



Poster image of *As I Must Live It*, text: “*As I Must Live it* by Luke Reece” in red above a kindergarten graduation photo of Luke which is framed and the background is writing. There are two red vertical lines framing the poster image on the left and right.

# AS I MUST LIVE IT

## SHOW GUIDE



Artist: Luke Reece

MAI Theatre  
3680 Jeanne-Mance  
Montréal, Québec

Show dates:

- February 25, 2026, 7:30pm
- February 26, 2026, 7:30pm
- February 27, 2026, 7:30pm
- February 28, 2026, 2:00pm + 7:30pm

# **WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS ACCESS GUIDE?**

This information package aims to help anyone access, understand the play, and the agency to decide whether to attend. In particular, the guide may assist those who have different needs for communication including, but not exclusively Autistic People, those who communicate using multiple languages as well as others who may be challenged by some theatrical constructs.

## **RELAXED ENVIRONMENT**

As I Must Live It will be performed at MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels) which includes a Relaxed Environment for some of its programming. A Relaxed Environment is designed to create a more welcoming atmosphere for all audience members, including those who could specifically benefit from a more informal approach, and a 'relaxing' of formal theatre conventions.

### **A Relaxed Environment includes**

At the theatre:

- A very low-level house light in the audience
- The ability for anyone to come and go from the space, get up and move, as needed
- The ability to leave your phone on silent or vibrate
- A more open approach to audience movement or sound
- May also include a quiet space to sit

An access guide which will include:

- An introduction to the play and some of the key elements
- Specific environmental, content and trigger warnings



## **HOW TO EXPERIENCE AS I MUST LIVE IT**

### **Performance**

As I Must Live It runs from February 25th – February 28th, 2026, performance dates and times can be found on MAI's ticketing page. As I Must Live It is 80-90 minutes in length.

### **Relaxed Space**

If you leave the theatre at any time there is a Relaxed Space in the lobby you can visit. Our Relaxed Space is a quiet space equipped with comfortable seating and sensory objects for any patrons who need a break from the performance or would like to experience it in a more low-intensity environment. If you ask an usher they will show you to this area.

## **CONTENT WARNINGS**

- Anxiety
  - Grief
  - Discussion of suicide
  - Mental health
  - Homelessness
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## **ENVIRONMENTAL WARNINGS (HAZE, LIGHT OR SOUND)**

-Note that the immersive installation includes prominent sound, light and video projection directly on the audience. This may not be recommended for individuals experiencing motion sickness and those sensitive to light and sound.

-Water-based haze is used and there is one Black-out of the lights.

-The audience is seated on stage with the actor, the performer uses direct eye contact with the audience and is invited to engage.

-The audience is seated with the performer in an immersive installation. For more information read the Seating/ Immersive Conditions.

-Age limit: Suggested age is 12, some coarse language

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## **ACCESS COMPONENTS**

-Relaxed Environment

-All performances will feature Surtitles.

-This Performance is accessible to patrons in mobility devices, if you have any questions please contact the box office for more details.

## PLOT DETAILS

The following section of text contains Plot Details that could be considered spoilers! Please continue to the section titled Set Details if you do not want to know what happens (the end of the plot section is highlighted)!

Words that are underlined can be found in the Background section if you would like a definition or would like to learn more.

Luke begins by telling the story about the squirrels he saw outside of his window.

His six-year-old self named them based on their personality or fur colour. He talks about his memory with his favourite squirrel, named Blackie. Although Blackie left because he didn't get along with one of the other squirrels, he eventually came back with his family.

Luke submitted a story called "Blackie Came Back" to his school's call for an anthology of stories. While his story was published, they only published the first paragraph, which made the title make no sense. This created a disappointment in Luke, as his writing was changed, and it wasn't put out in the way he wanted.

His first spoken word piece shares his experiences of racism and growing up biracial. Throughout his childhood, he was called "hybrid" because his mother was White, and his father was Black. All while trying to ignore the media, the poor representation, lack of similar experiences, and family dynamics seeped into his life. Being called "hybrid" is a label of being inhuman, and he is not sure what to do the next time he is called this again.

His next story talks about his memories of playing in the playground with his friends and his dad's work picnics. When his dad worked at Goodyear, they would have a picnic at Centre Island, he loved it almost as much as the playground. Every year, there would be a race. When Luke, his dad, and his sister were old enough to race, they all raced in their respective age categories; all placing in the top three.

In grade 5, his father was "let go" from his job. This is similar to being fired, but his father said he didn't do anything wrong to get fired. He had never seen his dad sad, so this was hard for him. Trying to stay happy for his dad, he hugged him. After learning this news, on the playground, he didn't want to play. He talked to his best friends about what happened and here, he cried because he didn't want his dad to see him crying. His friends reassured him that it would be okay. The following day, he played on the playground as usual.

Luke hands out a piece of paper with text to the audience. We do not know who wrote this. The text writes about a specific point of view on the experience of life. It expresses the desire for humans to stop thinking so much and learn how to feel, releasing oneself. It encourages people to be free and to be themselves.

Luke appears again dressed as a dinosaur. He performs a spoken word piece about his love of dinosaurs and how he was disappointed to find out that Chris Pratt was starring in the Jurassic World movie that premiered in 2015. He talks about how stories about dinosaurs should be free to exist outside of typical norms and narratives.

Luke shares a story about growing up and wanting to be perfect. As he does this he changes out of the dinosaur costume and puts on a blazer. He shares a memory of going to a youth group for kids who had parents with mental illness. He also talks about his nonna who has passed away recently. He then retrieves a rose from an audience member and goes up to the balcony.

On the balcony Luke performs a poem for his mother while slowly dropping rose petals to the ground. In the poem he talks about his mother's name, Rose, and thanks her for what she did to protect and care for the family.

He tells the story about the many people who would joke with Luke, telling him they were his father, referencing the Star Wars joke and an assignment he completed in school. Over time, this joke became frustrating and painful because of the fraught relationship with his own father, and that he didn't feel he had one. Luke recounts the men who acted as Father figures in his life. These father figures in his life looked like him and taught him the power and strength of being a Black man.

Luke begins to sing "Three Little Birds" by Bob Marley. He encourages the audience to sing with him. Then he asks if the audience wants to hear something else.

Luke goes back down from the balcony and finds an old high school assignment which he shares with the audience. This is about his father's OCD using a boxing metaphor. He wrote this when he was 17 years old.

Then the writing from earlier that was handed out is projected in cursive writing throughout the space.

Luke calls his sister. He reminisces asking her if she remembered going to those youth groups. After his phone call, he describes how excited he was to meet his new baby sister at three and a half years old. He got to choose between two names, he chose Cassandra. He is balancing on the seating railing while reciting this poem.

He talks about the things they did as kids. Playing their version of Survivor, singing, video games, and dance competitions.

Luke begins to smile uncontrollably- One day at Luke's retail job, one of his dad's coworkers comes in. They talk about how his dad has been. His dad's coworker tells him what he should be doing about their father-son relationship. This upsets Luke because it is a reminder of the pain that comes with the challenging relationship between him and his father.

Luke goes upstairs to the balcony, smiling the entire way. He sits and tells the story about using his poetry exploring his and his dad's relationship, and the time that he discovered the things that he didn't like to talk about while accepting his family's reality.

The piece that he shares next covers his desire to have control of the narrative. Just for him, not anyone else.

He comes downstairs and lies in the centre of the playing space and asks the audience to cover him in paper. With paper all over him he talks about the challenges his family had dealt with. Dealing with the pressures, and expectations, and not being able to reach out for help, he tells the story of how this affected his father. When he saw his father at dinner, it was not the same.

This spoken word piece is called Crease, it has been performed around the world. Luke knows the intended message has been communicated when a Black person comes up to him and mentions that the content is not talked about a lot. This makes Luke feel good.

Luke talks about the time when his Dad saw him perform this poem. He was very upset about it as it was about him and his mental health. They weren't talking at the time so he never told him about it. Luke's dad's girlfriend was upset too because he never opened up about his past but she did. When his dad's girlfriend passed away, his dad called him to come to the hospital with him.

Luke takes a hat and offers it to an audience member to wear. If they accept it, he shares a part of a poem with them as if they are his father. Luke says that is all he has, because he doesn't have an ending. Luke leaves. Luke returns. The next piece Luke performs is called "I Don't Have an Ending". He talks about what endings mean to him and why he doesn't like them. His poem goes back into the beginning about being a 'hybrid' of his parents, the traits he has from his mother and the traits from his father.

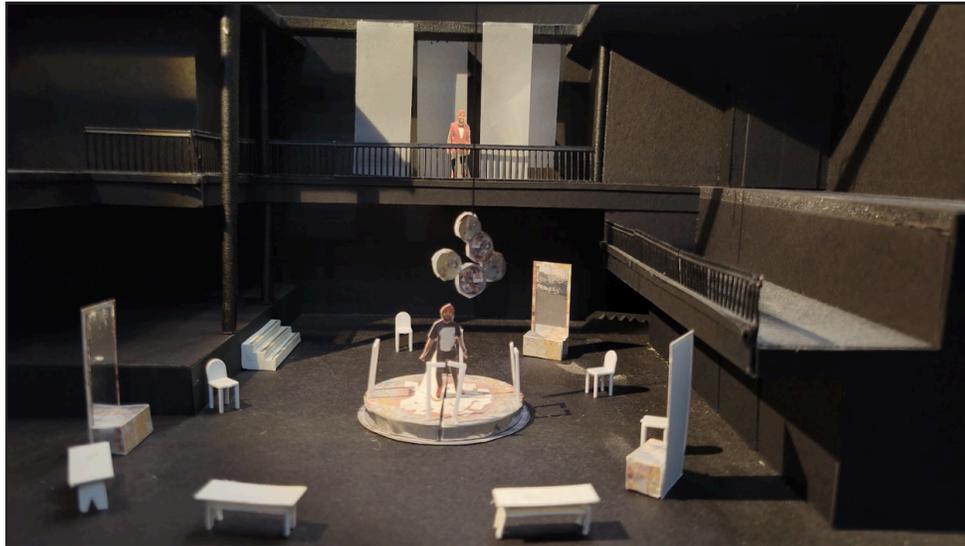
While trying to end the show, he brings back parts from the other pieces he performed throughout the show. His love for dinosaurs, the unwanted jokes about his name, and the hospitals. Despite his desire to have control over the narrative, it becomes beyond his control because he is now in the role of the storyteller. He realizes that he has to stop at some point but he wonders how.

Audio is played of a conversation between Luke and his father after Luke had read this script to his father at a coffee shop.

**End of spoilers.**

## SET DETAILS

On the Main Floor of the theatre is a circular platform that has handles and spins and breaks apart into 3 pieces (like a kid's playground spinning equipment) around that there are 3 tall fabric screens. There will be many different types of areas for the audience to sit that will include colourfully painted tires, benches and chairs.



The picture features a model of the set that will be used for *As I Must Live It* as described above in the above paragraph. Model & Set Design by Jackie Chau.



This picture features a real-life example of a kid's playground spinning equipment. It is a circular platform that has handles and spins.

# SEATING/IMMERSIVE CONDITIONS

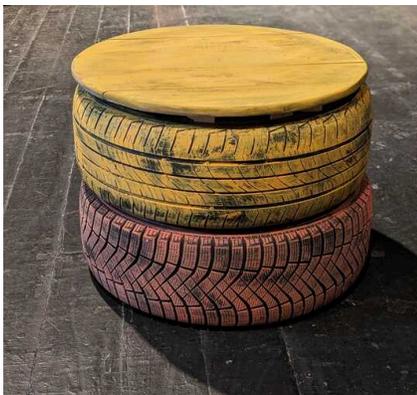
Immersive experience →

- Prominent sound surrounding the audience.
- Light and video projection.
- Use of water based haze working in relationship to lighting and projection effects.

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The elements working together may not be recommended for individuals who experience motion sickness and those sensitive to light and sound.

The audience will be seated on stage with the actor with a variety of seating options offered in addition to traditional theatre seats. The audience is invited to choose whichever seating option makes them the most comfortable. As an audience member, you may choose to sit in any of the seating options. You are also invited to stand, walk or roll around over the duration of the piece!



The above pictures feature three examples of what seating might look like offered for As I Must Live It. These include benches, boxes, and stacked car tires. In addition to this, there will also be the option of traditional theatre seating available. You are also invited to stand, walk or around over the duration of the piece.

## PROTAGONIST

### LUKE REECE

Writer and performer of  
As I Must Live It

This picture features a portrait of actor Luke Reece. During the performance, Luke will be appearing as himself.



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## BACKGROUND

The following words are listed in the Plot Details section with an underline. This list provides definitions and links if you would like to learn more.

Jurassic Park→ An American science fiction action film from 1993 based on the novel.. The film is set on the fictional island of Isla Nublar, off Central America's Pacific Coast near Costa Rica, where a wealthy businessman and a team of genetic scientists have created a wildlife park of de-extinct dinosaurs.

Goodyear→ A tire manufacturing company originating in Akron, Ohio. More information can be found [here](#).

Chris Pratt → An American film Actor and Producer. Chris Pratt was featured in the film Jurassic World (2015) the film following the first two Jurassic Park films in the Jurassic series. Before this movie, he was a fan favourite average-looking dude on the hit TV series Parks and Rec.

Centre Island → Island in Toronto. You can take a Ferry there. There is a children's amusement park on the island. More information can be found [here](#).

Star Wars → Star Wars is an American epic film franchise created by George Lucas, which began with the first film in 1977. It is an all-encompassing fictional universe, where the character of Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker have a conflict. It is eventually revealed that Darth Vader is Luke's father. More information can be found [here](#).

ROM (Royal Ontario Museum) → is an abbreviation for the Royal Ontario Museum. It is located in downtown Toronto. This museum contains historical artifacts such as dinosaur fossils. It is a great place for children to learn about history and science. More information can be found [here](#).

Aeropostale → is a retail brand. Canadian locations closed in 2016, which Luke experienced first-hand as a long time devoted employee. Their clothing can now be found and bought in Bluenotes in Canada. More information on Bluenotes Canada can be found [here](#).

Passed Away → to go out of existence. In the context of As I Must Live It, this refers to someone's death.

Survivor → An American reality television series where strangers are left on a deserted island and encouraged to survive. The show is now entering its 46th season. More information can be found [here](#).

## **CALM SPACE**

You can leave the theatre at any time; there's a quiet area waiting for you in the Café. There are colouring pages that you can colour in, crayons, stress balls and weighted animals. There's also self-service food and drinks. You can go there to relax and take a break before returning to the gallery. A member of the MAI team will be with you wherever you need to go.

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## **END OF THE SHOW**

At the end of the performance, you are welcome to come and go from the space while you are at the theatre if you would like to visit the lobby, washroom, or Calm Space.

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## **QUESTIONS?**

You can contact:

Claudia Parent

public@m-a-i.qc.ca

514-982-1812 ext 231

<https://m-a-i.qc.ca/accessibilite/>