

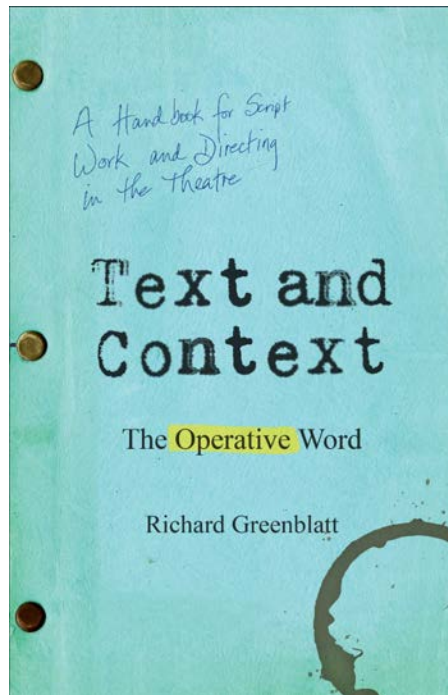


J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD

P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

ESSENTIAL READING



"This book is about how I've been developing and using the method of text investigation and its exercises for over forty-five years as a director and dramaturg, and that writers, designers and especially actors seem to find helpful in the beginning steps toward building their work. It is a method mostly of my own invention, but also includes some adaptations of exercises from others, and has been tested by trial and error over many years in productions that I've directed."

— *Richard Greenblatt*

June's featured book is *Text and Context: The Operative Word*, an essential new handbook for script work and directing in the theatre. Using methods developed over the course of his career, Richard Greenblatt offers practical techniques for artistic collaboration along with tools to create healthy, creative, productive, and equitable processes of theatrical practice.

Praise for Text and Context:

"This passionate and practical book is an invaluable road map for anyone wishing to make a journey in live theater. Full of insightful anecdotes and imaginative exercises, *Text and Context* demystifies the process of cracking open a play, as Greenblatt seeks to bring joy and trust back to the rehearsal process." — *Carey Perloff, director,*

playwright and former Artistic Director of American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco

"This is a *really* valuable book. Essential and engaging reading for everyone involved in the craft of theatre. Sheer good sensible sense." — *Geoff Bullen, Director Short Courses, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art*

"[Greenblatt's] approach is practical, pragmatic, open and honest in a way that is both relatable and malleable to any artist's process. It is a must-read for anyone in the business. I absolutely loved this book from start to finish and will refer to it from here on in." — *Keith Barker, Artistic Director, Native Earth Performing Arts*

[See More](#)

THE INTERVIEW

Marcia Johnson's plays include [Serving Elizabeth](#) (Scirocco Drama, 2020), which opens at Stratford this August, [Courting Johanna](#) (Scirocco Drama, 2009), based on Alice Munro's "Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage," *Binti's Journey*, an adaptation of *The Heaven Shop* by Deborah Ellis, and *Late. My Mother's Ring*, for which she wrote the libretto with composer Stephen A. Taylor, was nominated for a 2009 Dora Mavor Moore Award. Marcia lives in Toronto.



What do you like about being a playwright?

I like showing a different perspective on familiar stories and also shining a light on stories that should be told. It's fun turning a political or historical issue into an engaging play.

What's the best piece of playwrighting advice that you've ever received?

"Book the theatre and hire the actors. This will guarantee that you have something for the actors." — *Djanet Sears*. That advice helped me to write my first full-length play, *Perfect on Paper*, after being stuck at scene three. I couldn't afford a theatre rental, but I invited actors to my home and promised them a barbecue dinner afterwards. It worked. I sent the script to the actors a week ahead of time.

Serving Elizabeth opens at Stratford in August. Can you tell us a little about that play?

Serving Elizabeth was inspired by an episode of the Netflix series *The Crown* where Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip went to Kenya — and none of the Black characters had lines. (Some spoke in Swahili or Kikuyu but there were no subtitles). I wrote it during my time in the playwrights' unit at Thousand Islands Playhouse. TIP commissioned the play and co-produced it with Western Canada Theatre in Kamloops.

Stratford commissioned me to adapt the play from the two-act version that premiered at Western Canada Theatre in February 2020 into a ninety-minute version. (Stratford is doing one-act shows this year to avoid the crowding that would happen in the restrooms during intermission.) *Serving Elizabeth* begins previews there on August 24 and opens on the 28.

The TIP run has been moved from October 2020 to October 2021 with a completely different team than the Stratford production. Other productions are in the works.

What are you working on now?

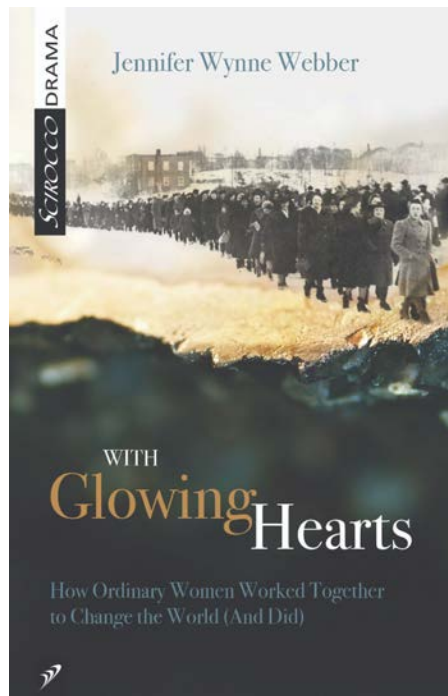
I have a commission from Blyth Festival, *Kate and Bianca*, inspired by the real life of James Mink, a Black councilman, hotel owner, businessman and millionaire in nineteenth-century Toronto. I've mashed up elements of his life with Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. I'm also researching and writing sketches for two other plays: One is set in a World War II POW camp and the other is set in Tudor England.

[Read the Full Interview](#)

CLASS NOTES

Want to share your story about how you use JGS titles in your classes? Let us know.

We'd love to talk to you!



Jennifer Wynne Webber's [*With Glowing Hearts: How Ordinary Worked Together to Change the World \(And Did\)*](#) is based on the inspiring true story of a group of miners' wives in Kirkland Lake in the 1940s. When a miner is injured, the women band together to help, and quickly become the heart and soul of a large-scale organizing drive that is fuelled by sheer will (and sometimes giddy enthusiasm). But their movement will also be tested by the women's own inexperience, a bitter strike, and the brutal force of the powers-that-be.

Katharine Rollwagen, Professor in the History Department at Vancouver Island University, on how she uses Jennifer Wynne Webber's *With Glowing Hearts: How Ordinary Women Worked to Change the World (And Did)* in her classroom:

In what course do you teach *With Glowing Hearts*?

HIST340: Work and Workers in Canada

Why did you choose to use *With Glowing Hearts* in your course?

It started when I saw the Theatre One production of *With Glowing Hearts* at the Malaspina Theatre on campus. The script was so lively and engaging, and also so well researched, that I immediately thought of teaching it in my history of work and workers course. The course is particularly focused on reading and telling working-class stories in accessible ways – using graphic histories and folk music, for example. Teaching a play was a natural fit, even though I'd never done it before! When I learned that Jennifer lived locally, I was even more convinced that including *With Glowing Hearts* on the syllabus could enrich my students' experience.

How do you use Jennifer Wynne Webber's book with your class?

Since this is a history course, I ask my students to dig deeply into the play's historical context. After reading the play, we come up with a list of places, events, people, and pieces of legislation that are mentioned in, or central to, the script. Then each student picks one to research and present to the class. From silicosis to Hepburn's Hussars to the music of Woody Guthrie, through this assignment the students learn so much about the labour movement and wartime working conditions in towns like Kirkland Lake, in Ontario, and in Canada. This context informs and enriches the class discussions we then have about the characters and the ways that gender, class, and ethnicity shaped their lives. Students are also asked to compare the strike

at Kirkland Lake to other confrontations across Canada before, during, and after the Second World War.

***With Glowing Hearts* contains supplemental material including historical photos, a timeline, and a reading list. Has this material been useful for students?**

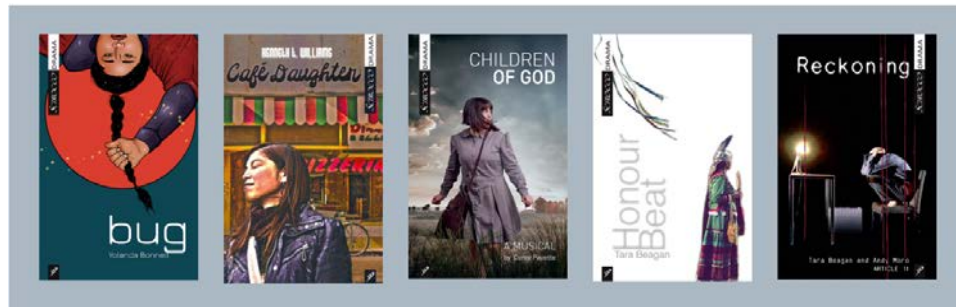
The supplemental material is very helpful. During our discussions, students refer to the timeline to put events in perspective. The students find that the photographs and images heighten the drama and realism of the events recounted in the play.

Can you tell us a little about Jennifer Wynne Webber’s visit to your classroom?

When Jennifer visited our class, the students were particularly keen to ask her about the process of turning historical research into a play with fictionalized characters. Their questions about what was “real” and what was “made up” led to an interesting discussion about how documents in archives can be transformed to communicate an engaging and important story to a wider audience. Her visit was an enriching experience.

Many of our authors are available for classroom visits, in person or via Zoom. If there's an author you'd like to invite to your class, [contact us](#) for more information.

COMMEMORATING INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH



[See More](#)

CELEBRATING PRIDE MONTH



[See More](#)

COMING ATTRACTIONS

- Several Scirocco Drama authors will have plays in the upcoming [Tarragon Theatre](#) season: Christopher Morris's *The Runner* will be the first in-person show, followed by Rosa Labordé's *Light*, Sean Dixon's *Orphan Song*, and Kenneth T. Williams's *The Herd*.
- Christopher Morris's *The Runner* will also be part of the upcoming in-person season at the [Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#).

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