



BOOM X: The Music, Culture, and Events of Generation X
Written, performed, and directed by Rick Miller
Friday September 13, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

The Center for Performing Arts
Governors State University
Followed by a Post-Show Q&A Session with the Creator

Tickets for Students are \$10
\$20 for GovState Faculty and Staff

Tickets are available through the Box Office T, W, F: 10A-4P and Thursdays: 11A-6P

Visit [CenterTickets.net](https://www.CenterTickets.net) for more information about
The Center for Performing Arts

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SYNOPSIS

Boom X is a one-man show written, directed, and performed by Rick Miller. Over the course of 100 minutes, Miller transforms into 100 characters from politicians, musicians, celebrities, and social activists to key figures in his personal life. The multi-media production mixes theatre, comedy, ethnography, spoken word, music, commercials, and visual arts to bring the story of Generation X to life.

The show begins by posing the question, “What the hell is Generation X?” Miller defines Gen Xers as anyone born between 1964 and 1983 with Wikipedia citing Gen Xers as “disaffected and directionless”. But that barely scratches the surface of Gen X, often referred to as “the forgotten generation” sandwiched between the larger Baby Boomers and Millennials. Also known as the “latchkey” or “MTV generation”, many Gen X kids came home from school to an empty house with television, and specifically MTV, as their babysitter.

With second-wave feminism, more mothers were working outside of the home and the traditional nuclear family was forever changed, resulting in an increase in divorced parents of Generation X and beginning to redefine what constituted a family.

Growing up with existential threats such as the Cold War and the AIDS plague, Gen Xers were being subjected to television advertising jingles from birth. It’s no wonder that these teens grew into adulthood as “disaffected and directionless,” suspicious of marketing and mass media.

While Miller covers key political, historical, and social events, much of the show is centered around his love for popular music: the show opens with Jimi Hendrix playing at Woodstock and ends in 1995 with the release of Alanis Morissette’s *Jagged Little Pill* album with Miller himself referencing or performing over 50 bands and musicians.

QUOTE FROM RICK MILLER

“Because the central story of *BOOM X* is my own coming-of-age, the whole show has emotional resonance to me, and is a tremendous joy to perform. In Act II, however, my “perfect game plan” gets severely challenged by world events and personal circumstances. That’s when the four main characters I play (Howard, Annika, Steph and Brandon) all push me, provoke me, and guide me to becoming the person I am today.”

QUOTES FROM CRITICS

“A one-man show that explores Generation X – the disaffected “slacker” generation to which Miller himself belongs – through the period’s music, history, technology, politics, and personalities (the broadly sociocultural and the narrowly personal and familial). Imagine a 25-year version of *The Wonder Years* that folds in the quick changes of your favorite TikTok vocal imitator, a Reuters greatest-hits ticker tape of historical headlines, video clips, and Pop-up Video-like insights – spliced together into a dazzling, satisfying whole through cool technology, thoughtful narration, wig changes, sleight-of-hand and sleight-of-voice.” --Scott Sneddon of *SesayArts Magazine*

“*BOOM X* is masterful. I say that Rick Miller is a wild man of creativity because he flits from song to song doing quick costume and wig changes along the way. He throws himself into the frenzy of the various performance styles. And he is also meticulous. He is meticulous in being able to stand aloof and observe the events of a time period and how it factors into how we shift and flow from changes in our lives etc. He is meticulous in picking events that changed the world, not just were noteworthy for their own sake. The same thing can apply to the bands and music that he re-enacts. He is meticulous in weaving the dialogue of the four people who guided him through this segment of his life.” –*The Passionate Playgoer*



RICK MILLER BIOGRAPHY

Rick Miller (born March 12, 1970) is a Canadian director, actor, comedian, musician and playwright. He has two architecture degrees from McGill University in Montreal, and has performed in 5 languages on 5 continents. Although primarily known as a solo theatre creator and performer, Miller is also known for hosting the television series *Just for Laughs* and for performing a version of "Bohemian Rhapsody" during which he impersonates "twenty-five of the most annoying voices in the music industry". His *BOOM* Trilogy of solo shows (*BOOM*, *BOOM X*, and *BOOM YZ*) examine 75 years of music, culture, and politics, and have been performed over 600 times across North America, Europe, and Asia.

Miller has created and performed in many plays, *BOOM*, *BOOM X*, *BOOM YZ*, *Bigger than Jesus*, *MacHomer*, *HARDELL 2.0 - VENDU*, and Robert Lepage's *Lipsynch*.

In an example of art imitating life imitating art, *The Simpsons* featured a segment in the episode "Four Great Women and a Manicure", in which Homer and Marge played versions of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, respectively. This was an idea originally conceived by Miller for his one-man-show *MacHomer*. Matt Groening approved of the show and allowed Miller to use his characters.

Miller is also the co-creative director of Kidoons, the Canadian multimedia company that has developed the family touring stage shows *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea* (premiered in 2015), *Jungle Book* (premiered in 2018), and *FRANKENSTEIN: A Living Comic Book* (premiered in

2022). Kidoons also produces web series for families, featuring animated characters that connect to the Kidoons stage shows.

When not on tour, Miller is the frontman for the Toronto party band TRAINWRECK, also featuring his life partner of 28 years, Stephanie Baptist. In 2019, he released a compilation CD of 20 tracks from all of his solo shows called *Rick Miller SONGS (from BOOM X and Other Shows)*.

THEMES

Self-expression

Identity

Coming of Age

Existential Threats

Community and Belonging

DISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

Music

Ethnography

History

Media Studies

Theatre and Performance Studies

Gender and Sexuality Studies

Identity Studies

Communication Studies

Anthropology and Sociology

Political Science

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What generation are you? Do you identify with your assigned generation? Why or why not?
- 2) What musicians and bands do you feel influenced your current identity? Do your peers share similar views/opinions?
- 3) If you were to create a soundtrack to your early life and coming of age, what bands and musicians would be included?
- 4) If Gen Xers were unfairly labeled as “slackers” and “disaffected and directionless,” what are some assumptions about your generation? How do you think these opinions formed?