

# Exploring Contemporary Canadian Voices

the spoken word



# Toronto Poetry Slam Team 2007

# Amanda Hiebert (TPST)



# Bio

Amanda Hiebert

- A member of the Toronto Poetry Slam Team for six years.
- Toured across North America helping the team to the finals for four years at the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word.
- Part of a poetry troupe called the [Last Call Poets](#).
- Performed over a hundred shows in Toronto and currently hard at work on her first book, titled *You're Probably In This Book*.
- Author and producer of two full length plays, both of which played to sold-out audiences and critics' acclaim.
- An actor on stage, television and film, both nationally and internationally. She was in the cast of "Blindness", co-starring Julianne Moore, Mark Ruffalo and Danny Glover.



# Before Viewing

Amanda Hiebert

Before viewing *Every Time I Go Home my Mother Asks...*:

- Is there a question your parents keep asking you, that annoys or upsets you?



# View *Every Time* *I Go Home My* *Mother Asks...*

4 minutes, 31 seconds  
Mature Content





After viewing *Every Time I Go Home My Mother Asks...*:

- In the beginning, how does Hiebert claim the stage?
- How does she keep your attention? (e.g., gestures, moving around the stage, different voices, changes in speed and volume of delivery)
- What phrases and parts of the story stand out for you?
- Come up with a question or make a statement about what you've just experienced.



# Activities

Amanda Hiebert

- **WRITE** a piece about your mother, father or another close relative. Focus on a question they ask you over and over and how you respond to that. Consider using humour as a technique to engage your reader.
- **KEEP** a journal for one week, recording questions your parents typically ask you. Or interview other students about what their parents ask them (e.g., How was your day? What did you do at school?). Use these questions as a starting point to write a poem, skit or story.
- **HAVE** a class discussion about adults' misconceptions about youth.





# Before Viewing

Amanda Hiebert

Before viewing *Sing Hallelujah* (with White Noise Machine):

- Think of a favourite grandparent or older person in your family.
- Describe him or her from your perspective.
- Do they have health problems and how does that affect you?
- What do you think their dreams might be? Their favourite song?



# Background

Amanda Hiebert

- This is a team piece, with two performers sharing the stage.
- In slam poetry, duos, trios, and quartets are allowed, even encouraged, so long as the primary author takes the lead.



# View *Sing Hallelujah*

3 minutes, 56 seconds



After viewing *Sing Hallelujah*:

- What story does Hiebert tell about her grandparents?
- Why is White Noise Machine singing Hallelujah? How is this song an appropriate backdrop to the poem?
- How is the team piece more effective than a solo piece? Support or disagree.



# Activities 1

Amanda Hiebert

- WRITE a journal entry describing your relationship with your grandparents or an older member of your family or friends. Using the poem as a model, consider the challenges of communication, their challenges in aging, the relationship they exemplify – is it a good one? Difficult?
- WRITE about a member of your family. Choose a favourite song of theirs and work it into the story. Chose a partner and share your story. Create a team piece. Ask them to perform parts of the song (even just one line) while you read your piece and vice versa. Work together to help each other develop the reading into a performance. Consider using gestures, different voices for each character, vary the speed and volume of delivery. Share it with the class.

more activities on next slide...



# Activities 2

Amanda Hiebert

- **WRITE** a song that tells a story about your grandmother or grandfather (or a senior in your community). Use specific details about their appearance, personal quirks, how they sound, what they say, what you feel about them. Perform the song. Feel free to add instruments, backup singers.





View *Interview*  
*with Amanda*  
*Hiebert*

5 minutes, 20 seconds



# After Viewing

Amanda Hiebert

After viewing *Interview with Amanda Hiebert*:

- What attracted her to slam poetry (versus acting)?
- What's more important in slam – the writing or the performing?
- Hiebert makes a wry comment that she fled Vancouver to search for a 'slam poetry community' in Toronto, only to find that Vancouver also has a strong community.
  - ▶ Did her journey to another city enhance her skills as a performer?
  - ▶ Does she think working with a team helps or hinders her writing?



# Credits

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