STUDY GUIDE

WILLIAM GOLDING’S

LORD OF THE FLIES

ADAPTED BY NIGEL WILLIAMS
DIRECTED BY HALENA KAYS

OCTOBER 16 – NOVEMBER 15, 2013
DEAR TEACHERS:

THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE STEPPENWOLF FOR YOUNG ADULTS’ 2013/14 SEASON AS WE EXPLORE THE QUESTION, WHEN THE GAME TURNS DEADLY, HOW WILL YOU PLAY?

On the heels of Now Is The Time, our 2012/13 season dedicated to combating youth violence and intolerance, we continue our conversation around violence and taking personal accountability for the choices we make.

This season, we investigate two plays, one new and one classic, in which young people navigate tricky ethical landscapes in games both virtual and real. Through Lord of the Flies this fall and Leveling Up in the spring, we examine what it means to grow up and take responsibility for our actions and their sometimes devastating consequences.

This summer, we armed ourselves with resources about the new Common Core State Standards and determined the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards that align with the information and activities in our guide. For a full list of these standards and the activities in which they are embodied, please see page 18. If you need further information on the way that our work aligns with the new standards, please let us know.

As always, we look forward to continuing the conversations fostered on stage in your classrooms, through this guide and during our post-show discussions with your students following each performance.

Thank you for the many ways you support Steppenwolf for Young Adults. We look forward to having you at the theater!

–Hallie, Megan & Lauren

Artistic and Educational Director
Hallie Gordon
Education Manager
Megan Shuchman
Education Assistant
Lauren Sivak

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ACCESSIBILITY DATES
Audience Description and Touch Tour
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 AT 3PM
American Sign Language-Interpreted Performance
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 AT 3PM
Open Captioning Performance
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 AT 3PM
*American Sign Language-Interpreted Student Performance available. Contact Lauren Sivak for details.

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SYNOPSIS
OF THE PLAY

ILLUSTRATOR SAM WEBER

1 SCENE: The Conch – beginning of civilization
A plane full of evacuated British schoolboys crash land on a deserted tropical island during an unnamed war, assumed to be WWII. Alone with just one another on the beach, two 12-year-old boys, Ralph and Piggy find a conch shell in the water. Ralph blows into it, sounding a loud note across the island. Other boys from the plane crash answer the call and begin to appear: Jack Merridew, Prefect of the Choir boys; Simon; brothers Sam and Eric; and Henry. Once gathered, during their first official meeting the boys elect Ralph as island chief. In an effort to soothe Jack’s disappointment—who also vied for the role of Chief, given his leadership over the Choir boys—Ralph appoints him as leader of the hunters and tasks Jack with providing meat for the refugees.

2 SCENE: The Fire – hope for rescue
In order to attract passing ships for rescue, Ralph builds a signal fire on the mountain, the highest point on the island. The boys use Piggy’s glasses to start the fire, but it burns out of control and they have to stamp it out. Ralph spots a ship on the horizon, their first chance of rescue, but it is too late to make another fire and the ship sails away. Perceval, a younger boy, frantically reports having seen a beast in the woods. Jack decides to hunt instead of staying to build shelters and a new fire, usurping Ralph’s authority and taking the rest of the “hunters” with him into the trees.

3 SCENE: The Beast – nature of fear
One night as Sam and Eric are asleep on the mountain keeping watch over the signal fire, a dead parachutist drifts down from the sky, a casualty of the war still raging miles away. The noise wakes the boys up and, thinking it is the dreaded beast Perceval mentioned, they run to tell Ralph.

4 SCENE: The Lord of the Flies – dawn of evil
That same night, the hunters kill their first pig, decapitate it and stick its head on a spear in the ground to mark the spot where it was killed; they name the pig the Lord of the Flies. Ralph calls all the boys to a meeting to discuss what to do about the beast, but the hunters want to eat the meat they brought home. Jack boasts that he will kill the beast, and chastises Ralph for not volunteering to do the same. Simon, a quiet older boy who has taken to exploring the island on his own, searches for the beast himself. He finds the hunters’ pig’s head covered with blood and swarming flies. Simon has what is assumed to be an epileptic fit and, in a vivid hallucination, imagines the “Lord of the Flies” talking to him.

5 SCENE: The Murder – fall to savagery
Back at the camp, the hunters chant and dance around the fire as the pig cooks. Simon runs back into the camp, but the boys do not hear him shouting as he stumbles into their circle. He falls and the boys, swept up in the moment and afraid of the Beast, kick and stab him. With spears in hand, they viciously kill Simon. After the murder, sensing the shift in power, Jack elects himself new chief of the island and leaves the camp, his hunters following close behind. Piggy is the only one to acknowledge Simon’s murder but his cries fall on deaf ears.

6 SCENE: The Glasses – destruction of order
The pig head is now a skull, the parachutist is a rotten skeleton, and the boys are solidly separated into Ralph and Jack’s separate tribes. Jack has claimed Castle Rock as his new camp, far from Ralph and the beach, but the hunters do not keep up their fire. Jack raids Ralph’s camp, steals Piggy’s glasses and stamps out their fire. Without Piggy’s glasses, they cannot restart their fire, so Ralph sets on a mission to reclaim the glasses and his honor.

7 SCENE: The Hunters – chaos
Piggy brings the conch with them to Jack’s camp, their last claim for power on the island. When Ralph’s tribe arrives, Jack refuses to negotiate and lunges at Ralph with his spear and orders his hunters to tie up the others. Piggy raises the conch and asks the boys what is better, “to have rules and agree or to hunt and kill like a pack of savages?” Roger, one of Jack’s most brutal hunters, twists the conch out of Piggy’s hand and it crashes to the ground, shattering into pieces. He pushes Piggy off the cliff to fall to his death.

8 SCENE: The Officer – return of civilization
Jack declares that they must hunt and kill Ralph. Ralph runs away and ends up by the pig’s skull, which he smashes. The boys corner Ralph and chase him through the woods. When Ralph finally collapses on the beach, exhausted, a British Naval Officer in a white uniform arrives on shore. Ralph sobs and shakes as he tells the Officer of the two dead boys (Piggy and Simon). The Officer reprimands the group of British schoolboys for behaving so badly and not “putting on a better show than this.” Roger throws Piggy’s glasses at Ralph’s feet and Ralph cries, mourning his lost friend Piggy and all that has transpired.

SYNOPSIS
#TEAM RALPH

Ralph Played by Spencer Curnutt

Ralph is a reluctant leader who is elected chief when the boys first arrive on the island. He believes that keeping a signal fire lit at all times is the only way the boys can be rescued. He has a strong moral compass and many of the boys look to him for guidance due to his quiet but steady leadership skills.

Sam and Eric Played by Ryan Heindl and Adam Shalz

Sam and Eric are brothers who are often treated as a single person because they frequently finish each other’s sentences. They are loyal to Ralph and keep watch over the signal fire on the mountain.

Piggy Played by Dan Smeriglio

Piggy is the smartest and most rational boy on the island. However, because of his lower-class accent and chubby physique, he is made fun of by the other boys and his pleas for orderly, mature behavior are ignored. He is the only boy who mentions adults, often quoting his auntie’s advice, which only serves as further fodder for the boys’ teasing. He is the keeper of the conch shell until his untimely death at Roger’s hand.

Simon Played by Lane Flores

Simon is a quiet, shy boy who is often seen by the others as strange. He likes to explore the island on his own and has a deep connection to nature. He has convulsive fits and visions while on the island, which is likely attributed to epilepsy. He is beaten to death by the boys.

Perceval Played by Cale Manning

One of the younger boys, Perceval is small and easily frightened. He is the first to warn the other boys of the beast in the forest. He stays close to Ralph and remains in his tribe even after Jack and the hunters desert the rest of the group.

#TEAM JACK

Jack Played by Ty Olwin

Jack is appointed by Ralph as the leader of the hunters, and is responsible for bringing back meat for the other boys. Prior to the plane crash, he was Prefect of the choir. His desire for power eventually leads to violent behavior.

Roger Played by Rudy Galvan

Roger is Jack’s right hand man and the most brutal of the hunters. He pushes Piggy off the cliff to his death when Jack’s tribe approaches the hunters to retrieve Piggy’s glasses.

Henry Played by Brendan Meyer

Henry is an original member of Jack’s choir and the hunters. He is a rugby player and likes roughhousing with the other boys, but recoils when play turns real.

Bill Played by William Burke

Bill is also an original member of Jack’s choir and the hunters. He follows Jack and Roger’s orders without question and is their loyal servant.

Ensemble Members Played by Lance Newton and Kevin Quinn

These actors play various roles.

Perceval

Simon
How did these Boys get here?

Evacuations during WWII that might have landed these boys on this island

The British Schoolboys in *Lord of the Flies* end up on an island after their plane crashes, killing the pilot and many of the other boys on board. Although the details around the boys’ voyage are vague, the premise for their travel was likely inspired by real-life accounts of a large-scale evacuation plan called Operation Pied Piper that moved British children out of major cities and into safer locations. Plans for the operation started before war broke out in the summer of 1938. During the first four days of September 1939, as Britain declared war against Germany, the largest exodus of children out of major cities took place: almost 1.5 million children were evacuated from major cities such as London, Manchester and Liverpool to places at lesser risk of air raids such as Wales, Scotland and rural West and Northern England. Train stations provided routes out of the cities. Each evacuated child was allowed to carry a small piece of luggage along with a box containing their own gas mask. The children were hand-selected by host families upon their arrival, paid by the government for fostering them. By 1943, almost half a million children had been evacuated from London alone. A smaller number of children (around 10,000) went farther to Canada, Australia and the United States. These smaller evacuations occurred until September 1944.

We know that the boys in *Lord of the Flies* crash land on a tropical island. Judging by the climate of the island and the fact the boys converse freely about the bombings in England, one can imagine the boys might have landed somewhere in the Indian Ocean, en route to Australia late in the war. Although William Golding, author of the novel, never provided information on the whereabouts of the island, a British Naval Fleet was stationed in the Indian Ocean in early 1942 when India was still a British colony. Placing the plane crash in *Lord of the Flies* in the early months of 1942, one can thereby reason that the dead parachutist who drifts down to the island might have been a casualty of a Japanese raid on the Indian Ocean from March 31 – April 10 of 1942. One can also suppose that the British Naval Officer who arrives on the island at the end of the play is a sailor in that British Naval Fleet.

September 19, 1911
William Golding is born in Cornwall, England.

1921 – 1930
Golding attends Marlborough Grammar School, a school not unlike that described by the school boys in *Lord of the Flies*.

1934
Golding graduates from Oxford and publishes his first work, a book of poetry entitled "Poems."

1935
Golding begins work as a teacher of English and Philosophy at Bishop Wordsworth’s School in Salisbury, which later serves as inspiration for *Lord of the Flies*.

May – July 1938
Plans begin for evacuation. Risk zones throughout Britain are identified as "evacuation," "neutral" or "reception."

September 1 – 4, 1939
Operation Pied Piper begins, during which 1.5 million children are evacuated from major cities in four days.

September 1, 1939
Hitler invades Poland.

September 3, 1939
Britain and France declare war on Germany.

1940
Golding joins the Royal Navy.

March 31 – April 10, 1942
Indian Ocean Raid. Japanese naval forces successfully raid the British Royal Navy stationed in the Indian Ocean, destroying many of the British carriers docked there and momentarily claiming Naval superiority over the Indian Ocean.

September 1944
End of evacuations. Between 1939 – 1944, over 3.5 million women and children were evacuated.

1954
Golding publishes *Lord of the Flies* after 21 rejections, and a decade after the evacuations ended.

1983
Golding wins Nobel Prize in Literature.
CLASSROOM ACTIVITY:

WHO ARE THESE BOYS?

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITY:**

**Activity Time:** 45 minutes total
- 25 minutes of writing
- 20 minutes of sharing out

**Step One:**
Have students list 10 things they notice from this photo; these can be simple observations but should include as many different details in the image as possible:

1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________
4. __________________________
5. __________________________
6. __________________________
7. __________________________
8. __________________________
9. __________________________
10. __________________________

**Step Two:**
Once students have created their lists, have them circle one of the observations most interesting to them. Have them list five more details about that observation:

1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________
4. __________________________
5. __________________________

**Step Three:**
Provide students with character descriptions found on page 6-7. Ask students to read through the character descriptions and identify a character they find intriguing.

**Step Four:**
Using the information provided in this article, “How Did These Boys Get Here? Evacuations During WWII That Might Have Landed These Boys on This Island” have students embody the character they have chosen and write a journal entry from the point of view of that character. Students should imagine the journal entry is being written one hour before the boys are evacuated and should be written in first-person narrative.

**Use These Questions to Guide Students in Their Writing:**

- Why am I wearing my uniform?
- When did I first learn I was going to be evacuated from my home?
- Do I have any siblings or family members accompanying me?
- Do I know where I am headed?
- What do I expect to see when I arrive?
- What am I most scared about?
- What will I most miss from home?
- How aware am I of the war around me? How am I affected by it day-to-day?

**Step Five:**
Once students have finished writing, ask for volunteers to read their entries aloud. Remind students that they are embodying the character they chose. Before they read aloud, ask them:

- How old is this person?
- How might he talk?
- How can you embody his posture or demeanor?
- From the character description provided, what can you represent about this person when you read your entry aloud?

**Step Six:**
Classroom discussion. After hearing several entries aloud, ask for feedback from the audience. Consider:

- What was similar about the entries read aloud? What was different?
- How many volunteers addressed the presence of war directly in their entries? Indirectly?
- What are you curious about from this exercise in regard to seeing the play?
MALIK PAULDON (MP): Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me. I wanted to interview you in part because I am very interested in directing. I attend Chicago Academy for the Arts, where I direct, assistant direct and also help out with stage management. Directing is what I ultimately want to do.

HELENA KAYS (HK): That’s very smart. If you learn about stage management as you’re learning about directing you’ll be smarter with your time and you will be a director people want to work with.

MP: What got you interested in directing?

HK: I came into theater more from the performer’s side, like most people do in high school. When I went to undergrad at Northwestern University, I worked with a group called Griffin’s Tale. I started directing with that company when I was a junior and I found I really liked it.

MP: What is your process when you begin working on a project?

HK: Every project is really different and you are drawn to it for different reasons. I like to always first start with the question, “What is the essence of this play?” and see where that leads me.

MP: What first drew you to Lord of the Flies?

HK: I am really interested in the progression of fun, young-boys-wrestling-around-like-little-puppies leading to murder. Being able to see and feel that on stage is exciting.

MP: Is there anything from the novel you are trying to preserve on stage?

HK: The feeling you get when you read the novel is a sense of panic. So, when you’re in the audience watching the play, I don’t want you to sit back and judge, I want you to feel immediately sucked in. I want you to think about your own morality.

MP: You’re choosing to keep the play set in World War II, is that correct?

HK: That’s right.

MP: Why did you make that choice?

HK: The world surrounding these boys before they are plopped onto this island affects what they do because it’s what they have seen men around them do. If the adults in their world are waging war and using violence as a way to solve problems, the boys in the play are just repeating that on a smaller scale. There is real fear behind all of what is happening at this moment [in World War II]. Bombs are dropping and the destruction of the entire planet is possible at this point. That fear is vital to this story.

MP: You’ve decided to cast actors ages 13 – 23. What is behind the choice to make the characters slightly older than ‘schoolboys’?

HK: There is difficult acting moments in this play that require a certain level of maturity in order to share the story in an honest way. If we think about the audience for this show [mainly high school students], it’s nice to have people who can see themselves on stage. If we allow our audience to say, “These guys are all my age, how are they capable of this?” hopefully they won’t feel as if they’re sitting on the outside, but instead that they’re a part of what’s happening.

MP: Thank you so much for talking with me. I can’t wait to see the show.

HK: Me either!
When good boys do bad things: Looking at evil in Lord of the Flies

In Lord of the Flies, we witness the savage behavior that eventually overtakes the young British schoolboys at the center of the play. Stranded on an island without the guidance and supervision of adults, the boys must find a way to govern themselves. While the impulse to assign a chief and create rules to obey is present at first, the opportunity to be violent and evil soon prevails. We see this first in the character of Jack, as his desire to hunt and kill becomes his obsession, quickly shared by the other boys who join him as a faction of “hunters.” The swift progression from civilized young men to barbaric savages has made this book a classic that has endured for almost 60 years. Witnessing this behavior from these young boys leads us to the question, “Why do good people do bad things?”

Initially the boys’ escapades on the island feel like a game, but their violent actions increase and eventually lead to murder. Dr. Philip Zimbardo, a psychologist and a professor emeritus at Stanford University, has spent much of his professional life studying human behavior and examining the question of why good people engage in evil actions. Dr. Zimbardo does not define evil as merely an act of wrongdoing, but instead as “the exercise of power in order to psychologically or physically harm another human being.” During his famous Stanford Prison Experiment, Dr. Zimbardo explored the behaviors of 70 young college males as they participated in a study assuming the role of either prisoner or prison guard. Although the study was intended to last for two weeks, it had to be shut down after only six days as “prison guards” became too brutal to their “prisoners” for the experiment to continue. In an effort to maintain a sense of power and control (or behave in an evil way, as defined by Dr. Zimbardo), without instruction from the leaders of the experiment, the “prison guards” readily forced the “prisoners” into humiliating situations that eventually led to multiple emotional breakdowns within the mock prison system.

Why did these seemingly well-behaved young men partake in evil behavior? And why do the boys in Lord of the Flies make the transition towards savagery? Mr. Zimbardo hypothesizes that any person, when placed under the right set of circumstances, is capable of evil behavior. In Lord of the Flies, it begins the moment the boys become stranded on the island. In the Stanford Prison Experiment, it began the moment the young men were placed within the mock prison and a differentiation of power was established.

“Kill the pig! Cut his throat! Spill his blood.”
— Jack, Lord of the Flies

Piggy: That was Simon.
Ralph: Shut up, can’t you?
Piggy: That was murder.
**CLASSROOM ACTIVITY:**

**ACTIVITY TIME TOTAL: 25 MINUTES**
- 10 MINUTES OF FREE WRITING
- 15 MINUTES OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

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**FREE WRITING**

**Writing Prompt**
Give your students the following questions to read through and explore on their own. After choosing one question to explore, assign students 10 minutes of free writing time to investigate the question they have chosen. Following free write time, form students into small groups to discuss their responses with one another.

**QUESTIONS FOR EXPLORATION:**

- What is the relationship between power and violence in *Lord of the Flies*?
- What is William Golding exploring about human behavior in *Lord of the Flies*?
- Did you find the violence in *Lord of the Flies* surprising? Why or why not? What was the most shocking behavior you saw on stage?
- Do you think Golding would agree with Dr. Philip Zimbardo’s assertion that “any person, when placed under the right set of circumstances, is capable of evil behavior?” Why or why not?

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**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION TIME**

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**EXTRA WRITING SPACE:**

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This spring we present Deborah Zoe Laufer’s Leveling Up, which takes place in the present day as the war in the Middle East continues to ensnare the United States military. The play follows three recent college graduates who spend all of their time gaming: playing video games like “Call of Duty” in which players participate in virtual yet highly realistic wartime scenarios, peering through a sniper’s crosshairs to shoot enemy soldiers and civilians alike. Fantasy and reality begin to blur when the play’s protagonist, Ian, lands a job with the National Security Agency (NSA) as a drone operator, killing real people thousands of miles away instead of the virtual characters in his games.

Both Lord of the Flies and Leveling Up depict the effects of unseen war. The boys in Lord of the Flies crash land on a deserted island during evacuations out of England during an unnamed (but presumed to be WWII) war. In Leveling Up, Ian is thrust into the world of covert drone warfare in the Middle East (presumed to be Pakistan, Yemen or Somalia). The young men in these stories become caught up in the whirlwind of their pretending and somehow find themselves in very real, very dangerous wartime situations.

This isn’t a videogame, this isn’t some sort of fantasy. This is war. People die.”
— Brandon Bryant, former Air Force drone operator

“As Leveling Up progresses, the effects of Ian’s new job with the NSA become apparent. Like real-life Air Force drone operator, Brandon Bryant, Ian struggles with his culpability in a violent act of war, even if far-removed from the impact. Bryant told NBC in an interview in June 2013 that after quitting his job with the Air Force, he became “troubled by the physical disconnect between his daily routine and the violence and power of the faraway drones.” He explained, “You don’t feel the aircraft turn, you don’t feel the hum of the engine. You hear the hum of the computers, but that’s definitely not the same thing.” Although Bryant and his team did what they could to avoid civilian casualties, he is still haunted by the alleged 1,600 people he helped kill as a part of his job from 2006 to 2011 where he guided unmanned drones over Iraq and Afghanistan bases from faraway bases in Nevada and New Mexico.

Remembering the question at the center of this SYA season, When the game turns deadly, how will you play? consider the following questions to discuss with your students following Lord of the Flies and before you return for Leveling Up:

Questions for Teachers in Preparation for Leveling Up this Spring:

• What do you see as the most interesting connections to make with students between Lord of the Flies and Leveling Up?

• What are you most curious about regarding Leveling Up?

• How might you plan to explore the question, When the game turns deadly, how will you play? with students?

• What can you connect from Leveling Up to conversations with students around responsibility and accountability for one’s actions?

If you have not yet booked your tickets to Leveling Up, please contact Lauren Sivak at lsivak@steppenwolf.org or 312.654.5643.
The Scene is a special opportunity for high school students to score an affordable ticket to a Steppenwolf production, meet Chicago’s most celebrated artists and connect with other teens who are passionate about theater. Each ticket includes dinner and post-show discussion with the actors.

TIKTETS ARE $10 – $15 (CAN ONLY BE USED DURING THE TEEN EVENT SERIES)

All performances take place at 1650 N Halsted Street
Must present student ID at door

Purchase tickets at the door 30 minutes before the show, or in advance by calling Steppenwolf Audience Services at 312-335-1650. Use code 14073.

Questions? Please contact Steppenwolf for Young Adults Education Assistant Lauren Sivak at 312-654-5643 or lsivak@steppenwolf.org.

Foundation support is provided by The Siragusa Foundation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

LORD OF THE FLIES
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2013 at 7:30PM

LEVELING UP
FRIDAY MARCH 7, 2014 at 7:30PM

THE WAY WEST
SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 2014 at 7:30PM

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


BBC offers a comprehensive look at the United Kingdom’s experience in World War II, summarizing key events, and supplying articles on major operations such as D-Day.


The Bureau of Investigative Journalism’s section on the Covert Drone War provides up-to-date statistics on drone strikes and daily articles on drone operations overseas.


NBC News interviews former Air Force drone operator, Brandon Bryant, about his experience from 2006 to 2011 at bases in Nevada and New Mexico guiding unmanned drones over Iraq and Afghanistan.


In 1983, William Golding was awarded The Nobel Prize in Literature for his novels, which the committee cited “illuminate the human condition in the world of today.” In his Nobel Lecture, Golding ruminates on the power and history of literature.


In this article for The Telegraph, Nigel Williams writes about his first time meeting William Golding, their subsequent collaboration as Williams adapted Lord of the Flies into a play, and Golding’s perspective on the novel.


Dr. Philip Zimbardo, a psychologist and professor emeritus at Stanford University, gives a TED talk examining human behavior and the question of why good people engage in evil actions.


Dr. Zimbardo reflects back on his infamous Stanford Prison Experiment where he explored the behaviors of 70 young college males as they assumed the role of either prisoner or prison guard in order to explore a situation where good people do evil things.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THOSE WHO PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FOR STEPPENWOLF FOR YOUNG ADULTS.

Target is the sponsor of the Target 2-for-1 Matinees.

JPMorgan Chase is the major corporate supporter of Steppenwolf’s career readiness and professional leadership program.

Major foundation support for Steppenwolf for Young Adults is provided by the Polk Bros. Foundation and Alphawood Foundation.

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The Steppenwolf Auxiliary Council, a community of dynamic young professionals, dedicates their support to Steppenwolf for Young Adults.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT IS PROVIDED BY:

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Siragusa Foundation
Robert and Isabelle Bass Foundation Inc.
Philip H. Corboy Foundation

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Steppenwolf for Young Adults is a citywide partner of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) School Partner Program.

As noted, many of the illustrations in this guide are the work of illustrator Sam Weber, reprinted here with special permission.

Sam Weber was born in Alaska, and grew up in Deep River Ontario, Canada. After attending the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary, he moved to New York to pursue illustration and attend graduate school at The School of Visual Arts. Sam is married to Jillian Tamaki.

For more information, please visit sampaints.com.
The Young Adult Council is a unique program for passionate and motivated high school students who wish to learn the inner-workings of professional theater from the most celebrated artists in the city. In addition to face time with these leading professionals, Council members attend the best plays in Chicago, learn how to analyze and speak about these plays and lead events for their peers around Steppenwolf productions in hopes of inspiring a new generation of theatre enthusiasts and practitioners.

Applications are available on March 1, 2014.

Like the Steppenwolf Young Adult Council on Facebook!
Or visit steppenwolf.org/youngadultcouncil for more information.

Foundation support is provided by The Siragusa Foundation.