

# THE HISTORY OF INVULNERABILITY

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 Directed by Mark Clements  
 Judy Hansen, Executive Producer

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This Teacher's Guide is designed to be used in the classroom along with The Rep's Study Guide for *The History of Invulnerability*. These are some suggested activities for your classroom. The Study Guide is available online at <http://www.milwaukeerep.com/Tickets/2013-14-Season/History-Study-Guide/>



## Create Your Own Comic Strip

In *The History of Invulnerability*, Jerry uses Superman to express changes he would like to see in the world, especially in relation to the horrors happening in Europe during the Nazi regime. Have students choose an issue that they would like to see changed in their community or their school (i.e. bullying, crime, environmental issues, etc.). Create a comic strip about this issue, showing characters making a difference in creating change. Use the comic strip as a way to promote making a difference throughout your school community, perhaps making posters to post around the school building.



# TEACHER'S GUIDE

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Teacher guide written by Hope Parow, Education Intern  
 and Lindsey Hoel-Neds, Education Assistant.

### Pre-Show Discussion Questions:

- The History of Invulnerability*, which is set largely in the 1930s and 1940s, tells the story of Jerry Siegel, the Jewish-American creator of The Man of Steel, Superman. Historically, what was happening during this time period that may be relevant and give rise to the story? How might that influence the creation of Superman?
- Define *invulnerable*. (Look it up in the dictionary if needed!) Given what you know of the setting and characters, why might the play have been titled *The History of Invulnerability*?
- Discuss your understanding and perception of comic books (as a genre and overall franchise) as a group. Consider: history, purpose/message, audience/fandom, characters/superheroes, modern adaptations, etc. How might these elements be integrated into The Rep's production to highlight the culturally and visually unique identity of comic illustration?

### Post-Show Discussion Questions:

- Beyond being the subject of Siegel's creation, Superman is actualized as a character onstage throughout the production. What role does this character play in the telling of Siegel's story? How does Superman's presence onstage influence your perception of his own character, Siegel, and the history of comic books?
- The History of Invulnerability* uses projections extensively to enhance the storytelling. How did the projections help tell the story of this play? How did the technology used alter your experience as an audience member?

### Understanding Historical Context

Break students into groups to research the following topics:

1. Comic books from 1930-1945
2. The Holocaust/Nazi occupation of Europe
3. American involvement in WWII
4. Domestic events in the U.S 1930-1945

After students have completed their research, have each group create a timeline for their topic. This can be done digitally or on a large roll of paper. Post all of the timelines together and have students look for parallels between the events of each topic.

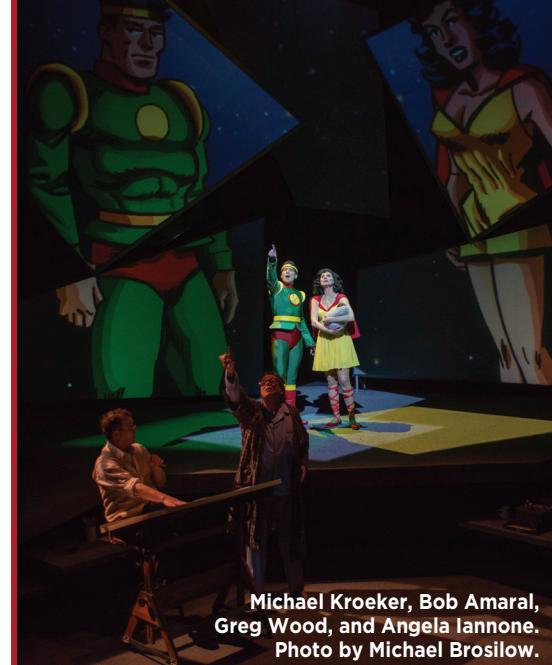
# Be Your Own Superhero

The history of superheroes is a rich and fascinating topic. Encourage students to find out a little more about superheroes other than Superman, focusing on their reflection of changing times and their influences on popular culture. Use this research to inspire students to create their own superheroes.

Have students make a list of their individual strengths, talents, and skills. From that list, have students create a profile of themselves as superheroes. The profile should include:

1. Their superhero name
2. Their superhero symbol
3. Their superpowers
4. Their costume
5. What do they fight for/against?
6. Their weakness

Once students have created a profile of their superhero selves, have them write a story or create a comic book outlining their alter-ego's exploits.



Michael Kroeker, Bob Amaral,  
Greg Wood, and Angela Iannone.  
Photo by Michael Brosilow.

## COMMON CORE AND WISCONSIN'S MODEL EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

### Common Core State Standards For English Language Arts

#### Reading

##### Literacy (Grade 12)

**RL.11-12.1:** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain

**RL.11-12.2:** Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text

### Wisconsin Model Academic Standards

#### Social Studies: History

**B.12.2:** Analyze primary and secondary sources related to a historical question to evaluate their relevance, make comparisons, integrate new information with prior knowledge, and come to a reasoned conclusion

**B.12.7:** Identify major works of art and literature produced in the United States and elsewhere in the world and explain how they reflect the era in which they were created

#### Theater

##### Grade 12

**A.12.1:** Attend a live theatrical performance and be able to explain the personal meaning derived from the experience, and also be able to analyze, evaluate, and create meaning in a broader social and cultural context in either written or oral form

-articulate with increased understanding what they liked and didn't like and why

-explain what happened in the play and why they think the playwright made particular choices

-explain what happened in the play and why they think the director and actors made particular choices

-explain how the technical aspects of the play supported the choices of the playwright, director and actors

-describe how the audience appeared to respond to the play

-explain the message of the play and its meaning to individuals and to society

**C.12.3** Explain in writing the potential impact of a play on society and culture.

## MILWAUKEE REP EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Education Department offers backstage tours, pre- and post-show workshops and classroom residencies.

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