

Deaf Crows bring Apple Time play to Globe Theatre

Regina / 980 CJME

[Andrew Shepherd](#)

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Members of Deaf Crows Collective rehearse their play Apple Time at the Globe Theatre on Feb. 5. (Andrew Shepherd/980 CJME)

The Globe Theatre is hosting a play by members of the non-profit organization Deaf Crows Collective this weekend.

Apple Time is performed by deaf and hard of hearing students using a blend of ASL, puppetry, mime, magic and more.

"This is the first time (the Globe Theatre) has ever invited student performers. We're very honoured by that," said Apple Time Director Joanne Weber.

She is also the president of Deaf Crows Collective and a teacher of the deaf. The majority of the performers are her students.

Apple Time is based on the individual stories of each student, the recollections of their past, dreams and anything that's on their mind.

"It's about presenting deaf students as individuals rather than being labeled as deaf," said Weber.

The play is written by the actors in a collaborative effort called devised theatre. They performed an older version of the play at the Artesian last June. Weber said it has since evolved as they add something new every practice to make the story fuller, richer and intelligible.

"You start with a story idea that they have and then you help them to build on it, find the metaphors, find the visual images, so we build them as we go along," she said.

During this process, Weber explained the actors are learning how to build a narrative.

“They’re able to really come alive and really present themselves as whole people instead of trying to utter the right set of words and phrases and not being able to elaborate much,” said Weber.

The goal is to develop a spirit of inclusivity, inviting people into deaf culture, creating a positive experience for the audience without hitting it over the head.

“We’re trying to build a bridge between the deaf and hearing world so that we can present these people as human,” she said.

Weber said some of her students struggled to integrate into the hearing world. She explained there is not much emphasis on learning about deaf culture during early childhood. When they turned 14, they entered the high school program at Winston Knoll Collegiate which focuses on visual arts and drama.

As members of Deaf Crows Collective, the actors are celebrating the fact that they belong to a community, one they want to invite hearing people into this weekend at the Globe Theatre.

“They can function in a community. They work together. They make decisions together. They tell each other what to do. They help each other. They support each other.”

Apple Time runs from Feb. 7-10 in Regina before it moves to Edmonton next week for a performance at the Sound Off Festival, Canada’s only ongoing deaf theatre festival.

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