *The Brothers Size*, playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney subverts traditional playwriting norms by having his characters speak their actions aloud

In this activity, students will explore the specific way in which language is used in *The Brothers Size* and create their own scenes exploring this technique.

10 mins



STEP ONE – READ AND DISCUSS

As a class or as partner pairs, have students read aloud the brief passages from *The Brothers Size* by Tarell Alvin McCraney and *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams. After reading both passages aloud, have students think about the similarities and contrasts between the two scenes.

In your reflections, have students consider:

- *What are some similarities between the two styles? What are some difference?*
- *How does having the characters speak aloud their actions add to the scene?*
- *How does having the characters speak aloud their actions change the rhythm and emotion of the scene?*
- *Why might a playwright write in this style, having their characters speak their actions aloud?*

***The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams**

Jim: I shouldn't have done that—that was way off the beam. You don't smoke, do you?

Laura looks up, smiling, not hearing the question. Jim sits beside her rather gingerly. Laura looks at him speechlessly—waiting. Jim coughs decorously and moves a little farther aside as he considers the situation and senses her feelings, dimly, with perturbation. He speaks gently.

Jim: Would you-care for a mint?

Laura doesn't seem to hear him but her look grows brighter even.

***The Brothers Size* by Tarell Alvin McCraney**

OSHOOSI SIZE
Oshoosi at the shop!
Standing breathing hard
from the walk

OGUN SIZE
Glad you could make it

OSHOOSI SIZE
...

OGUN SIZE
Can you bring a box from the...

OSHOOSI SIZE
Stares at his brother...

OGUN SIZE
You here now no need to be...

OSHOOSI SIZE
You left me.

OGUN SIZE
You overslept.

5 mins



STEP TWO – A NEUTRAL SCENE

As a class, have students read the neutral scene below. This scene presents two characters without any stage directions to provide additional context. Individually or in pairs, have students read through the scene a couple of times to get a sense of it.

Person A: Hi

Person B: Hello

Person A: Where have you been?

Person B: Around.

Person A: Around?

Person B: Yes

Person A: Well, Ok.

Person B: Ok.

Person A: See you then.

Person B: See you.

10 mins



STEP THREE – CREATING CONTEXT

Students will now create the context for the neutral scene by adding stage directions. Following the prompts located on page 17 of this guide, lead students through the process of adding "traditional" stage directions in the style of Tennessee Williams.

10 mins



STEP FOUR – BECOMING TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY

Inform students that they will now embody the literary voice of playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney. Using the "traditional" stage directions they created in step three of this activity as a map, students will rewrite the scene while mirroring the style in which McCraney writes *The Brothers Size*.

10 mins



STEP FIVE – PERFORM AND REFLECT

As a class, select a few students to perform their McCraney inspired scene, and reflect as a class on the process.

Have students consider:

- *How does having the characters speak aloud their actions add to the scene?*
- *How does having the characters speak aloud their actions change the rhythm and emotion of the scene?*
- *What was the experience like as a playwright, choosing what actions your character would speak aloud?*

CREATING CONTEXT- PART ONE

You were just hired as a playwright by a theatre who needs some help grounding their new play in a specific world. They have asked you to create context for the NEUTRAL SCENE to help the audience better understand what is going on. Use the prompts located on the opposite page and add "traditional" stage directions in the style of Tennessee Williams.

Get really specific about your stage directions and have fun!

Check out the example below to help you get started.

Person A enters the room. The room. A dark bleak place where no hope has ever resided. They ferociously slam the door behind them. Person B recoils in horror.

Person A: Hi.

Person B reaches for cigarette. Shakily tries to light the match but the stick snaps in half. Finally, after much consternation, person B is able to light the match and bring it to their face which is pale and quivering with fear. After person B inhales deeply they speak.

Person B: Hello

Person A notices the failed attempts to light the cigarette and responds contemptuously.

Person A: Where have you been.

Person B chokes on a lump of fear so large it could fill the state of Texas. Tears slowly begin to well up in their eyes.

Person B: Around.

Person A: Around?

Person B: Yes.

There is an long pause between them. A pause so deeply and profound as to shake the very foundations of souls.

Person A: Well, Ok

Person B: Ok

Person A: See you then.

Person B: See you.

With that Person A open the door for Person B and ushers them out. Person A flips over the table in a fit a rage. A howl emerges from the depths of their soul. A howl filled with loss and longing. Once they have finished. They move to the window and stare out. A window so old and dusty it can hardly be considered a window at all any more. The lights slow dim to black.

END OF PLAY

CREATING CONTEXT - PART 2

CREATE AN ENTRANCE: How does PERSON A enter the space? Use active verbs to describe how they enter the scene. Are they entering through a door, through a window, repelling down from the ceiling? Do they enter quickly or slowly? Is the room dark or bright?

Person A: Hi.

CREATE A REACTION: How does PERSON B react? Are they startled or happy? Scared or sad? Do they do something active? Do they flip over a table? Take a long drink of water? Start singing a song?

Person B: Hello

CREATE A PHYSICAL RESPONSE: How does PERSON A respond to PERSON B's previous action? Does it make them feel joyful or annoyed? Do they respond with a physical action (i.e. jump up and down, throw a plate against the wall, faint, etc.)?

Person A: Where have you been?

CREATE AN REACTION: How does PERSON B react to PERSON A's previous line? How do they feel? What do they do in response? Think about why they would respond this way!

Person B: Around.

Person A: Around?

Person B: Yes.

CREATE A PAUSE: Write a pause in this moment. How long is it? Is it a pause filled with emotion? With tension? With laughter? Use detailed language to describe the pause as specifically as possible.

Person A: Well, OK.

Person B: OK.

Person A: See you then.

Person B: See you.

CREATE AN EXIT: How does PERSON B exit the room? Does PERSON A help them leave? Do they leave through an open door? Do they bust a whole through the wall? Do they teleport away? How does PERSON A respond once they are alone in the room? Do they start crying? Do they start dancing? Do they just sit silently?

Now, it's time to step into the shoes of playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney. Using the stage directions you created in the last step of this activity as a map, rewrite the scene while mirroring the style in which McCraney writes *The Brothers Size* in which characters speak their actions aloud. The essence of your scene should remain the same, but the style in which it is spoken should change!

Check out the example below to help you get started.

Example

Person A
Slams Door!
Hi

Person B
Strikes Match
Strikes Another Match
Strikes a Third Match
Breathes Deeply
Hello

Person A
Where have you been?

Person B
Gulps
Around.

Your scene

Just bring yourself

THE SCENE

Curated by Steppenwolf's own Young Adult Council, The Scene is an exclusive opportunity for teens to score a cheap ticket to a Steppenwolf production, meet the artists involved with the play, and connect with like-minded teens. Each ticket includes dinner and a post-show discussion with the actors.

TICKETS ARE JUST \$5

Purchase tickets at the door one half-hour before the show, in advance online, or in advance by calling Steppenwolf Audience Services at 312-335-1650 and use code YACSCENE.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Scene: *The Brothers Size*
Saturday, October 12, 2019
Performance at 3:00pm with event to follow

The Scene: *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*
Saturday, March 14, 2020
Performance at 7:30pm with event to follow

STEP IN

Step In workshops are a free series that offer teens the chance to participate in hands-on theatre workshops led by some of the hottest theater artists we know, all while getting to learn more about the Steppenwolf Young Adult Council, an afterschool program for teens interested in careers in the arts.

ADMISSION IS FREE!

To reserve your spot, please RSVP to Education Associate Abhi Shrestha at ashrestha@steppenwolf.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Step In #1: DESIGN
Wednesday, October 30, 2019

Step In #2: WRITING
Wednesday, December 4, 2019

Step In #3: MOVEMENT
Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Step In #4: VOICE
Wednesday, March 19, 2020

Step In #5: DIRECTING
Wednesday, May 6, 2020



“DON'T STAND STILL AND DON'T RUN?” THE RIPPLE EFFECTS OF MASS INCARCERATION

By Education Associate Abhi Shrestha

The Brothers Size is a play that navigates the bonds of brotherhood and the limitations of familial relationships. We see the relationship of two brothers, Ogun Size and Oshoosi Size, tested after the release and return of Oshoosi from prison. The troubling effects of mass incarceration in this country can be examined through multiple avenues, but playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney chooses to focus on the impact of incarceration on sibling relationships and the challenges formerly incarcerated individuals face post release.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SIBLING?

Most research on the effects of incarceration on a family centers around the relationship between a parent and child. While the unique stress on children with an incarcerated parent is heavily documented, this is less true when the incarcerated family member is a “non-offending sibling” (those who have a sibling who is/was incarcerated). In a recent study of grief and coping with sibling incarceration, sociologist Katie Heaton states that non-offending siblings navigate a different kind of grief called *disenfranchised grief*.

Disenfranchised grief is a term coined by grief researcher, Ken Doka. He defines disenfranchised grief as:

“Grief that persons experience when they incur a loss that is not or can not be openly acknowledged, socially sanctioned or publicly mourned.”

In other words, disenfranchised grief is grief that doesn't have an accessible outlet. The term disenfranchised grief forces us to consider: What happens when you cannot openly discuss, or publicly grieve a loss? How does trapped grief manifest in the psychology and actions of the individual, in this case the non-offending siblings?

In reference to non-offending siblings, Heaton writes:

“Disenfranchised grief is a particularly difficult form of loss to overcome because the majority of cases involving this form of grief are the consequences of personal decisions of behaviors made. Such loss often creates a sense of shame or guilt within the individual or that person's family, making it difficult to openly mourn, discuss, or cope with the actions that have created the loss.”

This idea of disenfranchised grief is something that we see a lot in *The Brothers Size*, especially through Ogun. We learn that many people blamed Ogun for what happened to Oshoosi and that after his brother was imprisoned, people from the community would come to him and say, “If you would have been a better role model for [Oshoosi] he wouldn't have acted like this”—a belief that Ogun has internalized. This shame and guilt manifests as Ogun being overbearing and overly protective of Oshoosi, damaging the relationship of the two brothers.

Throughout the play we see a push and pull between the siblings resulting from Ogun's disenfranchised grief. The more Oshoosi tells Ogun to ease up, trying to reclaim his own voice and agency, the more Ogun pushes Oshoosi to find work, trying to ensure Oshoosi doesn't somehow end up back in prison. We can see how Ogun's actions may be driven by this feeling of guilt, his belief that maybe if he was harder on Oshoosi and was a better role model, Oshoosi wouldn't have been incarcerated in the first place. Likewise, we can see how Oshoosi, desperate for the trust and love of his family and community and hungry for freedom, might feel oppressed and held back by his brother's actions, even if they are well-intended.

REINTEGRATION TO COMMUNITY

A criminal conviction creates substantial barriers and limitations. Individuals released from prison receive minimal preparation and limited resources around reentry after incarceration. Previously incarcerated folks oftentimes have difficulty securing and maintaining employment, finding stable housing, and adequate health care due to the stigma around individuals with a criminal conviction.

We see this manifest in *The Brothers Size* through how Oshoosi attempts to navigate life post release. Unemployed and living with his brother, Oshoosi is dealing with what many previously incarcerated individuals deal with, a system that has not set them up for success in re-entering a community. The barriers, limitations and stigma that accompanies a criminal conviction informs much of Oshoosi's character in the play. We see this come through in moments where Oshoosi talks about frustrations surrounding employment, and especially in his gravitation towards having a car, a symbol of freedom and independence.

A CHALLENGE TO THE SYSTEM

The Brothers Size is a beautiful navigation of brotherhood, a stirring portrait of the complexities that are embedded in familial relationships, and a personal examination of the very real ramifications of incarceration, both on the incarcerated individual and their family members.

Things to Consider:

Where else do we see the idea of disenfranchised grief embodied in the characters of *The Brothers Size*? How do Ogun and Oshoosi feel trapped due to their circumstances? In what ways do these feelings drive them apart? In what ways do these feelings bring them closer together?

I AM... FREEDOM

A Classroom Activity

By Teaching Artist Fatima Sowe

ACTIVITY TIME: 45 minutes, to be conducted after students see the show.

For Oshoosi Size, the tension between freedom and the desire to belong is present in his release from prison and the transition back into working at his brother's auto repair shop, in his dreams and aspirations, and in the promise of liberation through Elegba and his car. Throughout these tensions, Oshoosi fights to find moments of self-expression.

In this activity students will explore this tension between freedom and belonging and identify a moment of liberated self-expression in their own lives.

“All that talk about riding is the ultimate freedom.” – Elgba

5 mins



STEP ONE – BRAINSTORMING

As a class or in small groups, have students brainstorm a list of qualities and skills that it takes to survive at school/in society (i.e. courage, humor, creativity, flexibility, empathy, taking initiative/asking for what you want).

10 mins



STEP TWO – WHAT IF

Have students think about 5–6 moments they've felt *most like* themselves. This can be a recent memory or a more distant one. These moments could have lasted for an hour, a day. It could be a moment that comes and goes, or one that they can recreate with the right conditions. Have students write down these moments in SECTION A of the handout located on page 24 of this guide.

EXAMPLE

Examples of a time I felt most like myself:

- By Lake Michigan, off the Addison underpass during winter.
- On stage, acting in front of an audience.
- Listening to my favorite music artist on noise-cancelling headphones.
- Singing in my car at the top of my lungs.
- Spending time with my younger siblings at granma's house for a family BBQ.

5 mins



STEP THREE – SENSORY MEMORY DESCRIPTION

Have students select ONE of those moments and, in SECTION B of the handout located on page 22 of this guide, describe the moment in detail during a 3-minute stream-of-consciousness writing activity. Consider the following guided questions to help students describe the context and sensory properties of that moment.

Have students describe:

The Context ...

- **When did you feel most like yourself? Describe the time.**
- **Where were you? Describe the setting (i.e. weather, geographic region, indoors/outdoors)**
- **Who was around you? Describe the people.**
- **What were you doing? Describe the action.**
- **What objects were around you? Describe the properties.**

The Sensations ...

- **What did you see? What colors, and shapes?**
- **Did you feel small or big? Buoyant or weighted down?**
- **What did you hear? Smell?**
- **What textures do you remember touching?**

5 mins



STEP FOUR – DISTILLING THE DETAILS

Ask students to read over their descriptions and identify six words that they feel best embody their moment of liberation or freedom of self-expression. Have students circle these words in Section B of the handout.

5 mins



STEP FIVE – I AM... A SIX WORD STATEMENT OF SELF-EXPRESSION

Once students have chosen their six words, have them rewrite the selected words as a single piece of text as their new SIX WORD self-expression statement in SECTION C of the handout located on page 22 of this guide. Have students read through their statement of self-expression to familiarize themselves with the text before presenting to the class.

10 mins



STEP SIX – ALLOW ME TO REINTRODUCE MYSELF

Have students form a circle and introduce themselves to their classmates using their SIX WORD self-expression statement.

5 mins



STEP SEVEN – REFLECTION

Silently, or as a group, have students reflect based on the following questions:

- What did it feel like to introduce yourself in this way?
- Were there similarities between the statements of self-expression? Were you surprised to share words with several classmates?
- How was this form of introduction and this way of representing your identity different from how we normal present or introduce ourselves?
- What are other strategies we might use to cultivate pockets of self-expression in a confined space/society?

NAME:

SECTION A: A MOMENT I FEEL LIKE MYSELF

What are moments you've felt most like yourself. This can be a recent memory or a more distant one. These moments could have lasted for an hour, a day. It could be a moment that comes and goes, or one that you can recreate with the right conditions.

SECTION B: DESCRIBE THE MOMENT

When did you feel most like yourself? Where were you? Who was around you? Describe the people. What did you see? What colors, and shapes? What did you hear? Smell? What textures do you remember touching?

SECTION C: A STATEMENT OF SELF EXPRESSION

I am...



STEPPEWOLF EDUCATION

CITY CONNECTIONS

Partnering with others to use the arts to empower young people

WHAT IS CITY CONNECTIONS

City Connections is Steppenwolf Education's community engagement model rooted in building authentic and mutually beneficial long-term partnerships. By partnering with organizations that share our mission of using the arts to empower youth, we find authentic ways to bring barrier-free programming into communities we don't currently serve, with the hope that young and emerging adults can feel inspired to join us at Steppenwolf.

“Partnering with Steppenwolf has been really impactful. I can see the change in the youth. This partnership is beautiful because these kids need creativity. Steppenwolf sharing their workshops and knowledge of the arts to our kids is more profound than I think most of us realize.”

- Max Cerda
Street Intervention Specialist
Build, Inc

800
YOUNG PEOPLE
SERVED/YEAR THROUGH
CITY CONNECTIONS

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY

We at Steppenwolf are thrilled to continue our work with the Chicago Public Libraries as a part of our City Connections partnership – a programming model focused on identifying authentic ways to bring barrier-free programming into communities we don't currently serve, with the hope that young adults can feel inspired to join us at Steppenwolf.

As a part of this partnership, we turned to the CPL staff to provide their expert opinions on ways teachers and students might dive deeper into the world of this production. The following lists have been prepared by Chicago Public Library staff as a resource guide to help you and your students explore themes and topics related to *The Brothers Size*. Learn more about what CPL has to offer at chipublib.org. And see the opposite page for information about the 2019 ChiTeen Lit Fest!

RECOMMENDS...

FICTION

TALES OF YORUBA GODS AND HEROES BY HAROLD COURLANDER

An anthology of stories complemented by songs illuminates the beliefs and attitudes of the Yoruba people regarding the importance and power of gods and heroes.

THE FIFTH SEASON BY N.K. JEMISIN

In a post-apocalyptic world plagued by natural disasters, Essun lives in a small community barricaded against the outside world. When her husband realizes that she and her children are orogenes with the ability to manipulate seismic energy, he kills their son and kidnaps their daughter. Against the backdrop of the end of the world, Essun follows, beginning an odyssey which will not end until her daughter is safe.

MONSTER BY WALTER DEAN MYERS

While on trial as an accomplice to a murder, sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon records his experiences in prison and in the courtroom in the form of a film script as he tries to come to terms with the course his life has taken.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BY COLSON WHITEHEAD

Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. Life is hell for all the slaves, but especially bad for Cora; an outcast even among her fellow Africans, she is coming into womanhood—where even greater pain awaits. When Caesar, a recent arrival from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they decide to take a terrifying risk and escape.

NON-FICTION

THE NEW JIM CROW BY MICHELLE ALEXANDER

With dazzling candor, legal scholar Michelle Alexander argues that “we have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.” By targeting black men through the War on Drugs and decimating communities of color, the U.S. criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control—relegating millions to a permanent second-class status—even as it formally adheres to the principle of colorblindness. In the words of Benjamin Todd Jealous, president and CEO of the NAACP, this book is a “call to action.”

SWEET TEA: BLACK GAY MEN OF THE SOUTH BY PATRICK E. JOHNSON

Giving voice to a population too rarely acknowledged, Sweet Tea collects more than sixty life stories from black gay men who were born, raised, and continue to live in the South. E. Patrick Johnson challenges stereotypes of the South as “backward” or “repressive” and offers a window into the ways black gay men negotiate their identities, build community, maintain friendship networks, and find sexual and life partners—often in spaces and activities that appear to be antigay. Ultimately, Sweet Tea validates the lives of these black gay men and reinforces the role of storytelling in both African American and southern cultures.

LOCKED DOWN, LOCKED OUT BY MAYA SCHENWAR

35,000 Americans are arrested every day, and the number of prisoners has increased 500% over the last three decades. Truthout Executive Director Maya Schenwar shows that incarceration actually doesn't deter crime, looks at its devastating effect on families and communities, and offers more humane and more effective alternative.

MULTI-MEDIA

DAVID MAKES MAN (TV SHOW)

Set in South Florida, this lyrical coming-of-age story centers on a teenage prodigy named David who lives in the projects but attends a magnet school for academically gifted youngsters. David straddles two different worlds, navigating between the streets that raised him and the school that offers him a way out of poverty. His balancing act comes at an emotional price which is portrayed in this original series on OWN that delves into issues of race and identity.

IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK (FILM)

A timeless love story set in early 1970s Harlem involving newly engaged nineteen-year-old Tish and her fiancé Fonny who have a beautiful future ahead. But their plans are derailed when Fonny is arrested for a crime he did not commit. Now the pair and their families must fight for justice in the name of love and the promise of the American dream.

THE 1619 PROJECT (PODCAST)

Four hundred years ago, a ship carrying enslaved Africans arrived in the English colony of Virginia. This new audio series from The New York Times examines the long shadow of that fateful moment.

EAR HUSTLE (PODCAST)

Ear Hustle brings you the daily realities of life inside prison shared by those living it, and stories from the outside, post-incarceration.

POETRY

BLACK GIRL MAGIC

Black Girl Magic continues and deepens the work of the first BreakBeat Poets anthology by focusing on some of the most exciting Black women writing today. This anthology breaks up the myth of hip-hop as a boys' club, and asserts the truth that the cypher is a feminine form.

ELECTRIC ARCHES BY EVE L. EWING

Electric Arches is an imaginative exploration of black girlhood and womanhood through poetry, visual art, and narrative prose. Blending stark realism with the fantastical, Ewing takes us from the streets of Chicago to an alien arrival in an unspecified future, deftly navigating boundaries of space, time, and reality with delight and flexibility.

EVEN THIS PAGE IS WHITE BY VIVEK SHRAYA

Vivek Shraya's debut collection of poetry is a bold and timely interrogation of skin—its origins, functions, and limitations. Poems that range in style from starkly concrete to limber break down the barriers that prevent understanding of what it means to be racialized. Shraya paints the face of everyday racism with words, rendering it visible, tangible and undeniable.

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY CHITEEN LIT FEST

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- Interactive Activities
- Meet-ups
- Workshops

Teens and Adults can apply.
Deadline to submit is October 31, 2019
Submit here: bit.ly/CTLFproposal2020



Common Core State Standards Aligned With Activities in This Study Guide

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 1:

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

See *'The Cosmology Behind the Story'* and *'Don't Stand Still and Don't Run: The Ripple Effects of Mass Incarceration'*, pages 2 and 20

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 2:

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

See *'The Brothers Size Play Synopsis'*, page 4

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 3:

Analyze how and why individuals, events and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

See *'The Car Shack: Characters in The Brothers Size'* and *'Welcome to the Distant Present: The Three Pillars of The Brother/Sister Plays'* pages 7 and 8

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 10:

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

See *'Don't Stand Still and Don't Run: The Ripple Effects of Mass Incarceration'* pages 20

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING, STANDARD 3:

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

See *'I am... Freedom Activity'* page 22

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING, STANDARD 4:

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

See *'Action in Language Activity'* page 14

If you need further information on how grade-specific standards fit into these anchor standards, please let us know.

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STEPPENWOLF FOR YOUNG ADULTS

FEBRUARY 26 – MARCH 21, 2020

I AM NOT YOUR PERFECT MEXICAN DAUGHTER

Adapted by Isaac Gomez Based on the novel by Erika L. Sánchez

Directed by ensemble member Sandra Marquez Featuring ensemble member Karen Rodriguez

A world premiere adaptation of Erika L. Sánchez's award-winning novel, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* follows Julia, a Chicago high school student as she navigates trials and tribulations of following her dreams of becoming a writer alongside the death of her older sister, Olga—who might not have been quite as perfect as she seemed. This poignant and vibrant new work is a love story to young Chicanas who, in trying to find the truth about the people and the world around them, end up finding themselves.

Recommended for grades 8+

Student performances at 10am will be held: Feb. 26, Feb. 27, Feb. 28, Mar. 3, Mar. 4, Mar. 5, Mar. 6, Mar. 10, Mar. 11, Mar. 12, Mar. 13, Mar. 17, Mar. 18, Mar. 19 and Mar. 20