Access Guide for Versus



Above are two images. The first is the logo for the Theatre Centre, text: THE THEATRE CENTRE followed by a collection of red arrows forming a square.

The following is a marketing image for the theatre production Versus, text: VERSUS appears prominently above an image of performer Adam Lazarus, a man in his late forties with short, curly grey hair. He is pictured from the waist up, extending his hands into the air. He wears a navy blue button-up shirt and has a frustrated expression, with his teeth clenched. Colourful objects, including reusable bags, confetti and egg cartons, appear to be falling from the sky around him. He stands against a blue background.

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The Purpose of an Access Guide

This information package aims to help anyone access and understand the performance **Versus, presented at The Theatre Centre**. In particular, the guide may assist those who have different needs for communication, as well as those who are new to the theatre, or need more information about some theatrical constructs.

Have further Questions? Want to schedule a visit?

If you have an accessibility request that is not outlined in this document, or if you would like to notify The Theatre Centre that you are attending Versus, please contact us:

Julia Haist (she/her), Visitor Experience Manager
Email: julia@theatrecentre.ca
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How to Experience Versus

Versus will be performed from November 11 to November 28, 2026, at the Franco Boni Theatre in The Theatre Centre (located at 1115 Queen St. W, Toronto, Ontario, M6J 1J1). The Franco Boni Theatre is located on the second floor of the Theatre Centre and is currently only accessible by a flight of stairs due to renovations to the building's lift.

A complete list of performance dates and times can be found on the Theatre Centre website and ticketing page. More information and tickets can be purchased here.

The performance will occur in the Franco Boni Theatre. The theatre space will be open to audiences fifteen minutes before the set start time of the performance and a Patron Experience staff member will announce when the theatre is open in the Lobby. **A late entry moment** will occur at approximately 8:25 PM. Patron Services will support your late entry. There is no **reentry** during the performance. The performance will occur in one act that is approximately 100 minutes with no intermission.

At the end of the performance, a live musician will usher the audience from the performance space into the Gallery of the Theatre Centre. Birthday cake will be available for guests to serve themselves, if interested!

After the **Opening Night** performance on **Friday, November 13th starting at 8:00pm,** audience members are invited to join the opening night reception.

Performance Advisories

The following are some Performance Warnings the Creative Team and The Theatre Centre have outlined during the development period of Versus. Performance Advisories help an audience prepare for the performance.

Versus uses humour and comedy to make fun of people and the world around us. No content is off limits. It looks at the good, bad and ugly parts of being human. The performer will use comedy to make fun of society, people in power, rules and behaviour. It asks audiences to examine the difference between what they say and what they actually do. A more detailed explanation of content is available in the **Plot Details** section of this guide.

A complete list of **Mental Health Resources** is available at the Theatre Centre Box Office.

Content Advisories:

- Strong language
- Anti-Semitism, Zionism, Islamophobia, Xenophobia, Racism, and Racial Anxiety, and references to Gaza.
- Concerns about death, sexual health and aging
- Bodily Harm, and the desire to cause Bodily Harm
- The portrayal of sexual acts, and references to
- Dental trauma and the portrayal of graphic surgery
- The suggestion of animal abuse
- The portrayal of vomiting and suggestion of defecating
- Discussions of gun violence and harm to children
- The use of real alcohol

Environmental Advisories:

- Surprising movement and sound, the sound of gunshots, and live instruments
- A small explosion, with flame, which occurs in proximity to the audience
- Direct address by performer and invited audience participation
- Flashing lights and full lighting blackouts
- The use of fake blood
- Theatrical haze
- Items will fall from the ceiling and onto the stage: lighter items, such as balloons and confetti, will fall over the audience

Invited Audience Participation

Versus is a solo performance. At various points throughout the show, the character Gerald Bloom, performed by Adam Lazarus, will speak directly to the audience and invite you to participate. Audience participation is invited in three ways:

1. **Verbal prompts:** From the stage, Gerald Bloom will encourage audience members to respond to verbal prompts at various points throughout the performance.
2. **Onstage participation:** At three specific moments during the show, Gerald Bloom will invite an audience member to leave their seat and participate in the onstage action. Two of these invitations occur at the beginning of the performance, and one occurs toward the end.
3. **Interaction within the audience:** At two specific moments, Gerald will leave the stage and move into the audience seating area. During these moments, the lighting will shift to illuminate the audience.

In all three instances, participation is entirely voluntary. Audience members are welcome to opt in or opt out at any time. **Your consent is important, and you are never obligated to participate.**

If you prefer not to be engaged with, you can choose not to respond to a verbal prompt or signal your preference by crossing your arms in an X across your chest.

We want everyone to feel comfortable, respected, and in control of their experience!

The Ensemble

Versus is a solo performance featuring three additional ensemble members. Although Gerald is the sole central performer, the ensemble members contribute throughout the production by portraying various characters in his storytelling, such as the dentists and pedestrians.

They also assist with the movement and transitions of stage elements, including curtains and set pieces such as the kitchen island. It is important to note that, at certain moments in the stage action, objects appear suddenly out of the darkness and are brought into view of the audience.

Plot Details

The following section of text contains **Plot Details** that could be considered Spoilers! Please continue to the section titled **Information on Performers and Characters** if you do not want to know what happens (the end of the plot section is highlighted)!

Important Note: Almost all characters in the performance, aside from the solo performer, do not appear on stage. Instead, they are referenced in dialogue, heard through voiceovers, or represented through sounds associated with their actions and movements (for example, a door closing or riding a bike). There is one specific moment when the performer becomes the character of the Mother and speaks from her perspective.

We hear a recording from the Maytag, a washer and dryer company. It's as though someone has called them and has been put on hold.

We meet Gerald, he is getting ready for the day and we learn that it is his birthday. He is asking his children to get ready for their day at school. He asks an audience member to walk his dog. This person is ushered backstage by the Ensemble.

The scene begins with Gerald discussing his relationship with Uncle Ben. His brother sends him a text message suggesting that he should visit his mother. Gerald then remembers that he needs to call Maytag. He speaks directly to the audience while making the call. Maytag answers but places him on hold. Meanwhile, Uncle Ben texts him back, with sound effects accompanying each incoming message.

Gerald continues speaking to his children as they get ready for school. As he attempts to manage the various demands of the morning, he takes deep breaths and repeatedly tells himself, “Every crisis is an opportunity.” Bent over, he asks an audience member to help him stand up. He engages in a conversation with the audience member and eventually asks them to make a smoothie. Maytag finally answers the phone but continues to keep him on hold.

The audience member who previously helped walk the dog is brought back onto the stage. Gerald discusses walking the dog with them before asking them to help vacuum the dirt the dog has brought into the house. Throughout this interaction, he continues trying to get his children ready for school. Eventually, Gerald asks both audience members to leave his house and thanks them for their help.

Gerald then begins searching for his house keys and looks around the kitchen island. Numerous keys emerge onstage, followed by reusable shopping bags and other household items, including plates. While handling the objects, Gerald accidentally stabs his hand with a pair of scissors. He asks the audience for help and attempts to repair his injured hand using glue.

As the mess in the house continues to grow, Gerald calls out to his wife and suggests that they may need to cancel the party or hire professional cleaners. Suddenly, ensemble members emerge and begin cleaning the stage. As they clean, the red outline representing the house disappears, marking a transition into the next scene. The setting suddenly shifts to the outside. Gerald notices a sign on someone's lawn advertising the Purple People Party and discusses it with the audience. He eventually gets into his car and asks his children to set their intentions for the day. As they drive, an elderly person begins crossing the crosswalk. Gerald tells the audience that he often

thinks about hitting the man with his car. He then tells his children that his intention for the day is equanimity. Shortly afterward, he nearly hits a cyclist, prompting him to discuss bike lanes. He eventually puts on the music his children request. During this moment, mild **flashing lights** accompany the music. His children then leave the car.

Gerald is next seen at work, delivering a presentation to his colleagues. He addresses the audience as though they are his coworkers and encourages them to repeat certain parts of his presentation. He discusses the uncertainty of the current times and references the conflict in Gaza. He states that he is not a Zionist and shares that his uncle holds anti-Islamic beliefs and has used anti-Islamic slurs. Gerald reiterates his belief that “every crisis is an opportunity.” Gerald then recalls a frightening health-related experience in which he began bleeding from his penis after ejaculating. He explains that he feared he was dying and promised himself that he would change his life if he survived. He goes on to describe the changes he has made since that experience. As he finishes recounting this memory, the office setting disappears.

An ensemble member suddenly appears riding a hoverboard and nearly collides with Gerald. Despite the changing scenes, Gerald is still on hold with Maytag. He then appears at a café, where he purchases a sausage roll and comments on its high price.

Gerald receives a text message asking whether he has visited his mother yet. Flowers appear onstage, and he takes them to his mother at the hospital. His mother is represented by a wheelchair. Gerald asks her whether she has signed a document outlining important decisions and arrangements concerning her death. He sings to her. He recalls a previous incident when his mother experienced a health scare and shares the anxiety and pressure he has been feeling. Gerald eventually sits in the wheelchair and takes on the role of his mother. Speaking from her perspective, she tells him that she cannot look after him right now and encourages him to connect with Uncle Ben. She asks him to come only one more time.

Gerald leaves the hospital, and the lighting shifts to **flashing lights.** A voice gives him various directions intended to help reduce his anxiety and pressure. He receives a phone call from his son's school. Gerald tells the audience that he is not okay and then asks them whether they are okay. At this point, he physically comes out into the auditorium and begins walking among the audience members. The lights come up over the audience, making the audience space visible as he moves through it. He speaks directly to audience members, asking them questions and responding to their answers.

A neon “OPEN” sign appears as Gerald arrives at a party store. He asks about purchasing balloons and is offered various colours, although the only balloons available are black. Gerald explains that he does not want black balloons for his party. His conversation with the store attendant develops into a discussion that reveals his anxieties and discomfort surrounding race.

Gerald leaves the party store feeling upset and unsure of what to say. His wife sends him another text message about the balloons. He begins discussing his family, explaining that some of his relatives hold xenophobic beliefs. He continues to express the pressure and anxiety he has been experiencing. The lights begin to flash, and dance music plays as Gerald starts dancing. He is reminded of his recurring belief that “every crisis is an opportunity,” but questions whether every situation truly has to be a crisis and why he cannot seem to recognize the opportunities within them. He wonders why he has not changed and worries that he may be missing opportunities to transform his life. As the **flashing lights** stop and the lights come up again, he addresses the audience directly, asking whether their lives have changed. He expresses his hope that he will eventually have an experience that changes him and gives him a new perspective.

Gerald's phone rings, and he receives a call from his friend Linus. A park setting appears, and Gerald sits on a bench covered in garbage. During their conversation, Gerald shares his feelings of pressure and anxiety. A bird suddenly poops on him. Linus encourages Gerald to come to the United States and discusses his conservative beliefs, revealing that he has purchased a gun. Gerald eventually ends the call. As the park disappears, the lights flash, marking another scene transition.

Gerald begins experiencing tooth pain and tells his wife that perhaps they should cancel the party. His tooth begins to bleed, and he eventually pulls it out. He asks the audience whether anyone knows a dentist. A dentist's chair emerges, and an ensemble member takes on the role of the dentist. The dentist places instruments in Gerald's mouth and administers an injection while Gerald continues attempting to speak. As the dentist works on repairing his tooth, a medical mask is placed over Gerald's face, and he appears to enter an altered state. The lights flash, and three dentists begin working on him. They remove his ears and perform increasingly surgical procedures, including removing a large internal piece of his body. Eventually, Gerald, along with the dentists, vomits. He finally gets out of the dentist's chair, believing that he has changed.

After leaving the chair, Gerald receives a phone call from his wife, who tells him that she has cancelled the party. His dog then appears and offers him advice. Gerald decides that he will begin using his gifts and attempts to redo his day, starting with the elderly man he encountered earlier. The dog reappears, and Gerald decides to visit a neighbourhood he refers to as a ghetto, where he intends to listen to the people living there. He proceeds to offer people soup and asks whether they would like to hear a story. He tells them a story about seizing opportunities and offers to comb a young girl's hair. When he is unsuccessful, he gives the girl a quarter and tells her that she can invest it. However, he then demands the quarter back. The scene ends with a crossroads appearing, as Gerald tells his dog that he has saved the children in the ghetto.

Gerald receives a phone call from his children, who share some positive news with him. He tells them that he can feel himself changing. The dentist's chair briefly reappears onstage before the scene returns to the crossroads. Gerald is presented with two possible paths: following Linus and his right-wing beliefs or following his Uncle Ben and his xenophobic beliefs. In one imagined scenario, Linus accidentally shoots his children. Gerald then confronts Uncle Ben by calling him a racist and defecating in his uncle's yard. Ultimately, Gerald decides that he does not want to follow either path and instead chooses to share and use his own gifts.

Flashing lights accompany the appearance of a large, circular representation of the Earth. Gerald proceeds to portray having sex with the Earth. The **flashing lights** continue as a helicopter appears overhead, accompanied by a voice coming from within it. Gerald boards the helicopter and eventually jumps out of it.

Gerald then summarizes the changes he believes he has made. He claims that he has saved the people in the ghettos, defecated, and created a new world where everyone is welcome by paying attention to others and taking care of himself. He is presented with the Nobel Peace Prize and delivers an acceptance speech, thanking everyone. A large representation of the Nobel Peace Prize emerges onstage.

The dentists reappear and help Gerald clean himself up. They provide him with fresh clothes, which he puts on. He then receives a text message saying that it is party time, reminding him that he needs to leave for his party.

Despite everything that has happened, Gerald is still on hold with Maytag. He walks out into the audience while waiting for the call to be answered. Finally, Kate from Maytag answers, but Gerald's phone suddenly explodes. He begins getting dressed and asks an audience member to help him. He expresses his anxiety about attending the party and the fear that people will truly see him. Gerald then invites an audience member to join him for a drink and brings them onto the stage, where a café setting has appeared. They sit together at the café and begin a conversation.

He eventually asks the audience member if they want to come to a party. The lights shift, and the rest of the audience becomes the other partygoers. An ensemble member brings out a cake. The cake falls onto the stage. Black balloons fall onto the audience.

A live band of brass instruments appears and performs. They encourage the audience to move to the lobby.

End of Plot Details

Information on Performers and Characters

The following descriptions include information for the performer Adam Lazarus.



This photo to the left features a portrait of performer Adam Lazarus (he/ him). During the performance, he will be performing the role of Gerald Bloom.

Adam is a man in his late-forties with short, curly grey hair. In the photo, he is seated with his arms crossed over his lap. He looks to the right of the camera into the distance. He wears a light-coloured, button-up, collared shirt, dark suit jacket, and dark pants. He has a ring on a finger on his left hand. The picture is black and white.

Stage Elements

Versus is performed on an empty stage, where set pieces appear and disappear quickly. Items will fall from

the ceiling and onto the stage: lighter items, such as balloons and confetti, will fall over the audience

Red Outline of a House: At the beginning of the show, a large cloth lies on the floor of the playing space, featuring the red outline of a house.

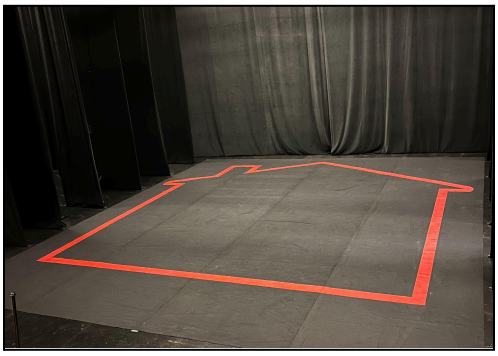
Kitchen Island: A kitchen Island (or countertop) quickly comes on and off throughout the show. Items appear from within the drawers of the Kitchen Island.

Hospital Curtains: These curtains appear quickly from offstage. They are blue. A manual wheelchair will appear with these curtains.

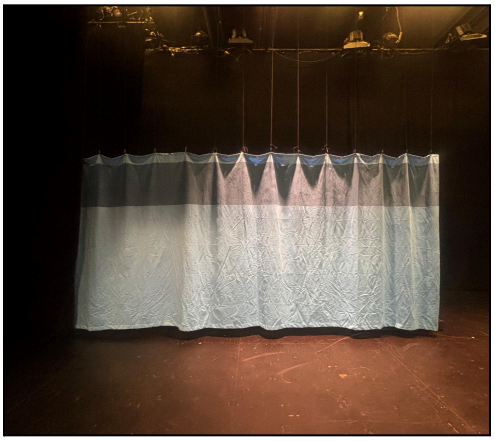
Park Bench: A park bench covered in garbage will appear from offstage.

Dentist Chair: The dentist chair will emerge from offstage. This chair spins the character from a seated position to a horizontal position. It is a metal and plastic chair.

Cafe: A small cafe/ bar seating arrangement appears at the end of the performance. An audience member will be invited to engage with this and sit at the cafe.











The previous photos, based on the information provided previously described, are: a house with a red outline, a kitchen island, hospital curtains, a park bench, a dentist's chair, and the cafe.

The Performance Space

Versus will take place in the **Franco Boni Theatre**, located on the second floor of the Theatre Centre.

Please note that, due to ongoing renovations to the building's accessible lift, the second floor is currently only accessible by stairs.

For more information about the venue, please visit the Theatre Centre Venue Guide.



The photo above is of the **Franco Boni Theatre**. It is a large room with a black floor and walls. In the photo, there is raised seating organized on one side of the room. This will be the orientation of the space for **Versus.**

Seating Conditions

The Franco Boni Theatre has hardback chairs. If you have specific seating requests not outlined in this document and would like them arranged in advance, please contact:

Julia Haist (she/her), Visitor Experience Manager
Email: julia@theatrecentre.ca
Phone: 416-538-0988

Please include your name, contact information, and any details you'd like to share. It is helpful (though not required) to let the Box Office know if you will be arriving with an access device.

The End of the Performance

At the end of the performance, the performer will bow and you are invited to applaud. Live musicians playing Brass instruments will usher the audience from the performance space and out of the theatre. There will be birthday cake available, and the audience is invited to have a piece!

Need More Information?

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