



## Arts &amp; Entertainment

## Outstanding new Broadway play's central character has Asperger's syndrome

By Alexandra Cohen

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, the best-selling novel turned play, has been seeing immense success on the stage. It began its run on the West End, winning seven Olivier Awards, and then transferred to Broadway in October of 2014. It received six Tony nominations and is sure to receive some love at the award ceremony in June.

The story revolves around a 15-year-old boy named Christopher with Asperger's syndrome who investigates the murder of his neighbor's dog. What begins as a simple murder mystery becomes a story about his adventure into the unknown.

I went to New York City in December, and having read the book, I was eager to see how the words written by Mark Haddon would be brought to life in front of me. I was not at all disappointed. In fact, the play exceeded all of my expectations.

The story is presented almost like a play within a play. Christopher's teacher narrates by reading a play that he wrote about his experiences out loud to the audience. This is similar to the book within a book approach taken by Haddon in the novel, which welcomes us into Christopher's world.

Arriving in the theatre, I was immediately intrigued by the set. The stage is quite literally an empty box, and the walls, ceiling, and floor look like a mathematical grid. The stage is an analogy for Christopher's mind: its inner workings are revealed to be out of the ordinary and complex throughout the play.

Squares of the grid open up to reveal boxes where props are hidden. Christopher writes math equations on the floor, and his writing is projected onto the grid behind him. These make for some awe-inspiring visual effects. A unique stage is the perfect setting for a unique boy to tell his story.

Many have tried to theorize on Christopher's exact diagnosis, but when writing the novel, Haddon was purposefully vague. Following publication of the book, Haddon wrote on his blog that "Curious Incident is not a book about Asperger's... if anything it's a novel about difference, about being an outsider, about seeing the world in a surprising and revealing way."

Both the play and the book are incredibly powerful. They were able to move me to tears, silence me in fascination, and provoke my laughter, all in the course of around two and a half hours. What I particularly love is the fact that this is not a story about a disorder. This is a story about an intelligent,



The National Theatre production of THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME On Broadway at the Barrymore Theatre (243 West 47th Street)

Helen Carey, Mercedes Herrero, Jocelyn Bioh, Alex Sharp (kneeling), Richard Hollis, David Manis, Ben Horner in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. (Photo credit, Joan Marcus, 2014)

witty, and very original boy who also happens to have a disorder. That message about individuality is something that the world needs to see.

Alexandra Cohen is a first year Health Sciences student at Marianopolis College and an active volunteer in many community organizations.

## Créatability Expo: A celebration of special art and artists

By Wendy Singer

Montreal's first ever special needs artisan market presented creative professionals with special needs the opportunity to promote and sell their handmade creations. Arts and crafts on exhibit included photographs by Eli Adams from Vermont, jewelry by Kenza's Kreations, home-made dog food and bowls by Peter Hall School students, pencil drawings by Heidi Vormer, candles and soaps by Light a Dream, and paintings by 10-year-old Kirk Davidson, to name a few.

Organized by the Big Blue Hug and Rekinexion, and sponsored by Inspirations News and Investors Group, Créatability aims to encourage a paradigm shift of how society views what special needs people can achieve and the role they have in our society.

"The vision begins with the artisan market and continues long term in supporting any person with an intel-

lectual, developmental or physical disability in finding and maintaining meaningful employment," shared Jason Goldsmith, Founder of Créatability, and The Big Blue Hug.

There are few words to describe the joyful feeling at Rekinexion, where the event was held on May 8. The over 150 visitors got to know the artists, appreciated their talent and the courage it takes to share personal works and stories, and left with their artwork of choice in hand. Artists connected with one another, bonding in their shared accomplishment and experiences.

"The event surpassed our expectations on so many levels," said Lisa Marcovici of Rekinexion. "We are already excited to plan the next one!"

Read more about Créatability on our blog: *The Inspired Blogger: Special needs in Montreal*. To view photos of the event, visit the Inspirations Facebook page. For information, contact [creatabilityexpo@gmail.com](mailto:creatabilityexpo@gmail.com) or visit [www.creatabilityexpo.com](http://www.creatabilityexpo.com).



Leanna and Zach from Light a Dream at the Créatability Expo.