

**Black Youth Theatre Intensive – A Summer Mixtape
Presented by Soulpepper Theatre Company
A SummerUp 2022
Course Description**

Course Name: Black Youth Theatre Intensive – A Summer Mixtape

Who Should Apply: You are a Black student, resident in Ontario, who will be enrolled in any of Grades 10, 11, or 12 in September 2022, or will be enrolled in post-secondary studies in September 2022. In addition, you are interested in the performing arts and in expressing yourself creatively. You are also keen to explore Black Canadian history.

Visit the SummerUp Website: <https://lileaders.com/summerup/>

What

The Summer Mixtape course provides Black students with an exciting opportunity to experience the world of theatre creation from the inside. Happening in-person at Soulpepper Theatre this summer, this course will help participants grow and reinforce a sense of community after a difficult period of social isolation. Students will be invited to draw back the curtains and dive into storytelling and playwriting, collaborative creation, live performance, and more.

All of this will be done by harnessing the power of theatre to tell stories rooted in both Canadian Black history and the present. Once the program is completed, participants will be sent off with a new creative toolkit as well as information about where to put it to use, inside and outside the classroom.



Soulpepper Theatre's *Black Youth Theatre Intensive* is an accessible and inclusive course designed for participants both with and without prior theatre experience. It will be led by artist instructors who will introduce participants to their respective areas of expertise. In addition to training offered by the artist instructors, participants are paired with mentors for additional personalized support and feedback in small groups of two or three.

The curriculum will include (*subject to change*):

Select workshops by guest instructors which will include:

- *Connecting to Our Ancestors Through Dance*
- *Spoken Word*
- *Creation in Historical Contexts*
- *Innovation in Design*

Projects written and performed by students include:

- In *Make Your Own Podcast*, students will select a specific Ontario city and create festivities for the city (parades, marching bands, speeches, etc.) to celebrate Emancipation Day and educate the public about its significance.
- In *Black in Time News*, students will create a newscast segment about a historical figure, event, or

landmark for the hottest new midday news program. They will then be challenged with writing fictional stories about their subjects.

- In *Being Black in Canada*, students will be prompted with the questions: “What does it mean to you to be Black in Canada? What is Black Canadian history, and what is its future?”. They will respond by creating original monologues, poems, rap verses, drawings, journal entries, acceptance speeches, movement pieces, and interpretive dance numbers.

Why this Matters

For some, this program may be an early start, a pathway to a career in theatre and performance. A mixture of participants who may or may not have prior experience in theatre will allow for peer-to-peer skill sharing. Moreover, having Black representation in theatre is one way for ensuring that Black stories and history are preserved, and this is empowering to the community and enriching to the still-growing culture of Canadian theatre.

The experiences of students will include:

- Development of a new cohort of Black Canadian artists ready to share their talents with the world
- Workshops in storytelling, theatre creation, songwriting, playwriting
- Workshops on Ontario Black History with connections made to the present and future
- Facilitation by Black Artist Educators
- A mentorship program.
- Laying the foundation of creation and performance leading to the creation of new original work and a final performance open to the public
- Providing a dedicated space for Black youth to have their voices heard
- Guidance regarding pathways for careers in the theatre
- Intergenerational knowledge production and connection through engaging the families of participants

In Summer 2021, this course was offered in online mode which limited the full learning experience that in-person mode provides. Here are the opinions of three students who took this course in summer 2021:

Student #1: *“I loved meeting so many cool people and the instructors were awesome! I liked the different tasks and assignments we did, they really made me think and I could tell they were well thought out and not just mindless assignments school tends to give me all the time. I feel super lucky to have done the workshops too, the guest artists were really inspiring as was the mentor I had. (The welcome package was also a plus) Thank you!!”*

Student #2: *“The program was something that was very out of the box, I found the fact that I was given so many opportunities to share my personal work made the program more engaging, because I was working hard to perfect and perform my work in the class, which helped improved my work as well.”*

Student #3: *“I learned new things such as black figures, costume design, using technology in music performances and movies, and poetry/plays.”*

Admission Details

Who: You are a Black student, resident in Ontario, who will be enrolled in any of Grades 10, 11 or 12 in September 2022, or will be enrolled in post-secondary studies in September 2022. In addition, you are interested in the performing arts and in expressing yourself creatively. You are keen to explore Black Canadian history and are totally committed to attending all in-person classes (see class schedule below).

Admissions Process: All eligible applicants will be considered for admission. Refer to application deadlines at <https://llileaders.com/summerup/> Eligible applicants will be required to attend an orientation session.

Start/Stop Dates: SummerUp will offer *Black Youth Theatre Intensive* in in-person mode over a span of six weeks starting Tuesday, July 1, 2 and ending Thursday, August 18, 2022. Classes will commence at 10.00 a.m. and end at 4.00 p.m. A one-hour lunch break will be provided.

Meeting Pattern: Noted below are the dates this course will meet. Before submitting an application, candidates must ensure they can attend all the scheduled classes.

Week 1: Tuesday, July 12; Wednesday, July 13 (10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

Week 2: Tuesday, July 19; Wednesday, July 20 (10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

Week 3: Tuesday, July 26; Wednesday, July 27 (10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

Week 4: Wednesday, August 3; Thursday, August 4 (10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

Week 5: Tuesday, August 9; Wednesday, August 10 (10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

Week 6: Wednesday, August 17; Thursday, August 18 (10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

Dress: We wish to readily identify SummerUp students while they are on campus. Hence, students will be provided with SummerUp T-shirts which must be worn unless the programming suggests otherwise.

Parent Role: This course will enroll young adult students who are age 18 and over. It will also enrol students who are under age 18 and these students will participate with the support of their parents. Here, parents or legal guardians will be deemed ‘partners’ with responsibilities for ensuring under-18 students arrive and depart the campus safely and on time, and for providing lunch. Parents must attend an online orientation for selected students.

Health & Safety: Since this course will be delivered in-person, certain COVID-19 protocols will apply. Admitted students must show proof of being fully vaccinated and must be prepared to wear masks when required to do so.

Mode: This course is delivered in-person. An online version will not be available.

Campus Site: This in-person course will be delivered at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts, Distillery District, Toronto. The site is accessible by TTC.

Faculty

This program will be offered by Soulpepper Theatre Company. Soulpepper is Toronto’s largest artist-centred theatre company. Soulpepper believes that stories can connect us, that they are vital to our understanding, compassion, and knowledge, and that they can motivate us toward social change. Central to Soulpepper’s mission is the commitment to become a radically inclusive company that truly creates a space of belonging. At Soulpepper, they share stories through plays, concerts, digital and audio programming; they train the next generation of artists and offer free year-round youth programs. Learn more about Soulpepper Theatre here:

<https://www.soulpepper.ca/>

Weyni Mengesha – Artistic Director, Soulpepper Theatre Company

Weyni Mengesha is the Artistic Director of Soulpepper Theatre Company and an award-winning director, known for her ground-breaking work and community engagement. Weyni is responsible for two of the most popular shows to come out of Canada in the last two decades – *da Kink in my Hair* (Mirvish Productions) and *Kim’s Convenience* (Soulpepper) both have gone on to break box office records, tour nationally and internationally, and both having been developed into television shows playing on CBC, Global, and Netflix. Other recent work has been seen in New York City and Pasadena, garnering a NAACP nomination for Best Direction; and she has been nominated for the Outstanding Direction Dora Award five times.



Luke Reece – Associate Director, Soulpepper Theatre Company

In a failed attempt to escape Presto, Luke left his hometown of Mississauga under the guise of becoming a Toronto-based artist. He strives to share authentic and engaging stories with audiences through his work as an award-winning producer, playwright, poet, and educator. Luke is the Associate Artistic Director at Soulpepper Theatre, one of Canada's leading non-profit theatre companies. Through Luke's work as an artistic leader within the national arts community, he advocates for engaging and nuanced storytelling that challenges Canadian audiences. He is one of Toronto's most decorated slam poets, and has represented the country internationally. Luke has recently been named to York University's inaugural Top 30 Changemakers Under 30 list.



Special Note:

SummerUp is a program designed to serve and support the personal and professional aspirations of Ontario's Black youth. The program is developed and presented by the **Lifelong Leadership Institute** (LLI), and it is primarily funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education. The quality of the SummerUp experience is assured by the contributions of a diverse group of individuals, educators, institutions and corporations. All are committed to championing the well-being, development and advancement of Black youth. The Lifelong Leadership Institute also offers the **Leadership by Design** program which provides extensive leadership-development opportunities to Black youth.

The **SummerUp** 2022 program is primarily funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

