

THE STORYTELLING CLASS - PRODUCTION NOTES:

ISHMAEL BEAH

- Ishmael Beah was born in 1980 in Sierra Leone.
 - In 1991 a brutal civil war erupted in his country. Beah's parents were killed and he, at age 13, was pressed into service as a child soldier.
 - When the war ended he was adopted by the American storyteller, Laura Simms who brought him to New York.
 - In the USA Beah completed high school and graduated from Oberlin College where he began his international advocacy against the abuse of children in wartime.
 - In 2007 he published the critically acclaimed *A Long Way Gone; Memoirs of a Child Soldier* which became an international best seller.
 - The Washington Post wrote of Beah's memoir, "*Everyone in the world should read this book... We should read it to learn about the world and what it means to be human.*"
- <http://www.alongwaygone.com>

LAURA SIMMS

- Laura Simms is a leading force in the revival of storytelling as a global art form. Her remarkable performances of traditional stories interwoven with personal narratives have earned her awards and critical accolades around the world.
 - In addition to performing, writing, recording and teaching she directs the Gaindeh Project, which uses storytelling as a medium for healing, traumatized communities. Current projects are underway in Rumania, Moldavia, Sierra Leone and the USA,
 - Recently she has included her adopted son, Ishmael Beah, in her work.
 - Laura Simms lives in New York City.
- <http://www.laurasimms.com>

MARC KULY

- Marc Kuly is a teacher and storyteller living in Winnipeg. He is the director of *Many Voices, One World*, a storytelling project that seeks to build bridges of understanding between students from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds
- After completing his Bachelor of Education and Arts (Honours) at the University of Winnipeg, he did graduate work in Folklore at Memorial University in Newfoundland. He then taught grades 2 through 12 in Winnipeg.
- For his innovative work, using the medium of storytelling in the classroom, Marc received the *2008 Manitoba Arts Council's Above and Beyond Award for Arts in Education* and his students received the *2008 YM/YWCA Youth Peacemaker Award*.
- In addition, he and his students have been featured storytellers at the Winnipeg International Storytelling Festival.
- Marc is completing his Master's degree in Education at the University of Manitoba.