*Bubbleschmeissis* is a storytelling performance written/performed by Nick Cassenbaum, with direction/dramaturgy by lead-researcher Danny Braverman.

The research process investigated popular theatre dramaturgy to develop a “dialogue-across-difference” (D-a-D), finding performance methodologies that bridge disparate audience demographics. Braverman’s D-a-D dramaturgy framework starts with marketing company Morris Hargreaves McIntyre’s “hierarchy of visitor engagement” (2005), creating performance events to enhance the interlocking social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual experiences of audiences. The process of discovery involved Cassenbaum oscillating between semi-scripted and improvised units of narrative, using techniques influenced by street performance and educational storytelling (Betty Rosen: 1988, 1993). The D-a-D framework was refined to continuously evaluate performance, as well as to inform rehearsals. In particular, Turner’s “communitas”(1987) concept was employed to explore audience interaction and engagement.

The main research insights were:

* The show itself was an exemplar of how the D-a-D framework creates a performance event that brings audiences together across cultural and social fractures. As well as creating a “good night out” (McGrath: 1996), Bubbleschmeissis created strong collective emotional, educational and spiritual experiences;
* A comprehensive refinement of the D-a-D framework itself, creating a new diagrammatic representation to be applied to all aspects of dramaturgy.

The project’s finding have been disseminated through a number of platforms:

* The process was shared through scratch performances June to October 2015 at Rose Lipman Centre, Rich Mix, Jamboree and Camden People’s Theatre. This phase included analysis of the role of music, that was eventually incorporated live;
* The D-a-D framework has subsequently been employed explicitly on two further projects Braverman/Cassenbaum’s *My Kind of Michael* and Braverman’s youth musical *Something Inside So Strong*.
* D-a-D will be shared at the centre of an artists’ symposium 2018-19.

1. *Bubble Schmeisis*

Danny Braverman directed this piece, written and performed by Nick Cassenbaum, that has toured nationally and internationally to critical acclaim (2015-2018). A full list of performances can be found here: <http://www.nickcassenbaum.com/bubble-schmeisis>

*Bubble Schmeisis* was an investigation into a dramaturgy that uses popular theatre forms to address a “Dialogue-Across-Difference” (D-a-D). Danny is developing a website that links together a number of projects investigating this area: <http://dialogueacrossdifference.strikingly.com/>.

The need for D-a-D comes from a reappraisal of the role of performance in community contexts, with a recognition of the importance of bringing together disparate demographics in an increasingly fractured society.

Integral to the show’s dramaturgical process was the refinement of the D-a-D framework. The starting point for D-a-D is a tool used by marketing agency Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (MHM). MHM designed a hierarchy of motivation moving from the social to the intellectual to the emotional and finally the spiritual.

Nick Cassenbaum and Danny used D-a-D in its raw form as a way to focus rehearsals and the development of the show in performance. Among other elements, they explored using building a sense of *communitas* (Turner, 1987); inspired by Dorothy Heathcote (1981), they found moments to drop to the “universal” from the “particular”; and through the participation of an audient in a final washing ritual (the “schmeiss”) explored how an individual audient can act as a symbolic proxy to create a “spiritual” experience. As a result of this investigation, the framework has now been refined for future projects.

The full show, as performed at Camden People’s Theatre (June 2016) can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxXdAfBvQgM>

Nick’s website contains a blog, reviews, press materials and audience responses: <http://www.nickcassenbaum.com/>

1. *My Kind of Michael*

*My Kind of Michael* is Danny’s second collaboration with Nick Cassenbaum, building on a the Dialogue-Across-Difference (D-a-D) investigation that informed *Bubble Schmeisis.* Danny is co-writer and director. The show premiered at Edinburgh Fringe 2018 and is due to tour the UK.

*My Kind of Michael*’s starting point is Cassenbaum’s admiration for his childhood hero Michael Barrymore. The dramaturgical process included examination of Barrymore’s popular theatre methodology; particularly working with audience as co-creator. This factor aligned with Nick Cassenbaum’s own experience as a street performer; creating a playful democratic space where the performer-shaman creates *communitas* (Turner, 1987). So, the creation process involved using Barrymore’s techniques to tell the parallel stories of Barrymore’s “downfall” and Cassenbaum’s relationship with his Nana Sylvie. Improvisation with audiences was developed through scratch performances at The Yard and Battersea Arts Centre, as well as workshops with Goldsmiths’ students (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqeytwmlYxs>)

The D-a-D framework was a constant reflective/reflexive tool, which itself was refined as the creation process progressed. In particular, the artists considered the interlocking of different strands. For example, the social-education axis was explored through the role of participant-audient as a proxy for the collective. This was examined the Goldsmiths’ workshop, where Barrymore’s *Strike It Lucky* format was explored for its parallels with Boal’s Forum Theatre. Although Forum is not used in the current iteration, this research enabled consideration of how Freire’s pedagogy (date) and the “utopian performatives” of Dolan (date) can be harnessed to foreground the political dimensions of a performance (in this case explorations of class, media and sexuality).

Video of the scratch at The Yard Theatre (password: Barrymore) <https://vimeo.com/256172620>.

As this is still a work-in-progress, more research and commentary 2018-2019, will be found on the Dialogue-Across-Difference and nickcassenbaum.com websites.

Article for possible REF submission

**Title:** Re-igniting the legacy of diversity in Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA): How the 1980s democratic ethos at Theatre Centre (UK) under the leadership of David Johnston can inform current theatre practice.

**50-word abstract:**

This article analyses the work of Theatre Centre under the leadership of David Johnston. Theory from performance, education, social psychology, disability studies and anthropology are all used to explores how the company’s work in the 70s and 80s can inform current future theatre practice, particularly with respect to increasing diversity.

NB: This c7,500 word article has been written and is ready for submission. Conversations are taking place with the editors of National Drama peer-reviewed journal.