***Something Inside So Strong***is a youth musical based Labi Siffre’s songs.

The research process explores:

* How young people can be more involved with the creation of musicals?
* How they can engage with production processes that fully tap into their creativity and learning?
* How musicals can be a vehicle to explore personal, social and political education?

This is being achieved through a multi-phase project:

1. (2016) A co-creation process with young people 14-25, led by playwright/lead researcher Danny Braverman, choreographers Sheron Wray/ Dena Lague and director Viv Berry;
2. (2016) A workshop production at the Arcola Theatre, subject to evaluation set against Braverman’s own evolving dramaturgy framework: “Dialogue-across-Difference”;
3. (2017) A second draft produced by Goldsmiths’ Musical Theatre Society, subject to the same evaluation methodology;
4. (2019) A third draft to be produced in a school with full musical arrangement(Stephen Wrigley), and external evaluation (Dr Anna Carlile);
5. (2019-2020) The piloting, evaluation and publication of a downloadable pack containing script, session-plans, score and backing track;

The “Dialogue-across-Difference” dramaturgy framework adapts Morris Hargreaves MacIntyre’s marketing tool that identifies four motivations for cultural attendance (social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual) to analyse dramaturgy and participatory experiences. It is also informed by Dolan’s “utopian performatives” (2005), Turner’s “communitas”(1987) and Heathcote’s *“*From the Particular to the Universal”(1984).

The main research insights include:

* A methodology for co-creating youth musicals from back-catalogues;
* Creating an alternative musical to the usual canon, depicting and empowering non-normative young people, especially in terms sexuality and neuro-divergence;
* Developing strategy to address the challenges schools and youth groups face in replacing the musical theatre canon;

Dissemination is mainly through the project website and the creation of a downloadable pack. The pack offers an alternative to traditional prescriptive approaches, better harnessing participants’ own creativity and enhancing pedagogic objectives.

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.