



VANGUARD THEATER

dedicated to **DREAM**

DIVERSITY, RECIPROCITY, EDUCATION, ACTIVISM & MENTORSHIP

VANGUARDTHEATERCOMPANY.ORG

UNLOCKING CREATIVE POTENTIAL
VANGUARD THEATER'S SCHOOL RESIDENCY PROGRAM

MISSION AND VISION

WHO WE ARE:

- Vanguard Theater was founded in 2015 by two Black artists to address inequities in the theater industry. Vanguard challenges conventional social and cultural narratives through theater dedicated to **DREAM**: Diversity, Reciprocity, Education, Activism, & Mentorship.
- We approach our mission through
 - **color and gender conscious casting** in our Mainstage productions,
 - **ongoing education programs,**
 - **summer camps, and**
 - **opportunities for young performing, creative, and stagecraft artists to be mentored by professionals.**

OUR VISION:

Our vision is that we are recognized as a model for:

- purposeful inclusion of diverse voices and stories;
- casting and leadership that reflects our community, and
- partnerships that propel cross community conversations with non-arts organizations, including public, private and higher education, government entities, advocacy groups, and those serving populations with specific needs.



ABOUT THE RESIDENCY:

WALK IN MY GRAVITY was created by teens and young adults through Vanguard Theater's VTC Next program.

WALK IN MY GRAVITY explores the concept of personal gravity: what holds us down and what grounds us to soar.

VTC NEXT is a training ground designed to foster equity in the arts.

VTC NEXT nurtures young talent, and helps young artists develop their skills and passions by explore pressing emotional and social issues through song, spoken word, and monologues.

WALK IN MY GRAVITY

AN ORIGINAL SONG CYCLE WRITTEN AND COMPOSED THROUGH VANGUARD THEATER COMPANY'S VTC NEXT PROGRAM, asking:



PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIAL: *As a black female, being different is something that is usually difficult to forget. You are reminded of it constantly, whether it be through false assumptions, stereotypes, loss of opportunity, and so many other social disadvantages due to your race. But in this room, being a part of Vanguard, I'd never once felt isolated from others because of my race. Not only because there were so many other minorities in the room, but because I felt that I was known as Olivia, not as a prop for the company's right to call themselves "diverse." And that felt wonderful.*

THEMES EXPLORED IN WALK IN MY GRAVITY



WALK IN MY GRAVITY

invites participants to take a walk with the performers, and experience the weight of their gravity

WHO CAN I BE

duet - boy and girl meet on a blind date and try to figure out which version of themselves will best impress the other



For an assembly only residency, the performance will be followed by a talkback about the creative process and / or your students own experiences with these issues and/or the weight of their gravity.



IMAGE OF A MAN

the pressures of toxic masculinity

JUST LIKE THAT

sudden change

ROOTS

self acceptance



These musical numbers may be interspersed with monologues, spoken word poetry, and/or original songs created by your students with the guidance and mentorship of Vanguard's Teaching Staff.



BLACK GIRL LOTTO

the toll of codeswitching

MEND ME TO YOU

healing and connection



BENEFITS TEACHING RESIDENCY

- **Benefits for Students:**

- Opportunity to work with professional teaching artists
- Creating monologues, spoken word, and songs.
- Focusing on personal issues and exploring gravity's weight.
- Performance Integration: Including student work in the final performance.

- **Benefits for Schools:**

- Enhancing Creativity; Encouraging students to think creatively and express themselves.
- Addressing Critical Issues: Highlight the opportunity for schools to address important social issues through art.
- Promoting Diversity and Inclusion; aligning with the schools' diversity and inclusion goals.
- Strengthening Arts Education: how does the residency complement and enrich existing arts education programs?



WHAT A RESIDENCY MIGHT LOOK LIKE

One Day Residency Plus Follow Up Performance: Includes a workshop day with up to 30 students, followed by an assembly presentation on a separate day. During the workshop day, our teaching artists will help students curate spoken word and monologue moments to be included in the assembly performance. \$1800

Five Day Residency: Includes all of the above plus the students will compose the lyrics and melody of a song with mentorship and instruction by Vanguard Teaching Artists, which will be rehearsed and staged for inclusion in the final assembly performance. \$3200

Assembly and Talk Back: Performance of *Walk in My Gravity* followed by a moderated talk back about the creative process, the topics explored, and how your student body relates to those topics. \$1200



YOUR STUDENTS WILL THRIVE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Bring Vanguard teaching artists right to your classroom for multiple sessions. Our residencies are designed to serve up to 30 students per class during the school day. To make things even easier, you'll have Vanguard Theater's administration team to help you every step of the way.

Students will experience the joy of connecting with themselves and others in this 5 or 10 session residency. It's all about acting, storytelling and developing stage presence — whether your students are already hungry for the spotlight or hesitant to step into it. In a warm and supportive environment, students will explore monologues, improvisation, scenework and memorization, all while collaborating with their classmates.

Contact: Brandi Chavonne Massey / brandi@dreamvtc.org



Curriculum Connections: English Language Arts, Math, Music, Health & Physical Education, Social Studies, Social & Emotional Development, Theater, Social Studies,

THE IMPACT

The journey that my daughter has been on while part of this process has been nothing short of transformational. I have watched her not only find her tribe, but her voice. You have cultivated a community of souls who intuitively and deeply trust one another. A community who puts service before self. A community that I am proud is a part of my child's life. Jessica B.



Through this process, I realized that Vanguard had become such a safe space for me and so many others. A place where my sexuality or someone's color are things to celebrate. Vanguard somehow manages to teach about privilege and the real world while still being a safe place, which for me is unheard of. Olivia R.

While of course we all believe in excellence, what I saw today was so much bigger than that. Art was being used to create healing in our communities. Stefon H.



As humans, we segregate ourselves because we find safety in those who share our background and common values. Through working on "Walk in My Gravity," we embraced individuality, diversity, inclusion, sexuality, and so much more, gained a deeper understanding and compassion for our peers, and felt free to break free from the racial and social boxes and cliques that are so widespread. Jordan M.



The beauty and art created in your group left me deeply moved. I am sure you know how important what you are doing is, but I just want to make sure that you know others see it. This piece and your process represents the best of our nature and creativity as humans. I am sure that these lessons and experiences provide a guarantee that long after we are gone, your students will remember them for as long as they live. Those lessons are not just about theater and music but about life, commitment, and excellence. Thank you. Bass player

THE FEEDBACK

I don't know how they sang about such deeply painful themes, and still made the audience feel so hopeful at the end. Was it their youthful, hopeful outlook, their mentors' guidance, the song order? I don't know what it is, but it could have been an evening of pain, which would have been valid, but it was an evening of rejuvenation. T. Purcell

I was personally overwhelmed by the amount of talent I was surrounded by when the show first started. Everyone did such an outstanding job --writing the music, performing, singing, and articulating their message to the audience. The process must've been hard and frustrating, but I promise that it was well worth it. It was remarkable! J. Ridley

I thought the whole show was incredible. The perspectives and experiences and the real-ness of each performer came through in every piece. Blew me away. Please keep promoting - this show is important and WILL / MUST be a big hit !! Thank you!!! J.Tierney

We're big fans of this show and hope not only that this show has a future life but that each of these writers/performers carries the experience forward into future endeavors, and that Vanguard continues this kind of mentoring. So impactful. S. Axelrod

It was a great show with great depth. It's amazing that it was written by teenagers. The songs were catchy and I would definitely be re-listening to the soundtrack right now if I could. N. Petrick

I had no idea what to expect and I was blown away by the content, quality of the music and acting, and the professionalism of the cast. As far as I was concerned, I could have been watching this show on Broadway. T. Gorgone

I thoroughly enjoyed the show!! It was so wonderful to see such a young and diverse cast giving us a glimpse of life from their perspective!! And to think they wrote the songs as well...just phenomenal! M. McHugh