



A Playlab Indie Publication



A TRIBUTE OF SORTS

by Benjamin Schostakowski

A Tribute of Sorts

by Benjamin Schostakowski

created with Dash Kruck and Emily Burton



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Director's Notes

Hello and welcome. Here we are. Let's begin.

Ivan and Juniper and their tribute. Our premise smashes two distinctive worlds together: one of macabre incidences of short-lived innocence and one of glitter-spangled showiness. These worlds seem rather contrary which is exactly why we ran with them.

Dash Kruck, Emily Burton and I had the incredible joy of creating this production from the ground up. We spent a significant amount of time investigating how Edward Gorey constructed his humour, we dove into the world of eisteddfods, of vaudeville, of what good and bad performing looks like and everything in between — we treated the humor of this work very seriously. As this production came into life we found ourselves constantly referring to how much information we needed to show and how much to leave unanswered. In some ways this show's most Goreyesque quality is its ability to tell you one thing by showing you something else entirely.

In February 2012 we had the opportunity to test the ideas of the show at Brisbane Powerhouse's World Theatre Festival. The response from our Scratch Showing, *A Spectacular of Sorts*, was delightfully encouraging and so we pushed forward into two more creative developments to complete the work with a quiet conviction.

Needless to say, we had an outrageous amount of fun working on this production. This is a work from our independent theatre company, Monsters Appear. It's was an absolute honour to premiere it in La Boite's Roundhouse Theatre through their Indie program. This work owes sincere thanks to a long list of people who lovingly helped us bring it all together, and especially to you, its readers and audience.

Our story starts in a small theatre or maybe a bedroom. Our story lies in the hands of Ivan and Juniper Plank, cousins with a predilection for shameless theatrics — they're new to the idea of live performance, but that isn't to say they haven't rehearsed — a lot. Tonight is the night they present their tribute to unfortunate infants.

I wonder what you'll think.

Benjamin.

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First Production Details

A Tribute of Sorts premiered at La Boite, Brisbane as part of La Boite Indie 2012, on the 24th of October, 2012 with Monsters Appear.

CREATIVES

DIRECTOR & DESIGNER	Benjamin Schostakowski
DIRECTORIAL ASSOCIATE	Lucas Stibbard
PRODUCER	Ashleigh Wheeler
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Jason Glenwright
ANIMATION	Pete Foley
LIGHTING ASSOCIATE	Whitney Eglington

CAST

IVAN	Dash Kruck
JUNIPER	Emily Burton

PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION MANAGER	Jeff Warnick
STAGE MANAGER	Tenneale Rogers
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS	Thomas Bartsch Samuel Boyd Jordan Tselepy

CREW	Kyle Berry Tim Gawne Julia Morwood Brenton Slattery David Wheeler Andrew Whittaker
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Characters

IVAN PLANK 16 years old.

JUNIPER PLANK 15 years old.

They're cousins.

Setting

This story is set in a small room, maybe a bedroom. In front of the room are red velvet curtains and a small stage platform.

Notes

Throughout the play IVAN and JUNIPER tell numerous stories. They play various roles — switching between themselves, narrators and other characters.

A Tribute of Sorts

OPENING CREDITS

The show credits are projected.

'A TRIBUTE OF SORTS'

'WRITTEN BY BENJAMIN SCHOSTAKOWSKI'

'WITH "NAME" AS JUNIPER PLANK'

'AND "NAME" AS IVAN PLANK'

'DIRECTED BY "NAME"'

The music changes.

PROLOGUE

'PROLOGUE' is projected.

The curtains open. We see IVAN and JUNIPER in a small room getting ready. JUNIPER is polishing her shoes. We see JUNIPER collect some of IVAN's hair and eat it. They stand side by side facing the audience. They decide to begin the show. They walk forward to the extremities of the stage platform, the curtains shut behind them.

IVAN and JUNIPER pop a confetti cannon each and a banner drops down: 'CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'RE AT THE THEATRE'. A geometric movement dance routine begins. As the dance ends, IVAN and JUNIPER return to the stage's extremities. We hear a timer start. 'Beep beep, beep ...'

JUNIPER Hello and wel —

IVAN — No, not yet!

We hear the timer finish with three quick beeps.

Now.

JUNIPER Hello and welcome. My name is Juniper Plank, and this is my cousin, Ivan Plank. Congratulations, you've made it. Tonight is a very special and a very important night and it gives us great pleasure to welcome you here to this particular venue and our particular show. We have prepared something special. Something flashy.

IVAN Hello.

JUNIPER It's a tribute to unfortunate young people — a tribute to the infants of the world who have had unfortunate things happen to them. The types of children who hold tightly onto a red balloon all day long, only to have a crow fly by and burst it with their talons — the type of infants who find death a little too quickly. This is a tribute to them. There's no need for us to become particularly drab about it all. That's not our intention.

IVAN That's not our intention. This feels good.

JUNIPER I thought it would be a little scarier to tell you the truth — but you're right. It feels good.

IVAN Yeah. You see I have alphabetised our tribute. It makes things a little easier to get through. At any one time you can refer to the alphabet to know where you are. And where we are as well — which will be in front of you doing the tribute. Each letter of the alphabet leads us closer to our flashy consummation. Once alphabetised, we decided to allocate stories to our skills. My skills are doing magic, being athletic, not rheumatic and speaking in verse.

- JUNIPER He's not a – verse – to it. Ivan says my skills are dancing and making sound effects with my mouth hole. I am also better vocally. I have a good voice. To tell story. This is the sound of someone trailing a heavy axe through brambles. *[She makes the sound effect]*. This is the sound of a baby falling out of a high window. *[And again]*. This is the sound of two-school kids caught-out pashing behind the shed. *[JUNIPER gets really caught up here — this is not the way they rehearsed it]*. 'Mmmmhhhh ... mmm, rub it' — 'Hey, what are you doing!' — 'Oh Gosh, quick let's get out of here.' This is the sound of regret.
- IVAN No, save it. Just in case.
- JUNIPER Ivan's logic is clear. Gather the skills, gather the stories, find the good ones, find a good way, use that way to tell them, alphabetise them and then tell them. It feels good. Once you get it. It feels good.
- IVAN Gather, find, alphabetise, tell — it feels good. To improve my skills I engaged in a rigorous exercise regime to work on my athletics. Involving mostly kinetics that work for asthmatics. Improving one's athletics. Aesthetics. *[He is devastated he made a mistake]*. I worked on my verse a bit too. If I'm not flexible — pliable — I'm not sure that I'd be reliable. You know, to perform correctly and pay tribute. I have my schedule — I'll show you.
- IVAN disappears behind the curtains.*
- JUNIPER I have a hunch he's a real romantic. He's my cousin.
- IVAN returns.*
- IVAN I couldn't find it. But I have good memory.
- They look at each other.*

IVAN

The following tribute will see us portray a variety of personas and theatricals. Be warned gentle audience members — none of what we bare for you tonight is real. Yep.

BOTH

What we have here is a series of tales, each more unfortunate than the last. A collection of melconcholies. A melancholy collection. It's a tribute to life in all its dramatics, it's a tribute to the odd and the indifferent. It's a tribute to being young and dying young by accident. Let's begin.

The music changes, they disappear behind the curtains quickly.

A IS FOR AGGIE IMPALED BY A PENCIL

'A IS FOR AGGIE IMPALED BY A PENCIL' is projected.

The curtains open. AGGIE stands holding a pencil close to her eye, gradually bringing it closer and closer to her eye while maintaining eye contact with the audience. Just before impact — the curtains shut.

B IS FOR BORRIS GLUED TO A HEATER

'B IS FOR BORRIS GLUED TO A HEATER' is projected.

JUNIPER/
NARRATOR

Borris Henchlap spent all of his time creating fantasies from within his bedroom. His parents condemned his pretend games but Borris never listened. His latest obsession was re-enacting the tale of *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville.

We see BORRIS holding his beloved edition of Moby Dick.