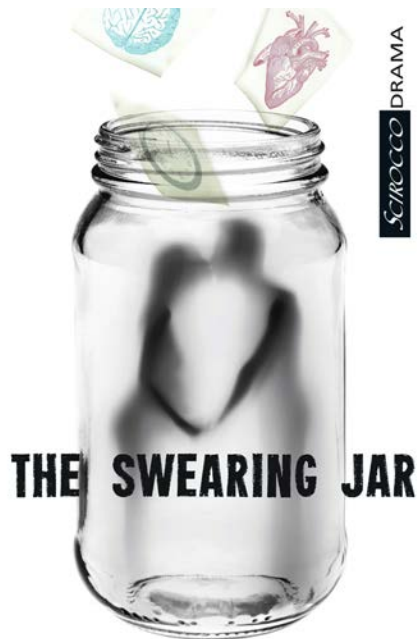




J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD
P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

ESSENTIAL READING



Kate Hewlett

SCRIPPO DRAMA

“The story Hewlett weaves here is wrenchingly honest, believable, sometimes laugh-out-loud funny, sometimes heartbreaking.”
— CBC Manitoba

- *Finalist for the 2013 Governor General's Literary Award for Drama*
- *Winner of Best of Fringe at the 2008 Toronto Fringe Festival*
- *Outstanding New Play at the 2010 New York International Fringe Festival*



Congratulations to Kate Hewlett—the film adaptation of her play [The Swearing Jar](#) will be premiering at the Toronto International Film Festival in September! Patrick J. Adams of *Suits* and Adelaide Clemens of *Rectify* star alongside Douglas Smith of *Big Love* and acclaimed stage and screen actor Kathleen Turner.

The Swearing Jar features Carey and Simon, an otherwise-perfect married couple with a bit of a swearing habit that they're trying to kick by the time their baby is born. Too bad that's not their only problem: Simon has a secret. And Carey has a new friend—a musician named Owen that she met at a bookstore. With quirky characters, music and gentle humour, this lovely and intricately constructed story is about meeting challenges head-on... and finding hope.

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THE INTERVIEW

In addition to her role as Artistic Director of Cahoots Theatre, [Tanisha Taitt](#) is a director/actor/playwright, musical artist, theatre & anti-racism educator, accidental essayist, and audiobook director for Penguin Random House Canada. A former preschool teacher, her creative journey includes encounters with numerous arts organizations. She has been nominated as a director for the Pauline McGibbon Award for Unique Talents, and her plays *Admissions* and *Keeper* are published by Scirocco Drama (the former in the anthology [Fierce: Five Plays for High Schools](#)). Tanisha is a recipient of the Canadian Music Publishers Association Award & Scholarship for distinction in songwriting, and was a 2021 finalist for the Gina Wilkinson Prize honouring female theatre-makers who centre community in their leadership. She was recently named Co-Coordinator of the joint Theatre & Drama Studies program at Sheridan College/University of Toronto Mississauga, and is an instructor for Sheridan's Music Theatre Performance program, where she teaches Acting Through Song. She is also part-time faculty at George Brown Theatre School, teaching Contemporary and Canadian Scene Study. Tanisha is a two-time YWCA Woman of Distinction nominee for her commitment to artistic excellence and social justice.



Tanisha, you are one of the busiest people we know! You are an actor, a director, and a playwright; you're a singer-songwriter, you're an audiobooks director, you're an activist, and you're the Artistic Director of Cahoots Theatre. Yet you also find the time to teach at colleges and universities. Why is teaching important to you?

Teaching brings me immeasurable joy! I teach at Sheridan and George Brown colleges;

both are amazing. I am also the new Co-Coordinator of the joint Theatre and Drama Studies program at Sheridan College/University of Toronto Mississauga, and I'm excited to get to know and spend time with those students. Why I teach, and why I make time for it regardless of whatever else I'm doing, is because I believe it is the best way to create not only the best artists we can, but the best human beings we can.

In 2021 I taught virtually for Memorial University of Newfoundland; I was offered a 3rd Year master class and given the freedom to determine its focus. I created a course on Contemporary Black Playwrights for the group. Other than *A Raisin in the Sun*, which two of them had heard of, when the course began, none of the students could name a single play written by a Black writer. Not one. In 3rd Year. Weeks later, half of them were in love with Branden Jacobs-Jenkins. All it took was exposure. My activism is no longer something that I view as needing to occupy its own lane. It is embedded in my teaching. Our industry is a microcosm of the world; it contains all of the beauty but also all of the ignorance. We convince ourselves that because most of us are "progressives," that we innately do this humanity thing right. But this so-called-progressive industry has fought progress pretty hard. And while it's true that theatre artists tend to be compassionate folks, there is also a self-righteousness amongst us that can rear its head.

You have long been committed to increasing racial and cultural representation in the performing arts. Can you tell us about how your students engage with racially and culturally specific plays in the classroom?

I've given addresses and done workshops on my approach to contemporary scene and play study, so I'll try to condense it! 90% of the playwrights introduced in my class are of colour or Indigenous. When I include other writers, it is work that confronts race in some way. *Master Harold...and the Boys* by Athol Fugard, *Bang Bang* by Kat Sandler, and *The Seat Next to the King* by Steven Elliott Jackson are the three plays by white writers currently in my syllabus.

I see my class as an opportunity to immerse students in what I know they are not being exposed to in other courses. They spend three or four years studying white writers, which is insufficient and frankly, negligent. The notion that racism has to be malicious or intentional is a fallacy. The damaged often learn to smile. You can be the nicest, most well-intentioned white educator alive and be robbing and negating your students of colour in egregious ways. How in God's name is any North American theatre student getting a diploma or degree without cracking the spine of an August Wilson or Lynn Nottage play? These are two-time Pulitzer winners; Wilson is the most celebrated African-American playwright in history and our grads are finishing their theatre education never having read a word of his work.

Today's students should be reading everything Dominique Morisseau writes. How are aspiring Canadian practitioners not being exposed to Djanet Sears or Tomson Highway? And how do so many educators teach only work written from a white lens and never question if they are failing their students? It is tacit racism. Period. "Tradition" is not innocent when birthed from entrenched prejudice. It says—without ever saying it out loud—that everything deemed to be worthy, necessary knowledge in order to graduate is European. That is white supremacist education. You can say that that's harsh and you call it whatever the hell else you want. It doesn't make it less true.

With regards to performance in Scene Study class, I believe that it's incredibly important for students to experiment and explore by traversing the cultural and racial barriers that exist in professional settings. No one is putting on a professional production of *Kim's Convenience* or *Fences* with a white cast, and no one ever should. We all know that. But school is a place to learn, and I sometimes give my students of European descent the

experience of playing characters of other races. That is controversial for some, but it is sheer magic in this class and I stand by it 100%. I don't choose scenes that centre race, as having a white kid give a monologue about living Asian life would be ridiculous. I look at the humanity of the scene, the writing, the universality in the particular. I weigh the opportunity it provides in terms of the rigour and the stretch that it demands—and I match scenes to actors.

The students are often nervous at first, particularly the white ones, but a few nerves never hurt anyone. They experience just an iota of what it's like for their classmates of colour to play (over and over again) characters that were written as white. And it allows me to bring in a LOT of non-white plays. What I love is how quickly everyone dives into the storytelling and into finding the essence of their characters. I don't ask a white student to "be Arab" or an Indigenous student to "be Black." I ask them to play thinking, feeling human beings in specific circumstances, and to roll around in the muck of those circumstances. It is an excavation of empathy, nudging actors into realms of experience far outside of their own.

I give my students of colour work written for them, and I always cast them first because they are often afterthoughts when cast in white stories. They're usually ecstatic and moved because it's the first time they've gotten to play a character who looks like them. In class we talk a LOT about the plays. We forage every play in the syllabus, together. When the students are watching each other present their scenes, they're not just watching isolated bits of plays they know nothing about. Every play has been read, discussed and thoroughly mined as a class, so when each pair or group gets up to perform, the whole class is already wholly invested in the story and deeply understands the scene they are watching in the context of the full play.

[Read the Full Interview](#)

THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER



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COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

Beyond the Sea by Kristen Da Silva

[Victoria Playhouse](#), Victoria, PEI, June 30–September 4, 2022.

Falling: Awake by Gary Kirkham

[Inspired Acting Lab](#), Colchester, ON, July 28–August 7, 2022.

Blackberry by Radha Menon

[Red Betty Theatre](#), Hamilton, ON, August 2–August 21, 2022.

Where You Are (Dove Ci Sei Tu) by Kristen Da Silva

[Festival Teatrale di Borgio Verezzi](#), Borgio Verezzi, Italy, August 2–3, 2022.

The Waltz by Marie Beath Badian

[Blyth Festival](#), Blyth, ON, August 11–27, 2022.

Beyond the Sea by Kristen Da Silva

[Festival Players of Prince Edward County](#), Bloomington, ON, August 24–September 4, 2022.

Salt Baby by Falen Johnson

[Theatre Aquarius](#), Hamilton, ON, September 14–October 1, 2022.

The Runner by Christopher Morris

[Magnus Theatre](#), Thunder Bay, ON, September 29–October 15, 2022.

My Sister's Rage by Yolanda Bonnell

[Tarragon Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, October 11–November 6, 2022.

Cowgirl Up by Anna Chatterton

[Alberta Theatre Projects](#), Calgary, AB, October 18–October 30, 2022.

The Ex-Boyfriend Yard Sale by Haley McGee

[Soulpepper Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, October 18–November 6, 2022.

Serving Elizabeth by Marcia Johnson

[Theatre Aquarius](#), Hamilton, ON, October 19–November 5, 2022.

New by Pamela Mala Sinha

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), Winnipeg, MB, November 3–19, 2022.

Jake's Gift by Julia Mackey

[Rose Theatre, Brampton](#), ON November 11–12, 2022.

Hurry Hard by Kristen Da Silva

[Cow Patti Theatre](#), Lacombe, AB, November 17–December 15, 2022.

Let's Run Away by Daniel MacIvor

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), Winnipeg, MB, December 1–17, 2022.

Controlled Damage by Andrea Scott

[Grand Theatre](#), London, ON, January 17–January 29, 2023.

The Gig by Mark Crawford

[Theatre Aquarius](#), Hamilton, ON, March 8–25, 2023.

The Birds and the Bees by Mark Crawford

[Persephone Theatre](#), Saskatoon, SK, March 29–April 23, 2023.

New by Pamela Sinha

[Canadian Stage](#), Toronto, ON, April 25–May 14, 2023.

The Birds and the Bees by Mark Crawford

[Globe Theatre](#), Regina, SK, May 4–21, 2023.

• ONLINE •

Buffy, a five-part podcast about Buffy Sainte-Marie by Falen Johnson

[CBC Listen](#). All episodes online now.

5 Short Films Inspired by the Five Senses featuring “Taste” by Mark Crawford and Britta Johnson, and “All the Colours” by Marcia Johnson and Danika Loren, [Bad Hats Theatre](#), Online now.

• ON SCREEN •

The Swearing Jar by Kate Hewlett

Starring Adelaide Clemens, Douglas Smith, Patrick J. Adams, and Kathleen Turner, premiering at the Toronto International Film Festival. [Release date: September 23, 2022.](#)

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