

TORONTO FRINGE FESTIVAL 2026

"Many plays claim they're "provocative" in their description, but Oren Safdie's compact drama set in a Montreal private school boys' locker room lives up to the hype ... Safdie, who directs the show with Fatima Lopez, creates complex characters with lots of hidden depths. The gifted young actors commit fully to their... The result is a fascinating look at sexual freedom and consent that will generate plenty of post-show debate." - TORONTO STAR

https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/stage/toronto-fringe-festival-2026-reviews/article_5ed07379-fc8e-4666-921a-8fcd767c6388.html

"What impressed me most was the confidence of the writing. The plot never stands still, and every scene introduces a new twist or revelation. Despite the sheer amount that happens in its 60-minute running time, the play rarely feels rushed. Instead, it gathers momentum, drawing the audience further into an increasingly unsettling world. There is little respite, but the relentless pacing suits the material. The four young performers all deliver impressive performances. Together, the quartet handle some extremely demanding material with assurance." BROADWAY BABY

<https://broadwaybaby.com/shows/gratitude/838004>

(#1 Recommended Fringe Show)

"As the play descends into darker terrain, watching it feels like staring at something so twisted you know you should look away. But you can't: it's simply too treacherously written and too vulnerably acted." - OUR THEATRE VOICE

<https://ourtheatrevoice.com/toronto-fringe-2026-dispatch-2-the-weekend/>

Oren Safdie's newest dramedy (co-directed by Fatima Lopez) screams for your attention early and refuses to let go. - MY ENTERTAINMENT WORLD

myentertainmentworld.ca/2026/07/toronto-fringe-2026-part-iv/

"In a world run on social currency, gratitude is power. Oren Safdie's 2018 play Gratitude, a frank psychosexual drama set in the boys' locker room of a Montreal private high school, gets a sharp, powerful production that reminds us both of the agency teens have in causing harm to each other and the lack of agency they have over much of the rest of their lives. The show's unflinching portrayal of teen sexuality and cruelty is sometimes deliberately hard to watch, but it's also hard to look away ... A talented young cast makes scenes crackle with tension."

- INTERMISSION MAGAZINE

<https://www.intermissionmagazine.ca/reviews/toronto-fringe-2026-2/>

NEW YORK

THEATERSCENE.NET (New York) TOP 10 PLAYS OF THE YEAR

"GRATITUDE takes Teenage-dom to the bitter edge and over. You will not fall in love with any of these characters but there will be glimpses of salvation and hope in each. And you will be captivated by the unfolding of this perfect storm." - ELECTRONIC LINK JOURNEY NYC (NYC)

"Hilarious raunchy high school sexual escapades merge with unsettling psychological twists and turns in this wild dark comedy that is electrifyingly performed ... Mr. Safdie channels the Oleanna-mode essence of David Mamet, Neil LaBute's twisted psychological gamesmanship and Jules Feiffer's Carnal Knowledge-style ribaldry, all into his own distinctively refreshing and well-plotted work which builds to a shattering conclusion." - THEATERSCENE (NYC)

"The play opens up a lot of topics that make people cringe, and then it makes them stare at those things ... Safdie's script works exceedingly well." - STAGE BIZ (NY)

MONTREAL

Oren Safdie's Gratitude is an unflinchingly dark (and darkly funny) exploration of sexual power play... [He] is clearly not a playwright to gingerly approach controversial issues ... The provocations in the play are very much in line with those of Neil La Bute at his most caustic ... You might have some strong post-show words for Safdie. What you won't be able to say is that he doesn't know how to put together a bracingly provocative and ferociously entertaining 75 minutes of theatre." - MONTREAL GAZETTE

"The 75-minute play begins rather innocently, but dissolves into so much sexual tension and human desperation with a great deal of simplicity and humour. The acting is riveting and brings out issues that teens handle amongst themselves within the sanctity of a private school with a great deal of force and authenticity. " - MONTREAL TIMES

"Gratitude offers a topical look at high school lust and longing The scenes are well-paced, engaging, funny ... skillfully choreographed ... and the acting is strong." - THE GLOBE & MAIL

"Montreal-born playwright Oren Safdie has hit the proverbial ball out of the court with his new play Gratitude. Safdie's play captures youthful stirrings with all their passions and insecurities to devastating effect. Gratitude is a brave, provocative story exploring the realities around sex, love, consent, duty, gender roles and rebellion." - THE SUBURBAN

"Oren Safdie's triumphant return to Montreal with Gratitude is a well-rounded presentation that will make one think, examine one's values personally – as well as those that seem pervasive in a societal context – and simply get one talking on both sides of the issue ... Safdie does an ingenious job of bringing the conundrum to the forefront for all generations in thought-provoking fashion." - ORCA SOUND ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

"No stranger to politics and seedy characters, Safdie has concocted a soapy drama that fits in well with our growing awareness of the evil teens can inflict on each other." - CULT MONTREAL

"Oren Safdie has once again written a timely and captivating play." - LAST CALL WITH SOL

"[Gratitude] manages to convey a large spectrum of emotions. It also makes you see certain youth experiences in a different light ... The audience felt all the cringe-worthy moments and the

musings of teenage infatuation. Without forgetting the awkward laughter of embarrassment and the indignation in the face of bullying.” - JANO LAPIN

“Oren Safdie's new play, Gratitude, is direct, raw and does not spare words ... The dialogue and the structure of the piece are flawless.” - ZONE CULTURE (translated from French)