

Excerpt from opening of 'MeAndYoutopia'

By Ben Hales & Lucy Cuthbertson, with material devised by the original company

On the stage is a single, free-standing door frame. It's a regular, single-sized doorway but there is no actual door. It is in the centre, about two-thirds of the way back in the playing space.

Among the audience, and unknown to them to begin with, are four Watchers.

The audience sits looking at the door for a little while.

Eventually, when everyone has been looking for slightly too long...

Watcher 1 Well this isn't very good, is it?

Watcher 2 It's just a door in the middle of nowhere.

Watcher 3 Actually, it's a door in the middle of an island.

Watchers Oh yeah!

Watcher 4 Maybe there should be some sort of island-y sound effect, then?

We hear the sound effect of water on the beach.

Watcher 2 Much better!

There is a gentle commotion from one side of the stage. Gradually, in a strange, circular group, the YOUTs enter, accompanied by gentle music.

The YOUTs' prime motivation is to make life better for other people, and their first action is to check how they can help someone else in any given situation. They are fairly quiet, slightly sheep-like. They keep their arms by their sides, or hold their hands out to prevent bumping into others, or to offer another to go first. They never raise their arms. They are quietly saying 'careful, careful' as they go.

On their first entry, it is clear the YOUTs have been travelling by sea. Around their shoulders they wear blankets, and underneath they have life-jackets. They are each wearing a little notice on a string around their necks.

When the Watchers speak, the action freezes, as if they have the power to stop time.

- Watcher 4** Look at this!
- Watcher 1** Who are they?
- Watcher 2** *(calling to the YOUTs and waving)* Hello! Hello!
- Watcher 1** They can't hear us.
- Watcher 4** Why are they moving that that?
- Watcher 3** Oh, they must be 'YOU's!
- Watcher 2** 'YOUTs'?
- Watcher 1** All they ever think about is other people.
- Watcher 4** *(laughs)* Idiots!
- Watcher 2** What are they going to do?

Their group is well-ordered but literally inward-looking, moving backwards where necessary to ensure that everyone is moving at the same rate and nobody is left behind. Eventually the YOUTs arrive in front of the doorway. They all inspect it.

Finally, together, and equally disappointed, they speak.

YOUTs *(disappointed)* Is that it?

Suddenly, there is a loud excited cry from the other side of the stage, and the MEs burst on, accompanied by pumping party music.

YOUTs Hide!

The YOUTs cover themselves in their blankets.

Watchers Whoa!

Watcher 4 Who are *they*?

Watcher 1 They're very excited!

The MEs are opposite to the YOUTs in apparently all ways. Their prime motivation is to get what they want and need as an individual. This is not malicious or actively uncaring, it's just that the ME can't see beyond their own objective. As a group they move fast, each trying to be first to their destination. They take up much more space physically and are not afraid of using their arms.

The MEs have also been travelling by sea, but they are wearing a large array of random beachwear, rubber rings and pool noodles. They start by taking selfies on their phones then they race towards the door.

The MEs are as confused by the door as the YOUTs were.

ME 1 *(disappointed)* Is that it?

ME 2 *(more disappointed)* Is that it?

ME 3 *(even more disappointed)* Is that it?

ME 4 *(still more disappointed)* Is that it?

All the MEs start repeating this as an excited rabble.

ME 1 *(sitting down)* I'm not going through there.

Then there is a race for all of the MEs to say 'I'm not going through there' and claim their own space to sit down, as if it was their idea.

ME 5 Rubbish!

ME 3 Boring!

ME 2 Pointless!

Watcher 1 What's wrong with our door?

Watcher 4 *(to the MEs)* It's a good door, just go through it!

Watcher 2 Who are these people anyway?

Watcher 3 I think they might be ME's. All they think about is themselves.

In sequence, all the MEs take selfies, each saying 'Me'.

Watcher 3 I wonder how they'll get on with the YOUTs?

Underneath the blankets the YOUTs have a choral sneeze ('A-AA-AAAA-CHOO!'). It makes their blankets fly up, revealing their group.

YOUTs *(to each other)* Bless you!

Surprised, the MEs turn to the YOUTs.

ME 6 Who are you?