

**SEATTLE**  
**REP**

**SANCTUARY**

**CITY**

**YOUTH GUIDE**

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# A NOTE FROM SEATTLE REP

Maybe it's because I taught middle school, or maybe it's because I have a lot of teenagers in my life, but I LOVE “coming of age” stories—stories about young people and their particular struggles. I'm obsessed with *Romeo and Juliet*, I had viewing parties for every Harry Potter movie release, and I have a Spotify playlist called “Sounds like a John Green book.” *Sanctuary City* is exactly the kind of story I like best: one that takes young people seriously.

This guide explores some of the big topics and themes that emerge from *Sanctuary City*. A useful tool for examining your reactions to the play might come from [Glenn Singleton's \*Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools\*](#). Although his ideas were specifically about hard conversations about race, I find his “Four Points” very useful when thinking about my reactions to anything I am seeing or hearing that might challenge me. Then, once I know where my own reactions are coming from, I'm better able to listen to others' ideas and opinions.



## The Four Points are:

**EMOTIONAL (Heart)** – responding to information and art with **feelings**. Am I moved to cry? Or laugh? Or do I feel embarrassed?

**INTELLECTUAL (Mind)** – responding in a personally disconnected way to the subject or looking for more evidence to inform **thinking**. Am I wanting to know more about the history of the subject? Am I curious about context? Am I asking for data or proof?

**MORAL (Soul)** – responding from a deep-seated **belief** that connects to the information and art. Am I connecting my own experience and belief systems to the art, creating a moral position? Do I come with a preconceived stance on the topics at hand?

**RELATIONAL (Hands and Feet)** – responding to information and art through **actions** and behaviors. Does the piece motivate me into action? Am I moved to make responsive art or am I compelled to take political or social action?

My reactions to *Sanctuary City* started in the heart, with some hands and feet to follow. I felt myself empathizing with the characters, feeling sad and frustrated by their circumstances, and even totally surprised at points (no spoilers!). After the play, I felt myself wanting to engage with the theme of immigration, which pushed me into action in planning curriculum and events for this show.

# A NOTE FROM SEATTLE REP

Once you watch the play, think about your own reactions. With which of the Four Points do you identify with the most? And as you discuss the play with others, can you pinpoint their Four Points perspective? How does that help you communicate with them about their reactions to the play?

Thank you for joining us for *Sanctuary City*. Have a wonderful time responding to this serious, beautiful piece about young people like you!



**Deanna Martinez**  
*Director of Arts Engagement*



Emilie Maureen Hanson, Junior Nyong'o, and Director Desdemona Chiang in rehearsal for *Sanctuary City* (2024) at Seattle Rep. Photo by Sayed Alamy.



# WHO IS MARTYNA MAJOK?

**Martyna Majok** was born in Bytom, Poland and raised in New Jersey and Chicago. (“Majok” is pronounced “My Oak,” like the tree.) She was awarded the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for her Broadway debut play, *Cost of Living*, which was nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play. Her other plays include ***Sanctuary City***, *Queens*, and *Ironbound*, which have been produced across American and international stages.

Martyna’s other awards include The Steinberg Playwright Award, Arthur Miller Foundation Legacy Award, The Obie Award for Playwriting, The Hull-Warriner Award, The Academy of Arts and Letters’ Benjamin Hadley Danks Award for Exceptional Playwriting, The Sun Valley Playwrights Residency Award, Off Broadway Alliance Best New Play Award, The Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding New Play, The Hermitage Greenfield Prize, as the first female recipient in drama, The Champions of Change Award from the NYC Mayor’s Office, The Francesca Primus Prize, two Jane Chambers Playwriting Awards, The Lanford Wilson Prize, The Lilly Award’s Stacey Mindich Prize, Helen Merrill Emerging Playwright Award, Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding Original New Play from The Helen Hayes Awards, Jean Kennedy Smith Playwriting Award, ANPF Women’s Invitational Prize, David Calicchio Prize, Global Age Project Prize, NYTW 2050 Fellowship, NNPN Smith Prize for Political Playwriting, and Merage Foundation Fellowship for The American Dream.

Martyna studied at Yale School of Drama, Juilliard, University of Chicago, and Jersey public schools. She was a 2012-2013 NNPN playwright-in-residence, the 2015-2016 PoNY Fellow at the Lark Play Development Center, and a 2018-2019 Hodder Fellow at Princeton University. *Gatsby*, a new musical for which Martyna wrote the libretto with music by Florence Welch and Thomas Bartlett, will premiere this spring at A.R.T. Martyna has developed TV projects for HBO and is writing feature films for Plan B/Pastel/MGM/Orion, MRC/T-Street, and Participant/Killer Films.

Learn more at: [martynamajok.com](http://martynamajok.com)



# CHARACTER BREAKDOWN



## POTENTIAL SPOILERS AHEAD!

Get to know the people in the world of *Sanctuary City*.

**G** is an undocumented individual who becomes naturalized by her mom before she turns 18. G spends a lot of time with B. She sees B as a friend, companion, and place of refuge. G wants to help B become a citizen. After high school, G's dreams of attending higher education come true. She is scared to go off to Boston for college, but promises to marry B.

**B** is an individual who is undocumented. He finds comfort in G as they share a similar situation. B struggles with his mom leaving him alone in the United States. B dreams of being able to attend university as a U.S. citizen. B proposes to G before she heads off to Boston. In the meantime, B works while being paid under the table and dreams about a better future.

**Henry** is a first-generation American. Years after the start of the play, he is in a relationship with B. Henry is upset with G for backing out of agreeing to marry B so she can help him gain citizenship. He does not trust G. All Henry really wants is to be able to marry his same-sex partner legally.

# DETAILED SYNOPSIS



## POTENTIAL SPOILERS AHEAD!

**Style:** The first half of *Sanctuary City* is written in a unique style, where the "scenes" referenced below are memories from the teenage lives of B and G. These memories are not always presented in chronological order and sometimes repeat with minor differences. The second half then takes place in one stationary location at one set time in their later lives.

### Winter, 2001

**Scene 1:** B is studying for a school test in his room. G climbs B's fire escape and knocks on his window, asking him if she can come in through his window. B lets G in.

### Spring 2002

**Scene 2:** B tells G that his mom is going back to their country of origin and he doesn't know what to do.

**Scene 3:** G has been physically assaulted by her mom's partner and has a visible injury on her neck. G says that the first chance she gets, she's leaving her home situation. G asks B if she can crash at his place.

**Scene 4:** B tells G again that his mom is leaving the U.S. because she's afraid of staying for several reasons, including the 9/11 attacks and because his mom's boss takes money from her tips, but she can't report it because she's undocumented. B says his mom is letting him decide whether he wants to leave the U.S. with her or stay. G is confused why B's mom would leave him if she came to the United States for B in the first place.

# DETAILED SYNOPSIS

**Scene 5:** G gets blood on B's bed sheets from an arm injury, presumably also after abuse from her mom's partner.

**Scene 6:** G asks B what he is going to do about next year and college. B says that he can't go unless he pays for it himself. [Editor's note: Though it is not explicitly stated in this scene, this statement from B refers to undocumented students not being eligible for federal financial aid. This is discussed between the characters later in the play.]

**Scenes 7–10:** B repeatedly asks G what she is going to say about her various injuries at school tomorrow. G responds each time saying she is not going to school. G shares that one time, one of her teachers saw her with an injured (presumably black) eye and the school nurse called her mom. G's mom got mad at her and told her to tell people that she got the injuries from "falling."

**Scenes 11–14:** G repeatedly tells B to tell her teachers that she is out sick, but then the two begin to run out of excuses they haven't already used. G tells B her mom is scared "they" (presumably social service agencies and the U.S. government) will send them back to their country of origin and/or separate them if someone finds out she is being physically abused at home. G says that everyone is extra nervous right now because of the recent 9/11 attacks. G is worried she and her mom would be sent to a detention center and specifically names a place on Fish Kill Road in South Kearny, New Jersey, where she's seen people behind barbed wire fences. B mentions it might be good for G's mom to be separated from her partner, but G says she's never going to leave him. B invites G to stay the night.

**Scene 15:** G tells B not to leave the country. B says if he stays, he will end up like his mom, doing unwanted and unpopular jobs, whatever he can get while undocumented. G disagrees because B went to school here in the U.S., but B responds that this doesn't matter since he and his mom overstayed their visas. B says that if the authorities find out about their immigration status, B and his mom won't be allowed back in the U.S. for at least another 10 years.

**Scene 16:** G tells B his mom is going to think they are sleeping together since she stays over at his place so often. G asks B why they aren't more intimate.



# DETAILED SYNOPSIS

**Scene 17:** B tells G college is too expensive to pay on his own. G mentions financial aid could help. B angrily responds he can't apply for aid because of his immigration status.

**Scenes 18–20:** G and B say goodnight. G thanks B for letting her stay over. This memory repeats three times.

**Scene 21:** G is determined to find a way for B to stay in the country. B does not think he can go to school while also working full time to pay bills. G offers that B can live with her. B notes that G doesn't even want to live in her own home.

**Scenes 22–24:** B tells G goodnight, G thanks B for letting her stay over. This scene repeats three times. The third time, G thanks B and tells him, "I owe you." They tell each other goodnight in each other's first language.

**Scene 25:** G offers to help B pay rent since she is at his place all the time and encourages him to finish high school. B doesn't see the point in finishing because there is no future to look forward to as an undocumented person. G tells B that together they will find a way for him to stay.

**Scene 26:** B tells G his mom left the U.S. G is shocked.

## Autumn, 2002

**Scene 27:** G tells B her mom is leaving her abusive partner.

**Scene 28:** G offers to help B with rent money so he can finish school.

**Scene 29:** G tells B her mom has become a U.S. citizen and with her mom's citizenship, G automatically becomes a citizen as well. G's mom kept the entire process a secret from her abusive partner and G. B asks G if she wants to stay one more night at his place for old time's sake.

# DETAILED SYNOPSIS

**Scene 30:** G tells B that he can rent out the extra room in his apartment when his mom leaves. B does not respond.

**Scene 31:** B tells G his mom left. He took his mom to the airport and wasn't allowed past security due to the attack on 9/11 changing airport security protocols. B asks G if she can stay at his place because he doesn't want to be alone. G agrees.

**Scene 32:** B helps G pack up her place.

**Scene 33:** B asks G if she'd want any of the clothes his mom left behind.

**Scene 34:** B is helping G pack up her place. G says she is going to miss her apartment. B asks how G could miss this place after all the abuse she's been through there. G feels like the apartment is part of her origin despite being born somewhere else. Plus, G will miss the place because it's closer to B.

**Scene 35:** G vents to B about her mom bringing another man to their new place right after moving in. G asks B if she can crash at his place for the night.

**Scene 36:** B is overwhelmed dealing with all the belongings his mom left behind.

**Scenes 37–39:** B thanks G. G responds that it's okay. This memory repeats three times. On the third time, B says, "I owe you."

**Scene 40:** B convinces G to call into their school and pretend she's B's mom, telling the school an excuse as to why he's not at school. G feels uncomfortable imitating B's mom's accent.

**Scenes 41–45:** B asks G what she was given to eat that night at work. [Editor's note: Presumably G works in food service and is fed by her workplace.] This memory repeats five times and each time, G has something different she's brought home from work to eat (chicken Milanese, spaghetti, penne...).

# DETAILED SYNOPSIS

**Scene 46:** G shares that her work now wants people to eat provided staff meals only at work because people are taking too much food home.

**Scene 47:** B asks G what she was given to eat that night at work. G responds chicken Milanese and B is excited.

**Scene 48:** B asks G what she was given to eat that night at work. G says she forgot to take home any food. G surprises B with a birthday cake and starts singing “happy birthday,” but stops as B becomes emotional; he is very lonely.

**Scenes 49–52:** G and B start coming home late and asking where each other has been. Neither shares where they’ve been.

## Spring 2003

**Scene 53:** G enters through B’s window per their “tradition,” even though she could use the stairs. B is frustrated—he can’t keep up in school while working and he’s exhausted. G tells B she got into college in Boston.

**Scene 54:** B tells G to check the fridge, where she finds a surprise congratulatory gift. G is overcome with emotion and thanks B.

**Scene 55:** B asks G if she wants to go to prom with him. G doesn’t want to spend \$70 on prom.

**Scene 56:** B and G are getting ready for prom. B is surprised that G bought him a corsage.

**Scene 57:** G tests B on practice questions about their lives so the two of them can get married and B can become a U.S. citizen. B wants to be asked harder questions, but G insists on starting with the basics.

**Scene 58:** B tells G he got her a corsage, too.

# DETAILED SYNOPSIS

**Scene 59:** B asks G to skip to the harder practice questions. G is worried about being tricked by questions when asked by authorities. G asks B what if he forgets. B assures G he can't forget how they met.

**Scene 60:** B and G enter prom. G regrets going; B does not. B slowly begins to move until he is dancing. G is mortified.

**Scene 61:** G gets annoyed as she tries to come up with “harder” practice questions. G starts asking questions like “when did your relationship become romantic” and “where did you go on dates.”

**Scene 62:** G sarcastically says she hates the prom, but actually loves it. B and G dance.

**Scene 63:** G starts pressing B with practice questions like “did your parents approve of their match” or “have you had an argument that resulted in one of you sleeping in another room.” B does not like nor answer these questions.

**Scene 64:** Outside the prom, G asks B what he is going to do next year. B says that he's going to continue to work at his current job. G reminds B she is a citizen and wants to help him. B immediately understands that G is proposing that they get married so he can become a U.S. citizen.

**Scene 65:** G is annoyed while continuing to rattle off practice questions to B. B asks to return to more basic questions (as G had initially wanted to).

**Scenes 66–69:** We flip between seeing B practicing answering the practice questions alone to himself, and back outside the prom, where G proposes that they get married so he can be naturalized.

**Scene 70:** G and B dance at the prom.

# DETAILED SYNOPSIS

**Scene 71:** B and G are on the bus home from prom, both drunk. They agree enthusiastically to get married, maybe elope.

**Scene 72:** B asks G practice questions about their sleeping situation and contraception. She is taken aback, but B tells her he is just reading what is written down.

**Scenes 73–81:** G is packing for college. B tells G to leave him something personal in case of a home visit by the authorities. We then flip between the two practicing answering intimate questions about their relationship, and B asking G to leave him something of hers.

**Scene 82:** G and B are waiting for G's bus to college in Boston to arrive. G is nervous. B reassures her that she'll be back soon. B says they could get married when she's home for Thanksgiving, and G says she won't be back until the December holidays but that they can talk on the phone all the time. The bus arrives. B gives G a ring: his mom's. They hold hands, say goodbye, and say they'll see each other soon.

**Scene 83:** B and G stand apart for a long period of time representing that weeks, months, and years have passed.

## Winter 2006

[The rest of the play continues in one continuous moment in time, no longer flashes of different memories.]

It's been three years since G and B decided to get married. G has come back from school for the holidays to visit B. We learn that G changed her mind about marrying B about a month before this moment. B had called G and told her that he was gay and in love with a man, which is what made G change her mind about their arrangement. She then sent B a letter explaining that she didn't want to marry him anymore because of all that she would be risking—huge fines, imprisonment, etc.



# DETAILED SYNOPSIS

B was devastated by G's letter. For over three years, he had been making plans for what he would do once he became a U.S. citizen. But G has arrived now and says she has decided to change her mind again—she will marry B after all. They start answering practice questions again about their “relationship,” when Henry unlocks and enters B's apartment door. Henry is surprised to see G. Henry is frustrated to hear that G has changed her mind again about her and B's marriage—Henry doesn't want B to go through the pain of G changing her mind again. Henry and B wish they could marry each other, but same-sex marriage is not legal in the U.S. at this time, and even though individual states have started passing same-sex marriage legislation supporting these unions, a legal union sanctioned by a single state is not enough to support a federal citizenship application.

G asks Henry to leave. Henry says the three of them should try to get along, especially because if B and G do get married, Henry will be coming along on the honeymoon as he wants to get something out of the arrangement. G reminds Henry that he would at least be able to be with the person he loves, while G wouldn't have that option. Henry says he and B would pay her a fee for her “services” of being B's “wife.”

Henry wishes he could marry B and has hope that Massachusetts just passed legislation for same-sex marriage, but G says she can offer a real solution to B's immigration status now, without waiting on all 50 states to pass legislation in favor of same-sex marriage or the fledgling DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act).

Henry asks G again why she is here going through with her promise now, after waiting three and a half years and then changing her mind. G says she was angry that B and Henry had been together for two years without telling her and making decisions about her behind her back. Henry tells B that he just wants him to be happy and that B needs to be sure about this plan.

G tries resuming practice questions, but B is resistant. Henry starts answering the questions for B—he knows all the answers. Henry then turns things around and starts questioning B and G about their relationship, but they only know the responses that they'd practiced in high school, not more recent responses.

# DETAILED SYNOPSIS

B and G have a touching moment when they recall the moment when B “proposed” to G (when G got on the bus to go to college), remembering the good times between them.

B then reveals that he had taken the bus up to G’s college to see her. He experienced a day on campus and went home without connecting with G because he didn’t want to take away her incredible college life. G says she felt guilty that B couldn’t be at college with her, when it was his dream, too.

Witnessing all of this, Henry sees how connected B and G are and it unnerves him. He asks them, as a practice question, to answer how their relationship turned romantic. B doesn’t go into much detail, but G expounds about the two of them sharing B’s bed one night. B and G share a moment.

Henry becomes upset as he realizes he isn’t a part of B and G’s story. G tells Henry that the night B called her and told her about he and Henry’s relationship was after B and Henry had gotten in a fight and Henry had kicked B out.

Henry and G fight about the risks they are both willing to take for B. G then changes tactics and tells Henry that, instead of being with B, he should find an undocumented woman to marry to help her gain citizenship. Henry is taken aback, but G says this is what she’s being asked to do, so why can’t he do the same? In anger, G tells Henry and B that they will never be able to get married.

Henry recalls again the night he and B had a fight, before B called G. Henry says the fight was about how Henry thought that G might back out of her promise to marry B, and B disagreed and defended G. When Henry was proven right, B fell apart, and Henry was the one to put B back together again.

B says that since he doesn’t have his papers, he’s been hiding and lying for so long that he doesn’t know what’s real anymore. G says she’s willing to risk everything to help B by marrying him, but only if B never sees Henry again.

# DETAILED SYNOPSIS

B asks Henry why he's not saying anything. Henry says he can't make this choice for B, because if Henry forced B to choose him over citizenship, B would resent him.

B says he will not get rid of Henry, thus turning down his marriage plan to G and citizenship. G returns B's ring and moves to leave.

B asks Henry if he would leave the U.S. and come to live in B's country of origin with him. Henry asks to talk about this another time, but B presses on. Henry says leaving the U.S. would just mean more hiding and he had already done enough hiding before he gained citizenship. Henry realizes that B will resent him forever if B doesn't become a citizen, and Henry leaves.

B asks G if she needs a blanket to sleep over. G says she'll go home instead, that she shouldn't be staying over. G says B should think things through more and that she'll call him on her spring break. B tells her not to call. G wishes B good luck, and leaves.

B is alone. He looks out the window. Nights, weeks, years pass. B is alone.

**End of Play**

# SETTING THE SCENE: SANCTUARY CITY IN CONTEXT

*Sanctuary City* begins in the winter of 2001 in Newark, New Jersey—just months after the 9/11 attacks—and ends in 2006. Below is a timeline of major political and world events to help refresh your memory of that time, or if you were born *after* 2001, to learn more about the world of *Sanctuary City*.

**1986** Congress enacts the *Immigration Reform and Control Act* (IRCA), establishing penalties for employers hiring people unauthorized to work in the U.S. IRCA also offered a path to permanent resident status for undocumented immigrants who had entered the U.S. prior to 1982.

**1996** President Bill Clinton signs the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996*, which institutes a 10-year ban for immigrants found to be unlawfully residing in the U.S. for more than a year. The law resulted in a substantial surge in deportations and detentions.

**2001** **JAN. 20:** George W. Bush sworn in as 43rd President of the U.S.

**AUG. 1:** U.S. Senators Richard Durbin and Orrin Hatch propose the bipartisan *Development, Relief, and Education of Alien Minors (DREAM) Act*, which would provide a pathway to legal status for undocumented youth brought to the U.S. by their parents. The bill does not pass, and has never passed both houses of Congress despite being reintroduced multiple times, but does popularize use of the term “DREAMers” (or “dreamers”) to refer to undocumented immigrant youth.

**SEP. 11:** Al-Qaeda terrorists hijack four planes, flying them into NYC’s World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. The attacks kill 2,753 people.

**2002** The NYC Council passes the Transgender Rights Bill, which expands queer and gender-based protections guaranteed under NYC Human Rights Law.

**JAN. 11:** First detainees arrive at Guantanamo Bay detention camp.

**OCT. 16:** U.S. Congress passes another joint resolution authorizing President Bush to use military force in Iraq.

**NOV. 25:** In response to the 9/11 attacks, all immigration agencies are placed under the new Department of Homeland Security, including the newly formed Immigration and Customs Enforcement office.

**2003** **MAR. 19:** The U.S. and allies invade Iraq, initiating Operation Iraqi Freedom.

**JUN. 26:** In a 6–3 opinion in *Lawrence v. Texas*, the U.S. Supreme Court declares sodomy laws, which outlawed a variety of sexual acts, including those between people of the same sex, as unconstitutional.

**NOV. 13:** The Massachusetts Supreme Court rules that it is unconstitutional for same-sex couples to be barred from obtaining civil marriages in the state.

**2004** **JAN. 12:** New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey signs the Domestic Partnership Act, granting same-sex couples many of the same financial and legal benefits as married couples.

**FEB. 4:** Harvard sophomore Mark Zuckerberg launches “The Facebook,” a social media website that now has over 2.9 billion active monthly users.

**FEB. 12:** The City of San Francisco becomes the first government in the U.S. to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

**NOV. 2:** George W. Bush is elected to a second term. Eleven U.S. states ban same-sex marriage.

**NOV. 18:** The Massachusetts Supreme Court rules that the state’s ban on same-sex

**2006** **APR. 29:** Thousands march in NYC to demand the U.S.’s withdrawal from Iraq, joining national protests that had been ongoing since the 2003 invasion.

**MAY 9:** Current U.S. Senator Corey Booker elected mayor of Newark, NJ.

**DEC. 30:** Former President and Prime Minister of Iraq, Saddam

# A "SANCTUARY CITY" IN PRACTICE

Though *Sanctuary City* is set between 2001–2006, U.S. immigration policy continues to be an urgent topic today. We spoke with local immigration lawyer **Elizabeth Poh** to gain insight into the impact of federal and City policy on undocumented youth.

**Seattle Rep:** The name of this show, *Sanctuary City*, refers to cities that have agreed to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation or prosecution, in light of federal immigration law. The City of Seattle has written: "To emphasize the true intent of Seattle, we prefer to use the term 'Welcoming City,' which means all City departments prioritize and consider policies, actions, and practices that help immigrant and refugee communities succeed." What does being a "Sanctuary" or "Welcoming" City really mean in practice for undocumented people—and in particular, youth—in Seattle?

**Elizabeth Poh:** Because immigration laws and policies are controlled by the federal government, cities like Seattle are limited in their ability to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation or prosecution. But being a "Welcoming City" does have practical benefits. Seattle police officers are not allowed to ask about a person's immigration status except in limited circumstances. And Seattle has instructed its police officers not to enforce civil immigration violations like being undocumented. In other cities, undocumented immigrants are often pulled over for a minor traffic infraction, questioned about their immigration status, and then reported to federal immigration authorities. So living in a "Welcoming City" like Seattle does provide some protection. Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs provides services to undocumented youth, including free legal clinics and consultations for applicants to the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), financial assistance for DACA renewals, and mental health resources for DACA recipients. In addition, Seattle is part of a coalition of cities and counties advocating for the passage of laws and regulations to promote immigrant and refugee rights, including Cities for DACA.

**SR:** In your experience, what are some of the largest hurdles that undocumented youth face in the U.S and/or the City of Seattle?

**EP:** Trying to build a future with the ever-present fear of deportation and family separation creates major psychological stress and anxiety for undocumented youth. Things that other teenagers take for granted—like getting a driver's license, getting a job, traveling, and going to college—are often unattainable. Undocumented youth are often forced to take low-paying and dangerous jobs working under the table. If they are injured on the job, they don't have the protection of workers' compensation, and if they lose their job, they don't get unemployment benefits. The high cost of living and shortage of affordable housing creates an extra layer of challenge for undocumented youth in Seattle.

**SR:** What can people who want to support undocumented youth in our region do to help?

**EP:** We are lucky to have several excellent organizations in the Seattle area dedicated to advocating on behalf of undocumented youth. But because the demand for services is so great, there is always a need for volunteer and financial support. Consider volunteering for or making a donation to **Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)**, the **Northwest Immigrant Rights Project**, **OneAmerica**, and **Colectiva Legal del Pueblo**. You can support scholarships for undocumented immigrant youth by donating to **TheDream.US**. If you are an employer, you can support DACA employees by providing assistance with their DACA renewals and offering consultations with an immigration attorney who can advise on whether they might be eligible for employer-sponsored or other immigration benefits. And everyone can **contact the White House and Congress** to urge them to pass long-term protections for DREAMers (Development Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act).

Elizabeth Poh practices immigration law at Cowan Miller & Lederman with a focus on business and family-based immigration. She does pro bono work with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND). She attended the University of Washington and has three kids in Seattle public schools.





## "THINGS THAT REALLY LIGHT MY FIRE:" AN INTERVIEW WITH SANCTUARY CITY DIRECTOR DESDEMONA CHIANG

**Seattle Rep: What was your initial reaction after reading *Sanctuary City* for the first time?**

**Desdemona Chiang:** I knew this was a really gripping, powerful piece of theater that was making its way around the country, and I was floored by the material. I think [playwright Martyna Majok] is so efficient and raw in the way she crafts her language. Her plays *Ironbound* and *Cost of Living* were both done in Seattle recently [at Seattle Public Theater and Sound Theatre Company, respectively]. I knew Martyna was someone writing about stuff that I really cared about: marginalized people, invisible communities, and the ways that folks have to work to survive in a system that doesn't really support them.

**SR: This is a perfect segue to my next question: Do you have any personal connections to the story or characters in *Sanctuary City*?**

**DC:** When I first read *Sanctuary City*, I found myself reflecting on my time in high school, and in the ways that when you're a teenager, things kind of *happen* for you. In high school, you're told where to go to class, you're told what to do, there are systems in place and you just have to agree to exist in this system that's been presented to you. It occurred to me, I think, for the first time, how invisible access to education was to me.

Background-wise, I was born in Taiwan and in the 80s, my parents came to America. My parents were fleeing what they thought was going to become a very problematic situation in Taiwan, and they came to this country on student visas, I think (it was probably easier to get student visas in the 80s). I came here when I was very young, at age three, and I was a "resident alien" here for several years and was never officially a U.S. citizen. But I went through



life thinking America is my home. Taiwan is a place I remember vaguely as a young person, but really, America is the place that I identified with culturally and socially.

Then when I was in high school, my mom, in a very kind of mysterious way, said, "We should get you citizenship because it would make college applications a lot easier for you." I didn't know what she meant, but I was like, sure, I'll do whatever, if it makes life easier. I was in California applying to UC schools, scholarships, grants, awards, and all those things, not realizing how much access I had to those opportunities because I was a legal immigrant.

By the time I was in high school, my mom had already gotten naturalized. I remember at seventeen, I went into a government office and took a quick oath, swearing to forswear allegiances to other foreign nations, blah, blah, blah. Then it was like, BOOM, stamp. I got all my paperwork done and it felt like I skated my way into citizenship, not realizing how hard it would have been for so many other people.

## "THINGS THAT REALLY LIGHT MY FIRE:"

### AN INTERVIEW WITH SANCTUARY CITY DIRECTOR DESDEMONA CHIANG

Naturalization allowed me to access grants and scholarships that got me into college, which then got me into graduate school. And again, I was blissfully unaware of this access and privilege as a young person because I was focused on boys and the things all high school kids care about, right? Reading *Sanctuary City* reflected back to me that there was a version of my life that could have mirrored the lives of the characters in the play. I could have been brought here the way the character of B was: Brought here on a visa, overstayed it, become undocumented, and then been stuck again. And it was a different time in the 80s when I was going through all this. 9/11 hadn't yet happened. It was a different world. But that idea really stuck with me. That was my way into this play: Imagining myself at 17. What would I have done at that time in different circumstances? What would have been my options? This play really asks the question, what part of you would you need to kill in order to survive? These are harrowing decisions.

**SR: Shifting gears a bit, how do the technical designs play a part in telling this story?**

**DC:** This play is an actor's calisthenics. The first half of the play is just two people on a blank stage: no furniture, no set. It's all just the actors and our imaginations. The play is purely driven by the actors' skill and craft. There are moments where the scene is going one direction, then it ends abruptly, and the actors have to pull themselves out of the emotional trench and start something completely different. They must imagine the environment for themselves. The actors have to do a lot with very little help from anything on stage, other than lights and maybe some sound.

When we get into the second half, we're in a real space. We have walls, we have furniture, we have the character of Henry, we have

objects. It's not just memory anymore—once Henry arrives, it's real. In a memory you can tweak and retell a story, but in real life, you can't deny the couch in the room; you can't deny the other human in the room; you can't deny all the tangible, material things in front of you.

So that's how I've imagined the logic of these two halves of the play and how this is represented visually on stage with the technical designs.

**SR: Is there anything else you want our audiences to know about the play? About what they can expect? Anything you want them to walk away from the show with?**

**DC:** If anything, I want audiences to have more of an awareness of how much we take for granted in this country. I would love for folks to understand that immigration is an ongoing issue, particularly because this nation is a nation of immigrants anyway! Who can and can't be here, who doesn't deserve to be here, who has the right to earn a place here are all questions that I think many folks don't have to confront on a daily basis. I would love for audiences to walk away with a greater understanding of how challenging it is for those who are really on the fringes.

# GLOSSARY

Review this list of terms to help you along as you watch *Sanctuary City*.

**ABC store:** A liquor store, especially one run by a state government.

**Ambush:** A surprise attack by people lying in wait in a concealed position.

**Boutonniere:** A single flower or a small cluster of flowers worn in a buttonhole on a man's jacket or lapel.

**Boston:** A city in Massachusetts, the capital and largest city in the state, and one of the oldest and most historic cities in the United States.

**Chicken Milanese:** A dish of breaded and fried chicken cutlets, usually served with a salad or lemon wedges.

**Contraception:** The deliberate use of artificial methods or other techniques to prevent pregnancy.

**Corsage:** A small bouquet of flowers worn on a woman's dress or around her wrist.

**Crabs:** A sexually transmitted infection caused by a tiny parasitic crab that infests the pubic hair.

**DREAM Act:** Short for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act. The DREAM Act would permanently protect certain immigrants who came to the United States as children but are vulnerable to deportation (American Immigration Council).

**Elope:** To run away secretly in order to get married, especially without parental consent.

**Fish Kill Road:** A street in South Kearny, New Jersey, where a detention center for immigrants is located.

**Honeymoon:** A holiday taken by newlyweds immediately after their marriage.

# GLOSSARY

**Kitschy:** Of, relating to, or characterized by low-brow, sentimental, or tacky items that appeal to popular or uncultivated taste.

**Lice:** Small, wingless, parasitic insects that live on the skin of mammals and birds.

**Loan:** A thing that is borrowed, especially a sum of money that is expected to be paid back with interest.

**Merengue:** A type of music and dance originating in the Dominican Republic, characterized by a fast tempo and a rhythmic accent on the second beat.

**Overstay:** To remain in a foreign country after the period covered by one's visa.

**Penne:** A type of pasta shaped like short tubes with diagonal ends.

**Sanctuary City:** A city that limits its cooperation with the national government's effort to enforce immigration law.

**Scholarship:** A grant or payment made to support a student's education, awarded based on academic or other achievement.

**Straw:** A dried stalk of grain, used especially as fodder or as material for thatching, packing, or weaving.

**Visa:** An official authorization appended to a passport, permitting entry into and travel within a particular country or region.

**Vodka sauce:** A creamy tomato sauce flavored with vodka and often bacon or ham.

**Wicker:** Pliable twigs, typically of willow, plaited or woven to make items such as furniture and baskets.

# RESOURCE LIST



## POTENTIAL SPOILERS AHEAD!

*Sanctuary City* explores many challenging themes. If you are looking for support around these topics within the Puget Sound region, check out the following organizations. And as you are able, please consider volunteering for or donating to these incredible organizations.

### IMMIGRATION RESOURCES

- **Northwest Immigration Rights Project:** Northwest Immigrant Rights Project promotes justice by defending and advancing the rights of immigrants through direct legal services, systemic advocacy, and community education. | [nwirp.org](http://nwirp.org)
- **Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network:** WAISN is the largest immigrant-led coalition in Washington. They are a volunteer-driven network of immigrant and refugee-rights organizations and individuals distributed across the state that strives to protect, serve, and strengthen communities across the state. | [waisn.org](http://waisn.org)
- **La Resistencia NW:** Based in Washington state, La Resistencia is working to end the detention of immigrants and stop deportations. La Resistencia is a grassroots organization led by undocumented immigrants and people of color that have been oppressed by the immigration enforcement system. | [laresistencianw.org](http://laresistencianw.org)
- **Colectiva Legal del Pueblo:** A non-hierarchical collective organization founded for and by undocumented immigrants working to build community leadership and power for migrant justice through legal advocacy and education. | [colectivalegal.org](http://colectivalegal.org)



# RESOURCE LIST

- **OneAmerica**: OneAmerica organizes immigrant and refugee leaders and our allies to build power in our communities and run campaigns to create a just immigration system, inclusive education for all, and a truly representative democracy. | [weareoneamerica.org](http://weareoneamerica.org)
- ***National Resource*** - **Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)**: KIND envisions a world in which unaccompanied and separated children's rights and well-being are protected as they seek safety. | [supportkind.org](http://supportkind.org)

## YOUTH FOCUS

- **Para Los Niños**: A grassroots community serving the immigrant, Spanish-speaking population in South King County. In all its work, Para Los Niños and its programs represent the desire of a community change that can support all immigrant families in their complex journey through the educational system in the United States. | [plnwa.org](http://plnwa.org)
- **Super Familia King County**: An unaccompanied and undocumented youth Mutual Aid group. **Read more in this story from Crosscut.**  
| Super Familia: [instagram.com/superfamilia\\_kc](https://www.instagram.com/superfamilia_kc)  
| Article: [crosscut.com/equity/2021/02/left-their-own-pnw-immigrant-youth-fight-ice-together](https://www.crosscut.com/equity/2021/02/left-their-own-pnw-immigrant-youth-fight-ice-together)
- **TheDream.US**: TheDream.US is the nation's largest college and career success program for undocumented immigrant youth, having provided more than 10,000 college scholarships to Dreamers attending 80+ partner colleges in 20+ states and Washington, DC. | [thedream.us](http://thedream.us)

## LGBTQIA+ FOCUS

- **National Immigrant Justice Center - Legal Services for LGBTQ Immigrants**: NIJC's LGBTQ Immigrant Rights Initiative provides legal services to low-income immigrants who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) and those who are living with HIV. | [immigrantjustice.org/services/legal-services-lgbtq-immigrants](http://immigrantjustice.org/services/legal-services-lgbtq-immigrants)

# RESOURCE LIST

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

- **[Immigration Equality - Know Your Rights! Guide:](#)** Immigration Equality answers some of the most common questions they receive about what your rights are and how to stay safe. | [immigrationequality.org/legal/legal-help/resources/know-your-rights](http://immigrationequality.org/legal/legal-help/resources/know-your-rights)

## DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE RESOURCES

- If you or someone you know is undocumented and experiencing abuse, find information about your rights at the **[National Domestic Violence Hotline](http://thehotline.org/resources/undocumented-and-experiencing-intimate-partner-violence-what-are-my-rights-when-reaching-out-for-support/)** | [thehotline.org/resources/undocumented-and-experiencing-intimate-partner-violence-what-are-my-rights-when-reaching-out-for-support/](http://thehotline.org/resources/undocumented-and-experiencing-intimate-partner-violence-what-are-my-rights-when-reaching-out-for-support/)
- **[King County Domestic Violence Resources](http://kingcounty.gov/council/vonReichbauer/Services/domesticviolence.aspx)** | [kingcounty.gov/council/vonReichbauer/Services/domesticviolence.aspx](http://kingcounty.gov/council/vonReichbauer/Services/domesticviolence.aspx)
- **[New Beginnings: Ending Domestic Violence:](http://newbegin.org)** The only full-service agency in Seattle whose primary mission is to serve domestic violence survivors. | [newbegin.org](http://newbegin.org)
- **[Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence](http://wscadv.org/get-help-now)** | [wscadv.org/get-help-now](http://wscadv.org/get-help-now)

# WHAT IS THE DREAM ACT AND WHO ARE THE DREAMERS?

The ADL (Anti-Defamation League) created a lesson plan titled “What is the DREAM Act and Who are the Dreamers?” that we highly recommend using alongside our *Sanctuary City* Youth Guide. The plan includes writing prompts, discussion questions, videos, a reading activity, and additional resources to learn more about the DREAM Act and those impacted by it.

**Find the PDF here:** [adl.org/sites/default/files/what-is-the-dream-act-and-who-are-the-dreamers.pdf](http://adl.org/sites/default/files/what-is-the-dream-act-and-who-are-the-dreamers.pdf)

**Grade Level:** High school

**Time:** 45–60 minutes

**Common Core Standards:** Reading: R2, R6 Writing: W1, W5 Speaking & Listening: SL4

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AT SEATTLE REP

Do you love all things theater? Have you always wanted to be on stage but never had the chance? Do you want to see more theater in your life? Seattle Rep has options for youth to engage with theater all season long! We've included some of our upcoming programs and ongoing ticket options. Learn about our Family Friendly programming, age recommendations, and more at: [seattlerep.org/forfamilies](https://seattlerep.org/forfamilies)

## **Ticket Discounts**

Seattle Rep believes theater is for everyone. We offer these discount programs and many more to make ticket prices accessible to all.

- **\$5 TeenTix:** Become a member of TeenTix for free (for ages 13 – 19) and get \$5 to every show at Seattle Rep! Seattle Rep honors a 2 for \$10 offer on Friday nights to all TeenTix pass holders (you can bring anyone of any age with you as your Friday plus-one!).
- **Student Tickets:** We offer a discount for youth under 18 or current students of any age for \$18 each.
- **Pay What You Choose:** Seattle Rep offers Pay What You Choose tickets for all of our performances.
- **Free Tickets for Native Individuals:** Seattle Rep offers free tickets for self-identified Native individuals to see all our shows.

**More details, discounts, and options:**



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AT SEATTLE REP

## Teen Nights

On select Fridays throughout our 2023/24 Season, teens are invited to see our shows for \$5 (with a TeenTix membership) with a free pre-show reception, fun activities, and a chance to hang out in a youth-only space! Pre-show Teen Night events begin at 6:30 p.m., followed by a 7:30 p.m. performance.

### 2023/24 Teen Nights

- ***Sanctuary City*** – Friday, March 15, 2024
- ***Fat Ham*** – Friday, April 26, 2024
- ***Jinkx Monsoon & Major Scales: Together Again, Again!*** – Friday, June 14, 2024

## Next Narrative Monologue Competition

Act on Seattle Rep's biggest stage and have the chance to perform at the legendary Apollo Theatre on an all-expenses-paid trip to New York City... what more could you ask for! **The Next Narrative Monologue Competition (NNMC)** features newly written monologues from fifty of America's leading contemporary Black playwrights. Students select a monologue, memorize and workshop the piece with talented theater professionals, and compete for the chance to perform both at Seattle Rep and in NYC! All high school-aged youth (grades 9-12) living in Washington state can join. It's totally free to participate!

**Registration for the 2024 NNMC has closed, but you can come cheer on this year's competitors at the Regional Finals on April 5! Learn more about the NNMC and how to sign up for next year here:**



**Check out all of Seattle Rep's Youth Engagement offerings!**





## THERE'S MORE TO EXPERIENCE IN OUR LOBBY!

When you come to Seattle Rep, arrive to the show early (our lobby opens an hour before each show starts) and enjoy these engagement opportunities in our lobby.

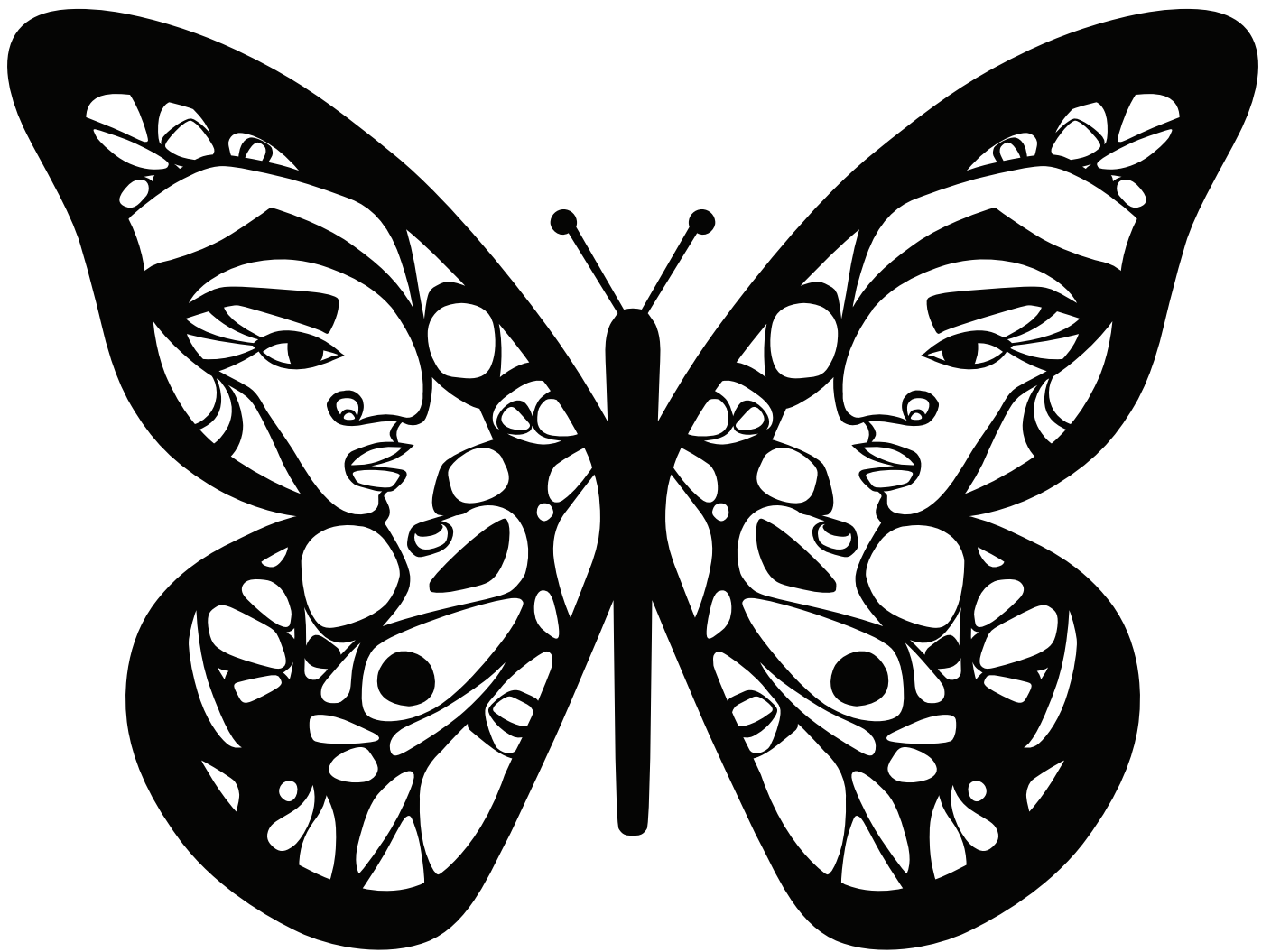
### ART WALK

While Seattle Rep is known for its art on stage, you don't want to miss the powerful art in our lobby, too. As the season progresses, check out the ever-changing work in our lobby Art Walk, located to the left of the Bagley Wright Theater Doors 4 and 1, near the main-level Bagley restrooms and Wellness Room. We will be highlighting three different local artists this year whose art and/or intersectional identities reflect the themes you will see on stage. This program is in partnership with local gallery organization A/NT Gallery.

**A/NT Gallery** has been a pillar at Seattle Center as a welcoming, non-juried art space with new FREE shows opening each month. If you are interested in displaying your own art or want to discover more local artists, contact A/NT Gallery at: [info@antgallery.org](mailto:info@antgallery.org) or 206.233.0680.

### LISTENING STATION

In the Seattle Rep lobby, check out our Listening Station, located under the big staircase as you enter the theater. Look out for rotating music and podcasts at our Listening Station that elevates the motifs of the shows on stage.



Favianna Rodriguez (artist/activist) helped to popularize the symbol of a monarch butterfly as representing DREAMers.

# SANCTUARY CITY

