



And Nathan Powell  
In association with Unity Theatre  
Present...



# THE SPINE

By Nathan Powell

Studio and Community Tour, 2020  
Resource Pack



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# Contents

- 1 About the Show
- 2 About Nathan Powell & 20 Stories High
- 3 Background to the piece
- 4 Creative & Production Team
- 5 Cast
- 6 Interview with Writer/Director Nathan Powell
- 7 Key Themes & relevant facts
- 8 Exploring difficult subject matter with young people
- 9 Links to Curriculum
- 10 Activity Ideas
- 11 Extracts from the Play
- 12 Football Facts
- 13 Arts Award Bronze: Toolkit
- 14 Signposting
- 15 Keep in Touch / Get Involved with 20 Stories High



c. Ryan Tomes

# 1 About the Show

## *The Spine*

**By Nathan Powell**

A new play about goals, brotherhood and the football academy system.

Kyle, Liam and Hakeem dream of football, fame and fortune...after spending most of their teenage years being the spine of the team, the premier league is now at their fingertips.

But as they all reach for that golden contract, the cracks begin to appear as years of institutional racism, and hyper-masculinity begin to take their toll. Will the boys be strong enough to stick together, or will they elbow their way to the top?

*The Spine* is an explosive new show that shines a spotlight on a system that promises the world but leaves over 99% of young men on the side-lines.

With heavy beats, raw performances and silky football skills *The Spine* is not only a play about football but one which explores what it really means to be a man in the 21st Century.

*The Spine* is an ideal resource for school groups and young people, encouraging them to explore themes and issues relevant to them, their peers and their communities.

Through vibrant, contemporary and accessible theatre the project supports Citizenship, PSHE and Drama/ English for young people aged 13-30 contributing to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

*The Spine* will tour in the Spring of 2020:

13 – 15 Feb:	Unity Theatre, Liverpool
18 Feb:	The Studio, Crewe Lyceum Theatre
20 Feb:	Prescot Library, Knowsley
21 Feb:	Huyton Library, Knowsley
25 – 26 Feb:	Stratford Circus Arts Centre, London
27 – 29 Feb:	Camden People's Theatre, London

### **Cast**

Kyle	Tristan Waterson
Liam	Keith Rice
Hakeem	Malachi Pullar-Latchman

### **Creative & Production Team**

Writer & Director	Nathan Powell
Designer	Kirsty Barlow
Sound Design	Conrad Kira
Movement Director	Rachael Nanyonjo
Lighting Design	Phil Saunders
Producers	Leanne Jones & Nathan Powell
Production & Stage Manager	Fiona Hilton

## 2 About Nathan Powell & 20 Stories High

Nathan Powell is the Associate Director at 20 Stories High and a writer and director. Nathan makes work that tells contemporary stories about life today. He is passionate about youth arts and an advocate for young people's work.

20 Stories High are one of the leading theatre companies in the UK making work for young adult audiences. Creating dynamic, challenging theatre which attracts new audiences, they cross over art-forms to develop new ones, nurture new writing and involve young people at every stage of the theatre making process. Working with the stories and artistic influences of surrounding communities, they are passionate about pushing the boundaries of what theatre can be.

We bring young people into theatre venues and go out into their communities.

We hail from Liverpool, but our reach is international.

We believe everybody's got a story to tell... and their own way of telling it...

20 Stories High is an Arts Council England National Portfolio funded organisation.

*"Director Nathan Powell has been incredibly creative with a fresh, visceral and urgent approach to the play."*

**Broadway World on Macbeth (2019)**

*"Takeaway is a theatrical gem, as well as a social outcry, simple and straightforward"*

**Everything Theatre on Takeaway (2018)**

*"This is theatre at its best. Raw, thought-provoking and with a message that needs to be heard."*

**North West End on The Broke 'N' Beat Collective (2016)**

*"Brilliant, important, authentic work."*

**Nina Hajiyanni, Action Transport Theatre on HEADZ**

### 3 Background to the Piece

Collecting stories from current youth players, professionals and those that never made it to the professional stage, *The Spine* explores what young men, particularly black men experience in the hope of making their dream a reality.

The football academy system promises young men the world, riches and fame, which makes it difficult to acknowledge the minimal success rate (0.012%). This play will explore what happens when there is a risk of that being pulled away and how the pressures of the system manifest in these young men. The story will discuss brotherhood and how we deal with mental health issues in a hyper masculine space.

We started the journey with the interviews. We met people from all aspects of the game, each with a different but equally fascinating take on football and the system that generates its players. Our interviewees were so generous with their time and information that we almost had too much to explore!

So, the next step was to take all that exciting information into an R&D with some actors. We explored and played and narrowed down what was most interesting to us. Nathan then went away and wrote a few more drafts of the play. We then had something that was close to what the final script may be, but now we had to figure out the best way to tell the story. What forms would we use, what style would best serve the piece?

And so, we had a second R&D and invited musicians and movement specialists to work with us on how we could best tell this story.

And here we are now, ready to share with you the culmination of all that exploration.

We will tell these stories using a blend of storytelling, music and movement, asking questions about the stability of the academy system and explore the sacrifices we make to fulfil our dreams.



c. Ryan Tomes

## 4 Creative & Production Team

### **Nathan Powell**

*Writer & Director*

Nathan is a Writer and Director, making new work that invites people into the theatre with open arms and a smile. He aims to make work that feels accessible to people that are not regular theatre goers, whilst giving regular theatre goers an exciting night of something new.

A large part of his work is creating with young people. Nathan is an advocate for the benefits of engaging with the arts and a champion of young people's work.

Credits include *Macbeth* at the Orange Tree Theatre, *Headz* for 20 Stories High, *Takeaway* at The Hackney Attic.

### **Kirsty Barlow**

*Designer*

Kirsty is a Theatre and Performance Design graduate from the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts and recent Linbury Prize for Stage Design finalist. As a Linbury Prize finalist Kirsty designed *Acid*, directed by Sam Hodges and Drew McOnie at Nuffield Southampton Theatres. Kirsty's design for *Acid* is now on exhibition at the National Theatre. Recent design credits include: *Reasons to be Myself* (The Local Theatre), *POP* (Unity Theatre), *Extra Yarn* (Stoke-on-Trent Light Night) and *The Love of the Nightingale* (Sennheiser Studio). Kirsty was the recipient of the 2018 Everyman and Playhouse Prize for Stage Design and nominated for the Naomi Wilkinson Award for Stage Design 2019.

### **Rachael Nanyonjo**

*Movement Director*

Training includes:

BA Honours in Dance Studies (Roehampton University). MA in Choreography (Middlesex University).

Credits:

Choreography & Movement Direction credits include: *IN A WORD* (Young Vic), *GREAT EXPECTATIONS* (National Youth Theatre at Southwark Playhouse), *EITHER* (Hampstead), *TWO TRAINS RUNNING* (ETT - Royal and Derngate), *AMERICAN DREAM* (Young Vic), *DOES MY BOMB LOOK BIG IN THIS* (Soho Theatre, Tara Arts), *BABYLON BEYOND BORDERS* (The Bush Theatre), *MACBETH* (Orange Tree), *THE JUMPER FACTORY* (The Young Vic, Bristol Old Vic), *MISTY* (Trafalgar Studios) Olivier Award Nominated, *SLEEPING BEAUTY* (Theatre Royal Stratford East, nominated for the Black British Theatre Best Choreographer Award), *AFTER IT RAINS* (National Youth Theatre), *SHEBEEN* (Nottingham Playhouse & Theatre Royal Stratford East), *BERNSTEIN'S MASS* (Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre), *TWILIGHT* (Gate Theatre), *THE DIVIDE* (Old Vic), *COVER MY TRACKS* (Old Vic).

Directing credits include: *BOBSLEIGH* (Old Vic Monologues); *AMAZINA* (Film); *AN ALTERNATIVE MUSICAL* (National Theatre, for NT Learning as co-director); *ASSATA – SHE WHO STRUGGLES* (Young Vic, for Young Vic fresh direction); *2:1* (Kanzaze Dance Theatre at Rich Mix).

As an Associate Director: *MOONLIGHT / NIGHT SCHOOL* (Pinter Theatre as associate to Lyndsey Turner & Ed Stambollouian); *PERICLES PUBLIC ACTS FIRST STAGE* (National Theatre).

As Assistant Director: *THE STEP MOTHER* (Chichester Festival Theatre, dir. Richard Eyre); *CAROLINE OR CHANGE* (Chichester, dir. Michael Longhurst); *UNDERWATER LOVE* (Arcola/Clapham Omnibus, dir. Caroline Bryant); *KAYLA* (Young Vic, dir. Justin Audibert).

## **Conrad Kira**

### *Sound Designer*

Conrad Kira is an award-winning musical artist from South London. His sound is the city, hard hitting industrial over a lush soundscape. With humorous, hard edged lyrics delivered with an in your face style exploring everything, from mental health to Anime. Conrad stakes his claim to being grime's great oddball.

Conrad is an experienced performer with many festivals and international gigs under his belt. He also recently composed soundtracks for short films *Bloke Fears* and *The Works* (premiered on BBC iPlayer) and is currently working on a joint album with artist Up in The Ear called ZER0FXXX.

## **Phil Saunders**

### *Lighting Designer*

Phil has worked as a lighting designer and technical manager in small scale theatre and dance for many years.

Highlights include:

Angels In America (Lee Beagley and Unity Theatre)  
When We Dead Awaken (Josette Bushel-Mingo and Västerbottensteatern, Skellefteå, Sweden)  
Tmesis, Memento Mori and Anima (Tmesis Theatre)  
The Golden Boy and The Corrupted Angel (Patrick Dineen)  
Wall Talks, and Treasured (Cut To The Chase)  
Krapp's Last Tape with Unity Theatre and Kazimier Gardens

Recent designs include

I Cried Because I Had No Shoes Until... with Izumi Ashizawa and Physical Fest  
Polar Bear Waltz with Patrick Dineen and Light Night  
The Sun The Moon and The Stars with House of Suarez and The Culture Company  
The Birth Of Death with Joanne Tremarco  
Wonder, and In The Palm Of My Hand with Paula Hampson and Bluecoat Arts Centre  
You Kissed Me a site specific piece with Fionnuala Dorrity and Physical Fest  
Unsung with DaDaFest, Turf Love and Liverpool Everyman.  
Five More Minutes with Travelled Companions  
Tony Teardrop with Jen Heyes and Cut To The Chase  
at St Lukes 'Bombed Out' Church, Liverpool

Works in progress

Wicked Women with Tmesis Theatre  
Sirens, Men and Crabs with Teatro Pomodoro  
You Can Hear The Heat with Denise Kennedy

Phil is Technical Manager at Unity Theatre, Liverpool.

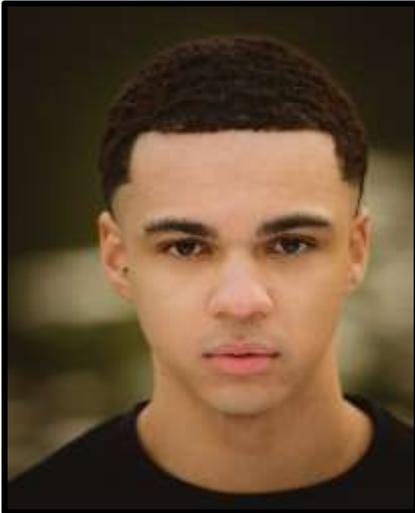
## **Fiona Hilton**

### *Production Manager & Stage Manager*

A high performing Production and Stage Manager working in many different genres of the performing world including traditional theatre, dance, musical theatre, street theatre and site-specific events giving her a variety of challenges and a diversity of performance that she enjoys. Creative and practical 'Fiona gets things done'.

Highlights of her career so far include BIG DANCE, *The Giant Spectacular*, *Nina* – a story about me and Nina Simone and the opening ceremony of the Vitality Netball World Cup. As well as long term involvement in LEAP dance festival, Physical Fest and the Vogue Ball.

## 5 Cast



### **Tristan Waterson**

*Kyle*

Training- The British Theatre Academy

Film credits include: David Craig in *Holy Beef* (Film London)

Other credits include: Theo in *Tree* (Green Door Pictures/Idris Elba), *Beautiful Thing* at the Tobacco Factory.



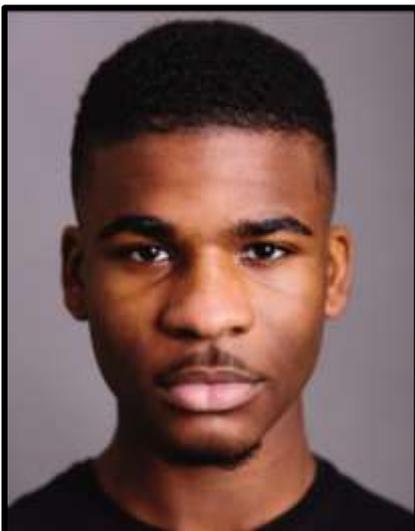
### **Keith Rice**

*Liam*

Television includes: *Hollyoaks* (Lime Pictures); *Little Crackers*; *Boo: A Ghost Story* (Sky 1); *Rocket's Island* (Lime Pictures) and *Casualty 1907* (Stone City Films).

Theatre includes: *Bulldozer*; *Urban Cabaret*; *On me Onez*; *Dark Star Rising* (20 Stories High).

Film includes: *The Drowning of Arthur Braxton* (Fireflight Films); *Small Creatures* (Nova Film & TV Inc); *Hang*; *Vulture Funk* (Funks Film Productions) and *Cousins in Arms* (Clapperboard UK).



### **Malachi Pullar-Latchman**

*Hakeem*

Malachi's film credits include: Timo in *Wall of Productions*: HBK: The Prequel & Bricks in *DRAWN OUT*.

Television credits include *Eastenders*.

## 6 Interview with Writer/Director Nathan Powell

### Tell us a bit about *The Spine* and what inspired you to write it...

I was inspired to write the play after having a conversation with a good friend of mine that used to play in a football academy. It just seemed like such an interesting world full of hope and incredible highs, but also some pretty harsh lows. It just felt like the right time to be making a play on this subject too. There is so much being reported about racism in football at the moment, which is great, we should be talking about it, but we also need to take some responsibility for what is happening a bit closer to home. We're also talking a lot about the hopes and prospects for young people in our society today, this play lets us get into meaty conversations about all this stuff in a way that is beautiful and exciting to watch as well.

### Is *The Spine* a true story?

No, but it is heavily inspired by a collection of true stories. When I started making the show, I began by interviewing people that used to play football, coaches and some parents whose children had been a part of football academies. All of this allowed me to create this story that feels very truthful but with fictional characters.

### The play focuses on three young boys in the football academy system. What have you learnt about the academy system whilst researching & writing?

I've learnt how truly dedicated these young boys have to be to have a chance at making it in the game. I've learnt about some of the sacrifices that these boys have to make for a dream that is really difficult to attain. There are also some pretty rough facts that I have learnt about the system, the most important being that out of all the boys that are playing in academy football at age 9, less than half than 1% of them will ever play professional football or make a living from the game. Less than half a percent!!!!

### How would you describe your writing style?

I think my writing style is quite conversational. I try and portray stories through conversations that feel honest and truthful. To me, those are the things that are most exciting, the things that we see as an audience from what isn't being said. When I write, I also sometimes just write down big ideas that I hope to figure out in the rehearsal room. Then when we get into rehearsals, I will try out a variety of ways to bring this to life.

### What writers & artists have inspired you through this process?

A lot of music has been inspiring me throughout this process actually, more than theatre writers. I have been listening to a lot of UK rap, grime and drill and have been taking from some of the playfulness and silliness of some of the lyrics whilst talking about really serious topics. Some artists I have been inspired by are Loski, Headie One, JME and SL. There is a clear feeling in young black Britain today that we are going to enjoy life no matter some of the terrible situations we might be in, and I think a lot of that comes out in the interactions of the boys.

### What will a typical day in the rehearsal room look like for this show?

It's going to be exhausting in the best way possible! There is going to be a lot of movement, a lot of football and a lot of competition. This show is all about brother hood in a competitive space and how competition effects that brotherhood or friendship and to get into that world we are going to experience some of that. It will be a lively room with a lot of really exciting conversation great music and football. I'll basically be using it as my new year's resolution to get fit!

## What excites you the most about this show?

The most exciting thing about this show for me is the fact that it speaks to a generation and a demographic that have often felt not included in the theatre. I think it is a show that will start a generational conversation between younger people and older people and will allow young people to feel empowered to talk about how they are feeling. Also, as a part of the rehearsals we will have a training session at a football academy, so I get to live out my childhood dream of being a footballer for one morning....



*Nathan Powell c. Wesley Storey*

## 7 Key Themes & relevant facts

Age/content advisory: Suitable for ages 13+. Contains strong language, and some themes of sexuality.

The Spine explores a wide range of themes and issues relevant to many young people today in the UK. The show can be an excellent starting point for young people to safely explore, discuss and debate how these issues can affect their lives.

The main issues tackled in the show are:

- Racism & Diversity in football
- Mental Health
- Sport
- Risks & Risk-taking
- Brotherhood
- The Football Academy System
- Health & Healthy choices
- Relationships
- Family pressures & pressure to succeed

Facts:

### What is Racism?

Racism is ugly. It divides people into 'us' and 'them' based on where an individual comes from or the colour of their skin - characteristics that a person cannot change. Put simply, racism is the belief that all people of a particular ethnicity, culture or population group possess characteristics, abilities or qualities specific to them alone. This belief is then used to distinguish particular groups of people as inferior or superior based on this assumption.

### What is equality?

Equality is about treating everybody the same and not giving favour to any particular group of people. Equality is not about making everyone look, act or behave in the same way, but recognizing that nobody should be treated any differently from anyone else.

### What is diversity?

Diversity is about recognising the differences between groups of people. It is something we should celebrate and be proud of! It's also important to recognize that within a particular group of people there is a whole diverse mix as well – remember, no two people are exactly the same!

### Why do we need to talk about racism?

Racism is divisive. It leads to long-term social, political and cultural problems if left unchallenged. It is vital that young people have an open, honest and safe environment to explore their own attitudes, values and beliefs surrounding racism.

Allowing young people a safe space in which to explore these issues allows them to safely express difficult and sometimes uncomfortable ideas, discuss and debate them and then draw their own conclusions without fear of judgment.

In addition to that, schools, charities and public sector organisations have a legal responsibility to actively challenge discrimination and promote social cohesion through all aspects of their organisation and delivery.

You may HEAR racism when people:

- Make 'jokes' or negative comments about a particular ethnic group
- Call others racist names or verbally abuse them
- Bully, harass or intimidate others because of their ethnicity or culture

You may SEE racism when people:

- Write racist graffiti in public places
- Make offensive comments online
- Are excluded from groups because they 'don't belong'
- Are physically abused due to the colour of their skin/ethnicity/culture/religion

Not all racism is obvious. Other forms of racism include:

### **Invisible racism**

Sometimes people may be excluded from opportunities because of a person's individual prejudice. An employer may not offer interviews to people with Arabic-sounding surnames or a security guard may follow a young black man around a shop believing he is more likely to steal something. This type of racism is more difficult to spot and challenge as it involves prejudice we don't often talk or think about.

### **Systemic racism**

Sometimes groups or organisations have rules that seem fair and equal to everyone. However, they can actually make things more difficult for people of different ethnicities or cultures. This is known as structural or systemic racism. For example, a bank may ask people to fill out numerous forms in English which may be difficult for someone whose first language is not English or an employer may not allow people who have been educated overseas to apply for jobs or simply fail to recognize international qualifications.

### **Microaggressions**

Microaggression is a term used for brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental comments or remarks, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudice and insults toward any group or person. For example, asking questions that might be presumptuous of someone's heritage which might feel intrusive to the person being asked, or a 'likeness' to other people, animals or objects which bear little resemblance to the person being spoken about.



c. Ryan Tomes

## 8 Exploring difficult subject matter with young people

The resources in this pack are intended to broaden young people's understanding and perspectives on racism and encourage empathy, but the challenging subject matter may cause prejudice and stereotype to surface. Some young people may express this through anger, frustration, distress or sadness and may have difficulty accepting opposing viewpoints.

It is important to spend time before going into activities ensuring that all participants and facilitators feel safe and comfortable. The best way to do this is by setting ground rules or drawing up a working contract. This should be created by the group and displayed for all to see throughout the session. Example ground rules...

**Respect others:** You may hear opinions that are very different to your own. Allow people the chance to express these and explain why they feel that way. Try not to talk over each other and respect the group leader too.

**Own your own values:** Speak from the standpoint of 'I' – 'I think that'/'In my opinion'. Avoid 'you' – 'you should'/'you all think that'. If you wish to challenge someone, challenge the opinion or the behaviour, not the person.

**Be open and honest:** There is no such thing as a silly question! Be inquisitive and just ask! You could allow young people to write down things they don't wish to ask out loud and then deal with the questions anonymously later on.

**Respect confidentiality:** People may reveal private things about themselves or express opinions that they don't wish to go any further than the people in the room. Stick to the phrase: what is said in the room stays in the room!

**Share the air:** Foster an atmosphere where everyone gets a chance to speak and air his or her views. Encourage EVERYONE to get involved but respect someone's right to not do so if they find it uncomfortable or distressing.

**No personal revelations required:** There is no expectation that anyone will reveal information about their personal life or experiences. We definitely shouldn't disclose personal information we know about others whether they are in or out of the room.

## 9 Links to the Curriculum

*The Spine* and the resources in this pack supports the delivery of the curriculum at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Whilst not exhaustive, the following information aims to give some guidance as to what outcomes and experiences could be covered by the play and surrounding lessons or workshops. The play and resource pack also meet the criteria for many other qualifications including NVQ, BTEC and Arts Award.

The main themes of the play are:

Culture and Identity	Race and Racism
Relationships	Football & Sports
Discrimination	Equality and Diversity
Sporting Politics	Exercise & Healthy Living
Understanding and Compassion	

The following experiences and outcomes can be met after students have watched and explored the issues in the play:

### **Citizenship – Key Stage 3 and 4**

- Democracy and Justice
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Identities and Diversity: living together in the UK
- Critical Thinking and Enquiry
- Advocacy and Representation
- Taking Informed and Responsible Action

### **Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education – Key Stage 3 and 4**

- Personal Identities
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Diversity
- Critical Reflection
- Developing Relationships and Working with Others

*The Spine* and the resources provided in this pack also cover experiences and outcomes on the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and 4 in the following subjects:

- Drama, Theatre Studies and Performing/Expressive Arts
- English Language
- English Literature
- Music
- Physical Education

## 10 Activity Ideas

### Learning Outcomes

- Confidently express various facets of their own identity and culture
- Recognise differences in identity and culture between people
- Understand the importance of community and belonging
- Recognise that people have multi-faceted identities and that identity is fluid
- Have an understanding of the different, escalating aspects of hate
- Recognise how small actions can have big consequences
- Understand the importance of challenging discrimination to stop hate escalating up the pyramid

### Activity: Fruit Salad

TIME: 10 minutes

RESOURCES: Chairs

AIM: This game acts as a physical and mental warm up for the group whilst introducing the idea of individual identity.

Ask the group to form a circle with their chairs. Ask for a volunteer to be 'on' (choose a blue!). The person who is 'on' moves their chair into the centre and sits down. Now give everyone a fruit – work round the circle alternating between apple, orange and banana.

The person in the centre should call out the fruits. When you hear your fruit, you should get up and swap seats with other people who are the same fruit. The person in the middle must attempt to get into an empty seat during the switch over. The last person left standing without a seat is now 'on'.

Introduce another rule: when the person in the middle shouts 'Fruit Salad!' everyone must get up and change seat. **YOU CANNOT RETURN TO THE SEAT YOU HAVE JUST GOT UP FROM.**

Now move the game on. The person who is on should now call out identifying features that people may share. These could be physical attributes such as 'Brown hair', 'Female', 'Size 9 feet' etc. They could also be related to clothing such as 'wearing black shoes', 'not wearing earrings' etc. Finally introduce likes and dislike and activities and beliefs into the mix: 'likes prawn cocktail crisps', 'has a pet rabbit', 'plays a musical instrument', 'believes there is a God' etc.

### Summarise

Explain that the game was a way to get us thinking about what makes us the people that we are. Ask the group to list all the elements that make up a person's identity such as: ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sex, gender, attitudes, values, beliefs, taste in music/art/film/sports, dislikes and likes, food, clothing, style and fashion etc.

## Activity: I am...

TIME: 10-20 minutes

RESOURCES: None

AIM: This activity continues to allow participants to think about what makes their own identity and what facets of their identity have been pre-determined for them and what facets they have chosen for themselves. It should also introduce the idea that identity is fluid and not fixed as well as the idea that difference is to be celebrated and not derided. The activity should hopefully demonstrate the huge range of differences within your group.

Stand in a large circle around the outskirts of the room – right to the extremes. Explain that you are going to read aloud a list of statements to the group. The more they agree with the statement, the closer they should stand towards the centre of the room, the more they disagree the more they should stay near the outskirts. If a person wishes not to express their view on a particular statement, they should return to the outskirts of the room (disagree area) and turn their back to the centre. Start with factual statements then gradually increase the level of emotiveness. You may want to occasionally throw in a more light-hearted statement to stop the activity from becoming too heavy.

Traditionally, agree/disagree activities are done on a linear scale. By turning this into a circle you increase the sense that this is a group exercise – it becomes less dividing and fosters a sense of supportiveness for people's choices. You may wish to allow the group time to express their decisions as you go along (although the exercise is as equally effective when it is a personal/reflective one done in relative silence).

Statements to use (you may wish to add or take away from this list):

- I am left handed
- I am 16 years old
- I am open minded
- I am British
- I avoid conflict
- I am weak
- I am hairy
- I am a good person
- I am brave
- I am prejudice
- I am honest
- I am judgmental
- I am a woman
- I belong
- I am proud of my culture
- I am tired
- I am young
- I am intelligent
- I am proud of myself
- I am a man
- I like conflict
- I am not British
- I am from a big family
- I am good liar
- I am always fair
- I enjoy school
- I am hungry
- I know what I want
- I have many different identities
- I am hopeful for the future

### Summarise

After this exercise you may want to bring the group together to play a quick 'tension-breaker' game to allow them to relax after reflecting quite seriously on their identities. The ultimate aim of the exercise is to reflect on how different we are as individuals and for young people to think carefully about the influences that make us the people we are.

## Activity: Challenge That

**TIME:** 40-50 minutes  
**RESOURCES:** Statement cards (below)  
**AIM:** This activity allows participants to think about identity in a wider context – why people might have specific views, and how people’s perceptions and boundaries are all different. It also creates conversation and is a useful tool for young people to explore their debating and listening skills.

The below statements are opinions that are expressed within the play. Each statement can be used in several ways to create discussion and explore the themes within the play. Cut out each statement and place them all into a hat, pulling one out at a time. The way this could be facilitated with a group can vary – maybe you want to host a dinner and debate session? Maybe groups are split into smaller groups, and they spend a short amount of time exploring just one of these each. The groups could then feed back to everyone on why they agree or disagree with the statement.

The listeners, after each presentation, can then chose individually to ‘challenge that’, giving their own opinion back to the group presenting. The idea is that each one is left in a place where the whole room are on a similar page to each other – but if they’re not understanding why and when that’s OK is key.

It's harder for boys to talk about their  
feelings than it is for girls

People expect different things from you  
depending on your ethnicity

It is always important to have a backup  
plan in your career

Money is more important than fame

The education system is outdated  
for life in 2020

Maintaining friendships with the people  
you love is more important than career success

18 is too young to be in a serious  
long-term relationship

## 11 Extract from the Play

Context: Before this scene, we're introduced to the three main protagonists, Kyle, Liam and Hakeem who are the three young lads in the academy team. They've played a tournament game in scene one, which has gone really well. The three lads are all hoping for a professional contract at the end of this season, and Coach has called them into the office to chat about the future. As the show is performed with only three actors - Kyle, Hakeem and Liam – they take it in turns to play Coach in the following scene:

### **SCENE 3 – “Yes Coach”**

*The boys are in the coach's office, they speak as coach to their teammates.*

ALL            You asked to see me coach

COACH        Come in son

COACH        How you feeling kid?

KYLE           I feel good coach, feel like I had a great pre-season, just really trying to get stuck in, I can see my game improving.

HAKEEM      Yeah I feel good, I always feel god when I'm banging in goals init

LIAM           I feel ok. I know I could be doing better coach, but this season I feel like you'll see the best me. I know there's a few things I need to work on but I'll get there.

COACH        Listen, this is gonna have to be a big season for you, you know that right, we're really looking for the lads to step up this season. I'm looking for boys I can send up to the first team and do a job, not just fill numbers. You know the clubs having a bit of financial trouble at the moment so some of the senior lads might have to move on to free up some cash, that means we're gonna be looking closely at you lot.

KYLE           I know and I feel like I'm ready coach, I really do, I want this, I really want this and I'm gonna do anything I can to make it happen, whatever you need from me coach, trust me, I got this

HAKEEM I'm just really enjoying my football at the moment coach, when my time comes I know I'll take it.

LIAM I'll be ready when you need me coach, I just wanna do a good job for the team.

COACH Tell me, what do you see as your strengths?

KYLE I read the game well

HAKEEM I think I make great runs

LIAM I'm physical, I get stuck in

KYLE I've got a great eye for a pass

HAKEEM I know how to play off the last man and bring the midfielders in

LIAM I never shy away from a challenge, I'm good in the air

COACH Listen that's great, but there's more to you than that lad. You got a good head on your shoulders, I'm looking to you to lead this team from the back, keep the lads in line, read the game manage your team

LIAM Yes coach

COACH Listen son, that's great, but think about what makes you special, what makes you stand out. You remind me of a young Michael Essien, your powerful, your strong, I wanna see you driving from midfield, bully that midfield and drag the team forward with you.

KYLE Yes coach

COACH You remind me of a young Didier Drogba, your fast and you can kick a ball hard, that's what I want you to focus on. You just keep on running, the lads will find ya, then you shoot on sight, I don't wanna see you tryna be too fancy or overthinking things, that's not your game.

HAKEEM But coach/ I got more

COACH /Listen kid just do as I say and you'll be playing in the first team in no time. I'm not asking what you think right now.

COACH So how are you gonna improve this season son?

LIAM I think I could improve pushing up from the back, get more confident on the ball to drive forward, I know I have it in me, just need to make sure/

COACH /Stop there lad. Look, you remind me of myself when I was playing, you got it all up there in your head but you let the lads that are louder than you overshadow you. This ain't a popularity contest. You got everything you need, you just have to believe it

COACH Alright lad, good chatting to you, see you out there.

HAKEEM Cheers coach

COACH Alright lad, good chat, I'm expecting to see you working as hard as you tell me you will.

KYLE Yes coach.

COACH Well what you doing still sat in here, go get changed. Oh and Kyle, don't be late again tomorrow, I aint interested in all this black man timing or whatever you call it. (he laughs) black man timing, that's a good one.

KYLE Yes coach.

## 12 Football Facts

- Less than **half a percent** of the boys that enter an academy at age 9 play professional football or even make a living from the game
- There are academies for both males and females
- Only **180** of the **1.5 million** players who are playing organised youth football in England at any one time will make it as a Premier League professional - that's a success rate of **0.012%**
- Professional game reports of discrimination have risen by **10%** (194 to 214) with cases rising in the Premier League by **1%** and the EFL by **30%**. The most common form of discrimination reported was racism (53% of cases), which is an increase on last year by **22%**
- In the Grassroots game, reports rose by **35%** across the same period (78 to 105), with racism (71%) and disability (33%) being the most common forms of discrimination reported
- There are only **4** non-white managers in the football league that consists of **93** clubs. Only one of these managers is in the Premier League
- There are around **1.5 million** people playing organised youth football in England
- Dr David Blakelock of Teesside University found in 2015 that **55%** of players in his study were suffering "clinical levels of psychological distress" 21 days after being released.
- Young people within academies aged 16-18 must continue with education – and receive this as part of their attendance at the academy
- It's reported that those who are given professional contracts, only **1 in 6** of them are still in professional football by the age of 21
- **15** Premier League and **9** Champion's League clubs currently run Academies and under 23 teams

### Article: Football's Biggest Issue: The Struggle Facing boys rejected by academies

*"In March 2013 a young man killed himself after suffering years of mental health difficulties following his release by a Premier League football club's academy at the age of 16. The summing up by the coroner who presided over the inquest into his death could hardly have been a stronger or more salutary warning about the potential dangers of English football's youth development system."*

To read the full article, click [here](#).

## 13 Arts Award Toolkit

### What is Arts Award?

Do you want to learn new skills?  
Find your own creative path?  
Experience a great piece of theatre?

All of these can be done with Arts Award – a nationally recognised qualification that's great for those wanting to develop careers in the arts.

You can use the following worksheets alongside *The Spine* to work towards your Bronze Arts Award. For more information on Arts Award and how to sign up, go to: [www.artsaward.org.uk](http://www.artsaward.org.uk)

### Bronze Arts Award has four parts...

Part A: Take Part in an Arts Workshop  
Part B: Be an Audience Member  
Part C: Arts Inspiration: Who inspires you?  
Part D: Share a Skill

### Information

This resource is designed to inspire and assist with the delivery of Bronze Arts Award to compliment visiting The Spine.

This booklet can be used by pupils to fully complete the qualification, or alternatively you the teacher can use the questions, themes and ideas within the pack to inform your own delivery. If you would like a word version of this document to enable editing, please email:

[lucy@20storieshigh.org.uk](mailto:lucy@20storieshigh.org.uk)



## Part A: Take Part

Attend our lyric-writing workshop as part of The Spine community engagement at your local venue and fill in the answers below! Alternatively, write your answers based on another workshop you've taken part in. This could be a music workshop, drama, dance, singing, painting, sculpting... as long as it's an arts activity!

1. Describe the activity you took part in...
2. List three things you enjoyed...
3. List three new skills or techniques that you've developed...
4. What kind of activity would you like to take part in next?

## Part B: Be the Audience

Attend *The Spine* show at your nearest venue and write your thoughts here! Alternatively, write about a theatre show, dance piece or gallery you've recently seen...

**The show, performance or exhibition you went to see was titled...**

**The venue was...**

**It was about...**

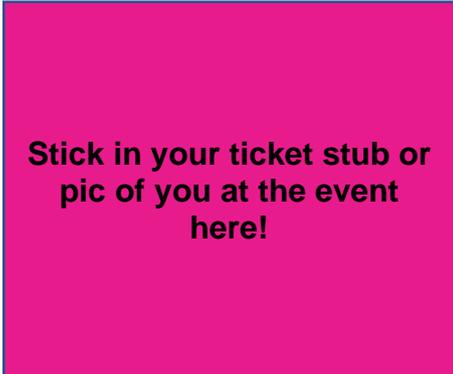
**The art forms they used included... (song, puppetry, movement, painting, etc.)**

**I liked it because...**

**But if I was to direct/perform/do it, I would...**

**I would / would not recommend this show to my friends, because...**

**Now share your thoughts with someone else in the group. Write down their thoughts here...**



**Stick in your ticket stub or  
pic of you at the event  
here!**

## Part C: Arts Inspiration

Use this resource pack, the internet and the programme of the show to select a cast or company member from *The Spine* and research about them (and ask them questions at our post-show discussions!). Or, chose anyone you're inspired by and write about them here...

**Who inspires you?**

**Why do they inspire you?**

**What is their main art form?**

**List five interesting facts about your inspirational artist...**

Remember to use this section to evidence your research here – take a picture of you at a post-show discussion, include the show programme in your portfolio, or include screenshots of your internet research!

## Part D: Share your Skill

With your newly learned skills from the show, the workshop and other activities, share a skill you've learnt with someone else!

**What skill will you share?**

**Who will you teach it to?**

**By the end, what will the person/group know?**

**Include notes on the plan of your session here – including timings on each thing, any warm-ups, cool downs, explanations or evaluation things that might need to happen...**

**Did the person/group successfully learn the new skill you taught?**

**What did they think of your session? Include as much feedback as you can here...**

**Three things you thought went well were...**

**One thing you'd change for next time is...**

Use this space to include pictures of your skills share....

**You've now completed your Bronze Arts Award!**

## 14 Signposting

### **Kick It Out**

Kick It Out is English football's equality and inclusion organisation.

Working throughout the football, educational and community sectors to challenge discrimination, encourage inclusive practices and campaign for positive change, Kick It Out is at the heart of the fight against discrimination for everyone who plays, watches or works in football.

A small independent charity, the 'Let's Kick Racism Out of Football' campaign was established in 1993 in response to widespread calls from clubs, players and fans to tackle racist attitudes existing within the game. Kick It Out was then established as a body in 1997 as it widened out its objectives to cover all aspects of discrimination, inequality and exclusion.

Kick It Out is primarily a campaigning organisation which enables, facilitates and works with the football authorities, professional clubs, players, fans and communities to tackle all forms of discrimination.

The campaign has been pivotal in persuading and supporting the game's stakeholders to take their equality responsibilities seriously.

To find out more: [www.kickitout.org](http://www.kickitout.org)

### **Football Beyond Borders**

FBB supports young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who are passionate about football but disengaged at school in order to help them finish school with the skills and grades to make a successful transition into adulthood. We do this by providing long-term, intensive support, built around relationships and young people's passions, in the classroom and beyond.

To find out more: [www.footballbeyondborders.org](http://www.footballbeyondborders.org)

### **Local Football teams to get involved with**

Find football near you! Join your local team or support them! To find out more: [www.thefa.com/get-involved](http://www.thefa.com/get-involved)

If you've been affected by any of the themes in the show or want to know more about where to find support, contact the organisations below.

### Sexuality and Gender (LGBT)

England and Wales: Stonewall - [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

Scotland: Stonewall Scotland - [www.stonewallscotland.org.uk](http://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk)

### Bereavement

England and Wales: Cruse Bereavement Care - [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk) / 0844 477 9400

Scotland: Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland - [www.crusescotland.org.uk](http://www.crusescotland.org.uk) / 0845 600 2227

### Race and Race Related Hate Crime

England and Wales: Show Racism the Red Card - [www.theredcard.org](http://www.theredcard.org)

Scotland: the same

### Hate Crime

England and Wales: True Vision - [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)

Scotland: Hate Crime Scotland - [www.hatecrimescotland.org](http://www.hatecrimescotland.org)

## Homelessness

England and Wales: Homeless UK - [www.homelessuk.org](http://www.homelessuk.org)

Scotland: Shelter Scotland - [www.scotland.shelter.org.uk](http://www.scotland.shelter.org.uk)

## Staying Safe Online

England and Wales: Think U Know and The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre -

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) / [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

Scotland: the same

## Rape and Sexual Assault

England and Wales: Rape Crisis UK - [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk) / 0808 802 9999

Scotland: Rape Crisis Scotland - [www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk) / 08088 01 03 02

## Drug and Alcohol Addiction

England and Wales: Addaction UK - [www.addaction.org.uk](http://www.addaction.org.uk)

Scotland: the same

## Bullying

Disrespect Nobody

[www.disrespectnobody.co.uk](http://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk)

## Mental Health Care

### PAPYRUS

Supporting teenagers and young adults feeling suicidal

0800 068 41 41

## Useful Apps:

### Chasing the stigma

<https://chasingthestigma.co.uk/hub-of-hope/>

### Woebot

Download from App store/Google store

## 15 Keep in Touch / Get Involved with 20 Stories High

Throughout the tour, we will be offering some of the following opportunities at your local venue:

### Post-Show Discussions

Young people can participate in a discussion with the actors and football industry professionals, exploring further the themes and issues in the play, and the making of the production.

### Lyric-Writing Workshops

Our fun and engaging lyric writing workshop explores how we start the story telling process in an accessible way. Delivered by professional lyricist Louie LeVack, it is suitable for up to 15 young people.

### Post-Show Jams

20 Stories High, in partnership with host venues, can set up exciting post-show jam events for local young people. Each post-show jam is bespoke, working alongside local young people to organise the event. Young people and artists from *The Spine* can collaborate on stage together. Young people are also encouraged to perform as individuals or groups. Suitable for up to 100 people.

### Football Tournaments

20 Stories high and FireFit Hub Liverpool are hosting a day full of football and family activities. An open 5 a side tournament for people aged 13-16. Sign up with an existing team or just pull together some mates who want to play and enter The Spine Tournament. Throughout the day there will be a host of family activities music and food.

Alternatively, if you live in Liverpool and want to get involved with 20 Stories High get in touch!

[lucy@20storieshigh.org.uk](mailto:lucy@20storieshigh.org.uk)

**Lucy Graham**

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## Social Media



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/20storieshigh



20storieshigh.  
bandcamp.com

[www.20storieshigh.org.uk](http://www.20storieshigh.org.uk)

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Resource pack content created by Lucy Graham, Nathan Powell, Nathaniel Hall & Leanne Jones.

### Sources:

Michael Calvin – No Hunger in Paradise

Kick it out Annual Report



c. Ryan Tomes