

“Bite Your Tongue” Should Keep Talking

Now playing at the [Theater for the New City](#) is *Bite Your Tongue*, a play centered on human nature and its counterforce of societal pressure to conform to an opposing mode of behavior. *Bite Your Tongue*, a new dramaturgy, is the American adaptation and translation by [Philippe “Keb” Blanchard](#) of 2009’s *Rouge Gueule*, a Quebecois play based on a combination of 17 short stories written by Montreal playwright [Etienne Lepage](#). *Bite Your Tongue* presents a series of vignettes that depict human nature as grotesque, overtly sexual, irrational, troubled, and inappropriate by all conventional societal standards. These vignettes do not follow a linear storyline. They simply comprise “one devastating day in dysfunctional post-postmodern America,” according to the theater’s pamphlet.

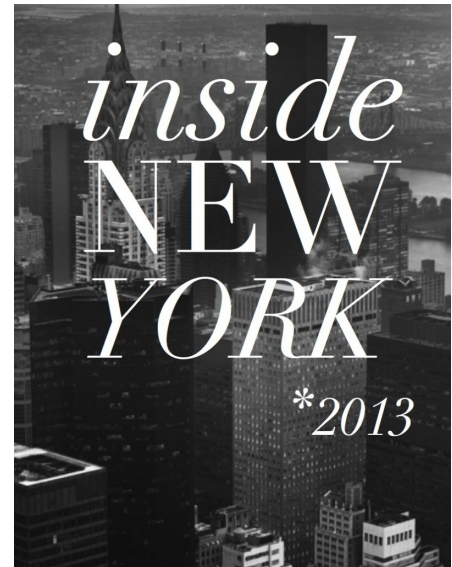


Bite Your Tongue

From a young man named Bamako ([Cameron Mason](#)) who makes a joke of being mentally unsound from eating his dead father at the command of torturers, to another young man named Francis (noteworthy [Ben Curtis](#)) who tells the story of his hard-on for an old World War II survivor who rejected him when he tried to kiss her, *Bite Your Tongue* is filled with characters that the audience would cringe to meet in reality. More often than not, I found myself thinking that certain characters should just *stop talking*. And yet, when they didn’t, I was glad because I was granted a view of the outcomes of situations of which participants continuously push boundaries. And I didn’t even have to do any of the pushing.

In one vignette, a man named John (standout Philippe “Keb” Blanchard) who receives a love letter contacts the writer to convince her to transfer her romantic feelings to his friend, Bamako, and to bring two food orders to his house, neither of which is for her. In another vignette, Francis, who appears nerdy and well-behaved on the surface, vocalizes extremely graphic sexual fantasies about a girl named Felicia ([Tali Custer](#)), who dances promiscuously onstage. In another, a girl named Melanie (a striking [Audrey Lorea](#)) tells the story of the time she waltzed into a house party in which she knew no one, viciously beat up a stranger, and immediately left to pick up Pizza Hut. In another, Melanie slumps on the ground in belligerent hysterics about her boyfriend, threatening to kill his mother and torture him into loving her, in one of the most powerful scenes in the show.

Bite Your Tongue is playing Thursday through Saturday at 8 PM, for \$25 a ticket, and Sunday at 3 PM, in a pay-what-you-can deal at the box office, until March 17. My advice? Buy these tickets and see this show STAT – it was an extremely enjoyable experience, to say the least. Knowing that each vignette starts and ends with a scene



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change creates for a very liberal theater-going experience, and relieved me of drawing hard connections between each. There is no pressure to understand the nuance of every little detail but rather, the encouragement to live in the moment as the characters do themselves.

-Renny Grinshpan

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[March 12, 2013 at 7:07 pm](#)

Good post, I always like them. dsfd.com

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2. [Sarah Seeds](#) says:
[March 13, 2013 at 10:11 pm](#)

Excellent review 😊 I am so glad to have seen this show. I am lucky to know the majority of cast- excellent performers, incredible talent, and great people. SEE THIS SHOW!

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