

SEPTEMBER 30 – NOVEMBER 8, 2015 | STIEMKE STUDIO



THE LION

Play
Guide

*Written and Performed by Benjamin Scheuer
Directed by Sean Daniels*



THE STIEMKE STUDIO SEASON IS SPONSORED BY
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Milwaukee Repertory Theater Presents

THE LION

Written and Performed by **Benjamin Scheuer**
Directed by **Sean Daniels**

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ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Some stories just have to be sung.

A good storyteller uses everything he has. So **Benjamin Scheuer** uses his guitar — actually, six guitars — in *The Lion*, a wholly original theatrical experience that tells one man's gripping coming-of-age story. The award-winning performer/songwriter inspires and disarms with his raw wit and emotional depth as he leads you on a rock n' roll journey from boyhood to manhood, through pain and healing, to discover the redemptive power of music. Hailed as "the best new musical" by *The Huffington Post* and "absolutely the best original musical of the year" by *The Stage* in London, Milwaukee audiences will be among the first in the country to experience this extraordinary event from a next-generation troubadour. Much like its hero, *The Lion* roars.



From the animated music video for *The Lion* by Benjamin Scheuer and his band Escapist Papers. The animation is a mixture of photographed cardboard cutouts and hand drawn animation composed in After Effects. The aim was to create a cardboard puppet theater world with a theatrical lighting setup to go with it.

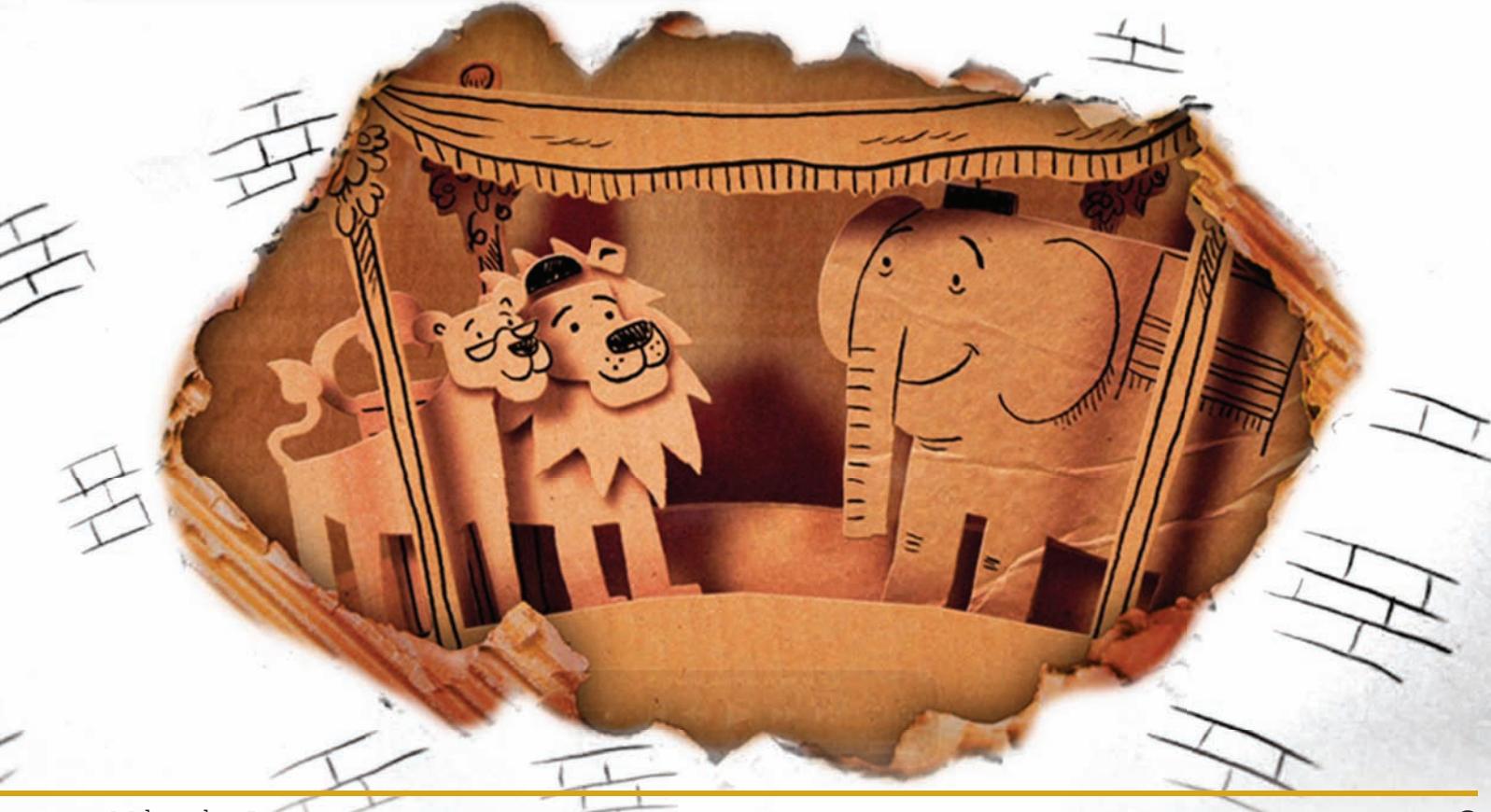
Director and producer **Peter Baynton**

Composer **Russell Etheridge**

Animators **Peter Baynton, Laura Nailor, Tim McCourt**

Credit to Radish Pictures

<http://www.radish-pictures.com/portfolio/thelion/>



ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Benjamin Scheuer, Writer/Performer

Benjamin is the recipient of the 2015 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Solo Performance and a 2015 Theatre World Award for Exceptional Off-Broadway Debut, as well as a nominee for two Outer Critic Circle Awards, a Lucille Lortel Award, and an additional Drama Desk for Outstanding Lyrics.

The Lion premiered off-Broadway in June 2014 at Manhattan Theatre Club and later returned to NYC in a commercial run at the Lynn Redgrave Theatre. Scheuer has performed the show at the St. James Theatre in London, where it won the 2014 Off-West-End Award for Best New Musical. The Lion has since been touring the United States, including a recent sold-out run at Portland Center Stage. The show will be seen at venues such as Merrimack Repertory, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and Arena Stage, throughout the 2015-2016 Season.

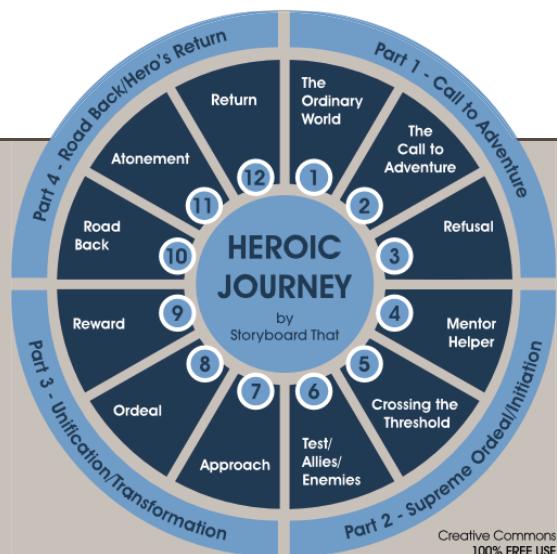
The animated music videos for Scheuer's songs "The Lion" and "Cookie-tin Banjo" have won prizes at the Annecy Film Festival, The Crystal Palace Festival, and the British Animation Awards (director/producer Peter Baynton). With photographer Riya Lerner, Scheuer is co-creator of the book "Between Two Spaces," from which 50% of proceeds go to the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society. www.BetweenTwoSpaces.com

Scheuer has toured with Mary Chapin Carpenter, and has performed at venues including Lincoln Center in New York and the Royal Albert Hall in London. He records and performs with his band Escapist Papers, whose second album, "The Bridge" (produced by Geoff Kraly), was released in 2014. Scheuer is currently at work on an album called "Songs from *The Lion*."

He has been a writer-in-residence at the Goodspeed Theatre, the Weston Playhouse, and the Johnny Mercer Songwriting Workshop. He has been commissioned to write a new show by Williamstown Theatre Festival. Additional Awards include the 2013 ASCAP Foundation Cole Porter Award for songwriting and the 2013 Musical Theatre Network Award for Best Lyrics.

The Lion is a true story.

BenjaminScheuer.com @BenjaminScheuer



Sean Daniels, Director

Sean has directed at Manhattan Theatre Club (NYC), Lynn Redgrave (NYC) The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), St. James (West End, London), Actors Theatre of Louisville, Portland Center Stage, Geva Theatre, Playmakers Rep, Cleveland Play House, Alliance Theatre, California Shakespeare, Dad's Garage Theatre Company, Swine Palace, Neo-Futurists, Aurora Theatre, Crowded Fire and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

His direction and shows have won: "Best New Musical" in London, The Drama Desk Award in NYC, & "Best Play" and "Best Director" in the Bay Area, Rochester and Atlanta. His shows have also been nominated for the Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle Award in NYC. Sean has been named "one of the top fifteen up & coming artists in the U.S., whose work will be transforming America's stages for decades to come" & "One Of 7 People Reshaping And Revitalizing The American Musical" by American Theatre magazine.

He is the Artistic Director of Merrimack Repertory Theatre. He's previously served as the Artist-At-Large for Geva Theatre Center and spent four years at the Tony Award-winning Actors Theatre of Louisville as the theatre's Associate Artistic Director (where he directed 17 productions including five Humana Festivals). Mr. Daniels is the former Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director of the California Shakespeare Theater and before that spent a decade as the Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Dad's Garage Theater Company in Atlanta.

He'd love to hear from you: @seandaniels.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Benjamin Scheuer, Writer and Performer

Sean Daniels, Director

Neil Patel, Scenic Designer

Ben Stanton, Lighting Designer

Leon Rothenberg, Sound Design

Jennifer Caprio, Costume Consultant

Don Ruggiero*, Stage Manager

Mind The Gap Productions, Technical Supervisor

Maximum Entertainment, General Management

Eva Price, Producer

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

A graduate of Harvard with his degree in English, Benjamin Scheuer's framework for his lyrics follow the literary structure commonly referred to as "The Hero's Journey". Derived from Joseph Campbell's Monomyth book, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* and adapted by Christopher Vogler is the Twelve Stage Hero's Journey. Star Wars, The Wizard of Oz, and countless other timeless films and stories fit in this traditional structure. The framework provides a beginning, middle and end which can be found in each of Benjamin's songs, allowing each song to stand on its own as a complete story. In *The Lion*, the hero himself brings the audience on an emotional journey there and back again.

THE MAN BEHIND THE LION: GUITARS, FORGIVENESS AND STYLE

Credit to The New York Times interview with Suzy Evans in June 2014

Q. Growing up in New York, did you see live music and theater often?

A. I went to a Gilbert and Sullivan performance with my parents at Symphony Space, and I had the extraordinary honor of playing on that very same stage this year. I played my song "Cookie Tin Banjo," and to be on that stage, in that theater, where my father had taken me, singing a song about my father was an extraordinary honor.

Q. Who are some of your musical influences?

A. I'm a big fan of Eminem, Oscar Peterson, Tupac Shakur and Nine Inch Nails. Tupac's on my turntable right now.

Q. "Dear Dad" is one of the most poignant moments in the show. Where does that song come from?

A. I love writing pen and ink to my friends and my family, and when Sean and I were at the Weston Playhouse [in Vermont] working on the show, I would send postcards when I didn't know what to write. Sean said to me, "Why don't you write a postcard to your father?" And I started crying and so Sean made me bacon. [Laughs] And I realized that I had a really difficult time directly addressing my father. I certainly had never asked for his forgiveness or offered him my own forgiveness. I wrote a postcard to my father, and I sent it to the house where I grew up. My mother got the card in the mail and looked at me like I was a bit mad when she found it.

Q. You play six guitars over the course of the show. Why so many?

A. A lot of the songs are written in alternate tunings. So having the different guitars not only allows for the different tones, it also allows for the different instruments tuned to different chords, which allows greater flexibility of harmonic variation.

Q. You talk in the show about how clothing was a form of armor during your cancer treatment.

A. When I was very ill, I looked terrible, and what I didn't want was for people to see me, look sympathetic and say, "You look terrible." I wanted people to say, "You look nice." One of the few things I could control was what I wore. I really liked suits, but I did not wear them all the time until I was diagnosed with cancer. After my father died, I used to wear his clothes all the time. It was a real way I could feel close to him. I have a fantasy that my children and my children's children will say, "Grandpa Ben dressed so cool, and we want to wear all his clothes."

Q. Do you feel that writing the show has helped you overcome hard times from your past?

A. I've gotten to know my father much better. I see him much more as a complete man with wonderful qualities and deep flaws rather than the hagiographic figure that was presented to me as a little boy. I have begun to understand my father probably because I've made peace with and understand myself.



ADULT HODGKIN LYMPHOMA

In *The Lion*, Benjamin Scheuer beautifully conveys the story of his life, including his diagnosis of Stage IV Hodgkin Lymphoma at age 28. Benjamin worked with photographer Riya Lerner to create a limited edition artist book, *Between Two Spaces*, which includes twenty-seven black and white photographs alongside text selected from Benjamin's journals, an introduction by Benjamin and an afterword by Riya. 50% of all proceeds from the book are donated to the Leukemia Lymphoma Society.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ADULT HODGKIN LYMPHOMA

Adult Hodgkin lymphoma is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in the lymph system. There are two main types of Hodgkin lymphoma: classical and nodular lymphocyte-predominant. Age, gender, and Epstein-Barr infection can affect the risk of adult Hodgkin lymphoma. Signs of adult Hodgkin lymphoma include swollen lymph nodes, fever, night sweats, and weight loss. Tests that examine the lymph nodes are used to detect and diagnose adult Hodgkin lymphoma.



STAGES OF ADULT HODGKIN LYMPHOMA

Stage I

Lymphoma cells are found in one of the lymph nodes in one of the lymph node groups (such as the neck or armpit). The cells may also be found somewhere else on the body, but only in one organ or area.

Stage II

Lymphoma cells are found in two or more lymph node groups either above or below the diaphragm (the thin muscle below the lungs that helps breathing and separates the chest from the abdomen).

Stage III

Lymphoma cells are found in lymph node groups above and below the diaphragm (the thin muscle below the lungs that helps breathing and separates the chest from the abdomen). The cells may also be found in nearby organs or the spleen.

Stage IV

Lymphoma cells are found outside the lymph nodes throughout one or more organs, and may be in lymph nodes near those organs. The cells may have also spread to areas far away from the organ, or been found in the lung, liver, bone marrow, or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).

Treatment options include:

- Chemotherapy
- Targeted Therapy
- Radiation Therapy
- Stem Cell Transplant

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The National Cancer Institute website provides **online access to information** on cancer, clinical trials, and other websites and organizations that offer support and resources for cancer patients and their families. For a quick search, use the search box in the upper right corner of each web page. The results for a wide range of search terms will include a list of "Best Bets," editorially chosen web pages that are most closely related to the search term entered.

<http://www.cancer.gov/>

The NCI has **booklets and other materials for patients, health professionals, and the public.** These publications discuss types of cancer, methods of cancer treatment, coping with cancer, and clinical trials. Some publications provide information on tests for cancer, cancer causes and prevention, cancer statistics, and NCI research activities. NCI materials on these and other topics may be ordered online or printed directly from the **NCI Publications Locator.** These materials can also be ordered by telephone from the Cancer Information Service toll-free at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237).

Credit to the National Cancer Institute

LOCAL RESOURCES

MILWAUKEE REGIONAL CANCER CARE NETWORK

<http://www.wisecancercarenetwork.org/>

EXPRESSIVE ARTS STUDIO

Participate in creative process. Join the creative road to healing.

<http://www.wisecancercarenetwork.org/expressive-arts-studio--2015-07-06.aspx>

MOVIN' AND GROOVIN' AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

Sponsored by: Aurora Women's Pavilion of Aurora West Allis Medical Center

<http://www.wisecancercarenetwork.org/>

AURORA WOMEN'S PAVILION

West Allis, Wisconsin 53227

Phone: 414-328-6640



All production photos of Benjamin Scheuer by Matthew Murphy

VISITING THE REP

Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Patty and Jay Baker Theater Complex is located in the Milwaukee Center downtown at the corner of Wells and Water Streets. The building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company.

The Ticket Office is visible on the left upon entering the Wells Street doors. The Stiemke Studio is on the main level behind the large rotunda staircase



THE REP VALUES YOUR SUPPORT



Financial support enables The Rep to:

- ★ Advance the art of theater with productions that inspire individuals and create community dialogue;
- ★ Provide a richer theater experience by hosting Rep In Depth, Talkbacks, and creating Play Guides to better inform our audiences about our productions;
- ★ Educate over 20,000 students at 200+ schools in the greater Milwaukee area with Rep Immersion Day experiences, student matinees, workshops, tours and by making connections with their school curriculum through classroom teaching programs such as Reading Residencies and Scriptworks;
- ★ Maintain our commitment to audiences with special needs through our Access Services that include American Sign Language interpreted productions, captioned theater, infrared listening systems and script synopses to ensure that theater at The Rep is accessible to all;
- ★ Educate the next generation of theater professionals with our Artistic Intern Program which gives newly degreed artists a chance to hone their skills at The Rep as they begin to pursue their theatrical careers.

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