

sitting in circles with rich white girls



"Fascinating...
touching and
troubling."
-The Stranger

"Brilliant...
Goller-Sojourner
is both a heart-
breaking and
hilarious story-
teller."
-Seattle Weekly

memoirs of a bulimic black boy

a solo performance by Chad Goller-Sojourner

www.sitting-in-circles.com

Contact/ Booking:
Chad Goller-Sojourner
Color Your World Productions
206-851-5933
info@sitting-in-circles.com
www.sitting-in-circles.com

"I'm sixteen years old and I spend two nights a week sitting in circles with rich white girls. Trust me I did not pray for this. So if you choose to remember anything, remember that my prayer was to have been born a rich white girl, not sit in circles with them."

PERFORMANCE:

Sitting in Circles with Rich White Girls: Memoirs of a Bulimic Black Boy is the groundbreaking and crushingly honest reclamation story of a fat, gay, bulimic, black boy raised by white parents and struggling to find beauty, acceptance and safe spaces – in a world short on all.

With playful humor and sharp observance *Sitting in Circles...* takes audiences on an intense and insightful journey, along the way unpacking the mother load of competing and conflicting identities. Yet, when retold these stories are funnier than they are tragic: getting busted by the high school janitor and guidance counselor, who, instead of mopping floors and handing out college brochures, staked out the boys' bathroom, in hopes of catching the girl they assumed must be sneaking in to

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Seattle, WA 98118

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throw up, or the time God instructed him to march around his Junior High seven times— promising him, he'd make the walls come tumbling down, just like he'd done at Jericho.

Whether retracing the struggles and hilarities of being diagnosed during the mid-eighties with a "girl's" disease, or recalling the sixth-grade field trip to the high school swimming pool, where a white classmate sat two seats behind him, and called him a Tar Monster the whole way— *Sitting in Circles...* continues to resonate with diverse audiences. Demonstrating how even the most painful of experiences can be reclaimed, transformed, and accepted for what they are: the building blocks of our unique identities.

ARTIST STATEMENT & BIO:

Writing and performing continues to transport me to a place of depth and purpose— a place where everything about me fits and matters — a place where I feel distinctively beautiful.

My work explores the often complex and misunderstood world of identity construction and self-preserving mechanisms— specifically how growing up fat, black, gay, bulimic and raised by white parents affected and shaped both my development of and recovery from an eating disorder. Throughout this process my intention has been to draw from my own fractured history in the hopes of stitching together a unique, compelling, and entertaining body of work.

I am humbled and overjoyed that this work continues to resonate with such diverse audiences, particularly those who find themselves, or loved ones, in the bodies and voices presented onstage. I hold fast to the possibility that each person will take from the performance what they desire. If it is entertainment you seek, it's here; information, it's here; healing, it's here; reconciliation, it's here.

Of course, at the end of the day, *Sitting in Circles with Rich White Girls: Memoirs of a Bulimic Black Boy* remains the reclamation story of a once broken boy who spent fifteen years searching for identity, shelter, and temporal relief in spaces constructed of nothing more than cold ceramic tiles and graffiti-resistant stainless steel partitions.

Chad Goller-Sojourner is a Seattle based solo performer and recipient of a distinguished 2008 Artist Trust/Washington State Arts Commission Performing Arts Fellowship. His work has been funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and featured on NPR and continues to explore how the narrow categories we assign ourselves and others inevitably fail to represent our whole selves.

In July 2008, his highly anticipated solo show, *Sitting in Circles with Rich White Girls: Memoirs of a Bulimic Black Boy*, debuted at Seattle's Brownbox African-American Theatre, receiving overwhelming support and accolades from the community at large as well as the following civic and arts organizations: Mayor's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, Artist Trust, The Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas and King County: 4Culture. Currently a written memoir is in the works.

BOOKING/TECH & VENUE DETAILS:

Sitting in Circles... is a high impact, low tech solo performance running approximately 70 minutes, followed by a 20-30 minutes period for questions, comments, or issues that the audience may have about the work they just saw. **Performance & Discussion – \$1,500.00***

* Presenter is responsible for:

- Round trip travel (usually from Seattle) for performer.
- Standard hotel accommodations.
- Ground transportation to and from airport, accommodations, technical rehearsals, and performances.

Sound Requirements:

- CD compatible PA system

Lighting Requirements:

- Basic theatrical stage lighting setup

Pre-show Tech & Personnel Requirements:

- One (1) knowledgeable "in-house" tech person capable of operating simple sound and lighting cues based on tech script, which will be provided.
- Minimum of two (2) hour scheduled tech run-through WITH available tech person to commence no less than 4 hours before show time.

Performance Space Requirements: *

- "End stage theater" preferred with a minimum 18'x16' stage
- Performer will require one (1) music stand; two (2) adult sized armless non-folding chair (i.e. standard campus dining hall chair); two (2) flat surface stools or standard acting cubes

*** We are pleased to adapt this performance when possible to accommodate various situations and settings, so just ask as we can probably work something out.**

WORKSHOPS/CLASS DISCUSSIONS:

Workshops can be a great addition to the performance and are easily tailored to fit a wide variety of participants, issues and situations. Fees range from \$300 to \$500 and depend on the number of participants and length of workshop, which generally run between ninety minutes and two and a half hours. See below for general descriptions. Time and scheduling permitting, performer is also available to participate in classroom visits/discussions (see attached letter).

Spoken Word/Monologue: This workshop focuses on creating and developing monologues and spoken word works that enliven political, social, and identity issues. Participants will explore the art of crafting and presenting stories that matter, inspire, and transform. This workshop is designed for students of all levels of experience, from those who have never explored this form of writing and performance to seasoned writers and performers. Students will leave with a broader and deeper understanding of the spoken word as a whole.

Creating A Solo Performance:

This workshop will focus on how to develop and perform a solo show. Starting with what motivates you, we will then move into creating, crafting, and building upon your character/characters from both a written and physical point of view. Storytelling will figure heavily in the work as you begin to discover and structure your own solo performance material. Participants are asked to please come in with an idea. It can be anything—a poem, a prop, a gesture, a monologue, a word. Anything!

The Art Of Memoir Writing

Everybody has stories to tell. This workshop will focus on unearthing, harnessing, and crafting those stories into compelling memoirs. Covered topics include: finding your stories and honing your storytelling voice, exploring what moves you to tell them, writing memoir with the finesse of fiction, and giving yourself permission to say what needs to be said. We'll also explore critical techniques such as character development, narrative arcs, and description. Come and explore the power of being your own witness.

Exploring Identities/ Beyond The Box:

This exciting and informative workshop invites participants to challenge and explore their worldview, biases, and cultural socialization surrounding their current understanding of identity formation and development. Topics covered include: exploring the relationship between leading and/or perceived identities and secondary and/or non-obvious identities, identity allegiance (such as Black/Gay vs. Gay/Black), shifting/transforming identities (such as Lesbian/Trans Male). In the end participants will leave with a broader and deeper understanding of their and others' identity stories.



Apparel, Merchandising Design and Textiles Department

TO: Chad Goller-Sojourner
DATE: 10/8/2009
SUBJECT: Presentation in my class

Dear Chad,

Your presentation at the CUB Auditorium last night was absolutely wonderful. The way you were able to describe your life at the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity and body image issues was masterful, especially in the way you were able to take painful moments and make them memorable with amusing anecdotes. Few people are willing to be so frank in discussions of how the body comes to represent societal issues, and you are to be lauded for doing that.

In addition, I so appreciate your willingness to come and discuss some of the same issues with my class today. AMT 417: Multicultural Perspectives on the Body and Dress is a course that examines how the body is mediated and controlled by societal norms, and how people strive to attain idealized images that are not only unrealistic, but harmful. Your willingness to openly discuss these issues in a way that helps students critically think about them is a true gift. After you left, the class and I had an excellent discussion about the serious issues you raised, and in doing so, you certainly raised their consciousness.

Again, thank you so much for coming to Pullman, and to my class, to provide a much needed lens through which to examine these serious societal issues.

Sincerely,

Dr. Linda Boynton Arthur,
Professor and Curator
Department of Apparel Merchandising, Design and Textiles

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

_____ Presents

The Highly Acclaimed Solo Performance

Sitting in Circles with Rich White Girls: Memoirs of a Bulimic Black Boy

WHEN: _____

WHERE: _____

TICKETS: _____

MEDIA CONTACT: For news stories and interviews contact _____

PRESS PHOTOS: <http://www.sitting-in-circles.com>

"Brilliant... Goller-Sojourner is both a heartbreaking and hilarious storyteller." Seattle Weekly

Award-winning and highly acclaimed solo performer, Chad Goller-Sojourner brings his hilarious and heartbreaking coming-of-age memoir to _____ (location) _____ for one night only, on _____ (Date and Time) _____.

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The production is directed by Seattle's BROWNBOX African-American Theatre, artistic director **Tyrone Brown**. Brown explains, "Chad's writing is brilliant. He has this remarkable ability to transport the audience to a time and place showered in such vivid detail that you actually become a witness to his life. As a performer, Chad is so engaging that it's like you are the only other person in the room and he has personally invited you into his past to experience his life first hand."

Chad Goller-Sojourner is an award winning Seattle based solo performer, and recipient of a distinguished 2008 Artist Trust/Washington State Arts Commission Performing Arts Fellowship. His work has been featured on National Public Radio (NPR) and funded by the National Endowment for

the Arts (NEA). His highly anticipated solo show, *Sitting in Circles with Rich White Girls: Memoirs of a Bulimic Black Boy*, debuted at Seattle's Brownbox African-American Theatre, receiving overwhelming support and accolades from the community at large as well as the following civic and arts organizations: Mayor's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, Artist Trust, The Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas and King County: 4Culture. Currently a written memoir is in the works

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