

# Us Versus...?

## Talking Across America

### A Satirical Inquiry into the Red, White, and Blues States of our National Character

*As I travel around the country, I've been asking folks what question they'd like to ask the American people and why?*

Actor, poet, singer **Ray McNiece**, presents a revival of his solo play **Us?** on tour through the red, white, and blue states. Performed in front of a wall-sized map of the country made from 50 used flags saved from being burned, **Us?** is a theatrical, cross-country exploration of national character from Times Square to Hollywood Boulevard told through monologues, poems, and guitar accompanied songs.

Based on interviews with "We, the people," McNiece portrays a cross section of a dozen characters — from a WTC relief worker to a Gulf War vet to a Hollywood hustler — who depict the conflicting and sometimes comic opinions our fellow Americans offer to describe themselves and the zeitgeist of our country. "As I travel around the country, I've been asking folks what question they'd like to ask the American people, and why?" creating composite characters from their responses to mirror the face of our nation.

Of McNiece's first solo show at the Edinburgh Fringe Fest, **London's Stage**

**Today** commented, "The energy he has for each character is impressive and he never fails to surprise with the variety packed into the show." **The Scotsman** added, "McNiece's characters are acutely observed, the speech patterns and mannerisms perfectly caught." In a review of **Us?** **The Star Phoenix** said, "His thoughtful writing combines with perfectly timed delivery to create a powerful wordscape that owes as much to jazz as drama."

Ray McNiece has authored six books of monologues, poems, and lyrics created two solo theater pieces, **Dis: Voices from a Shelter**, and **Us Versus...?**, and two poetry musicals, **Mouth Music** and **Rustbowl Hootenanny**. He has appeared in several Cleveland theater productions, most recently as Johnny Freeman in **The American Revolution**.

He has toured **Us Versus...?** to the Canadian Fringe Festival, The Orlando Fringe, The Columbus Fringe, and dozens of Colleges and Universities throughout the United States.

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For more information, call **440-918-0878**  
or log on to **www.raymcniece.com**

# Praise for Ray McNiece's "Us Versus...?"



*McNiece is a folk troubadour descendent of Woody Guthrie. He has a way with words and a wry sense of humor. -- Orlando Sentinel*

*Ray McNiece again and again creates memorable characters and moving theater. 'Us Versus...?' is dramatic satire at its best, by turns biting, witty, poignant and always engaging. -- James Levin, Director, Cleveland Public Theater*

*Ray McNiece is a bardic voice for our time. Bristling with energy, Ray's one-man show reveals his passion about the state of the United States. The wide array of characters he portrays illuminates many of the critical issues gripping the nation. The show provokes outrage, laughter, sorrow, joy, dismay, and a host of other*

*emotions. It is truly moving theatre crafted by an outstanding poet and performer who leaves 'US' with much to ponder. -- David Thompson, Director, Honors College, Henderson State University*

*Ray McNiece delivers a cast of essential characters in his 'Us? Talking Across America' performance, and one of those is America itself. It's an experience you won't forget, full of humor and heart, the way Jack Kerouac or Walt Whitman would make America sing. Our audience of students and community members were stirred and couldn't stop talking about it. -- Dr. Larry Smith, BGSU Firelands College*

*I think it was a great opportunity for our students to hear this poet and actor...He certainly gave our kids food for thought and he did it in a non-threatening but highly engaging way. I liked his approach – very much-serious, but well presented.-- Gerard McKenna, English Department Chair, University of Wisconsin*

*Ray McNiece was a spectacular success on our campus! More than 500 students turned out for his 'Us Versus Us?' program – on a week-day! The student response was very positive, and many students told me afterwards, 'I wish we had a lot more of these type of events!' Ray also worked very well with our students one-on-one and in classes. I highly recommend Ray McNiece to any college in the country. -- Dr. Bill Davidson, Dean of Communications, University of Wisconsin*

*Ray McNiece performed for us in a way that I have never experienced before. From the moment he started, his audience was enmeshed and enraptured as he moved from one personality to the next. His use of vocal variety, gestures and small props brought his performance to life. McNiece embodied the people of this nation, representing them all in different ways and adding a lifelike quality to them. Rather than just talking about the people, he spoke as if he were the people. -- Melanie Blank, University of Wisconsin Communications Major*

*He had a good variety in the tone of his presentation. It wasn't too much of one feeling. Parts were really funny and others were very serious and really made you think. He mixed poems with normal speaking and then added a little music to it all. -- Ashley Raddant, University of Wisconsin Communications Major*

*McNiece is a fantastic performer, using comedy, dramatic monologue, and songs to morph into another character every five minutes for an hour straight. He kept the entire audience entertained. He told the story of contemporary America from many different perspectives. -- Bryan Iversen, Comm 101 University of Wisconsin, Steven's Point*

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