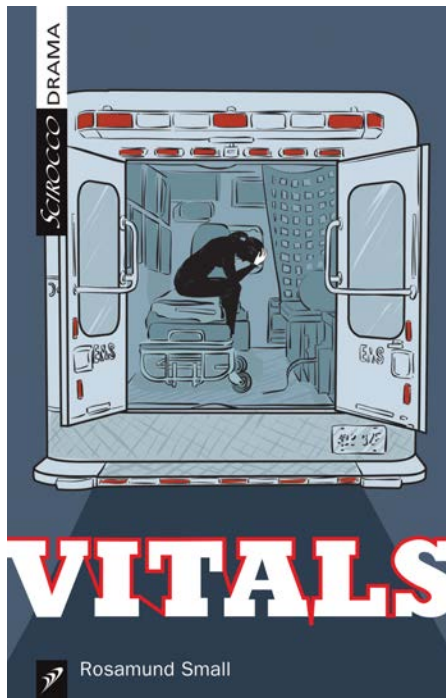




J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD
P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

ESSENTIAL READING



“Every word...sounds fresh and real, a tribute to Small’s accurate ear for human speech, one of the greatest gifts a playwright can have.”

—*Toronto Star*

“In Small’s clever, often darkly comic script, seemingly isolated incidents develop larger importance as Anna falls apart, shaking with anger. That anger makes her aware that her work can’t help but be personal, an understanding that leads her to a new kind of care-giving, one for which she’s perhaps better suited.”

—*NOW Magazine*

Vitals is the story of Anna, a Toronto paramedic. Anna’s daily routine is life, death, bureaucracy. Every call she receives is an emergency.

Based on real interviews Rosamund Small conducted with local EMS workers, this solo show weaves together a canvas of affecting, poignant and disturbing emergency stories and explores their impact on the responders to these calls.

[See More](#)

THE INTERVIEW

[Steven Elliott Jackson](#) is a Dora-nominated playwright and the artistic director of Minmar Gaslight Productions and its family theatre company, 3 Little Bears Productions. His plays include [The Seat Next To The King](#) (which won Best New Play at the Toronto Fringe in 2017), *Three Ordinary Men* (which won Best New Play at the Hamilton Fringe Festival in 2020, was a finalist in the 2020 ScreenCraft Stage Play Awards and was nominated for the Best New Play at 2022 Dora Awards) and *The Leaves Beneath The Trees*. (finalist in the 2019 Newmarket Ten Minute Play Festival). This past year, Steven has premiered the queer film history play, *The Garden Of Alla* and *The Prince's Big Adventurer*, a queer fairy tale for the whole family at the 2022 Toronto Fringe to glowing reviews.



Steven, your play *The Seat Next to the King* presents us with two characters whose lives intersect with political power, homophobia, and racism. What compelled you to tackle these large and complex themes?

Well, I guess I hope as playwrights we challenge ourselves to tackle these topics. I don't think I set out to do it, but I let the characters tell me who they are, and these topics are integral to who these men were. Our world is filled with many intersections and that makes any play complicated. It's less being compelled to write about the topics than the topics needing to be part of these characters.

Several of your plays delve into the subject of race and racism. The Black Lives Matter movement has caused many Canadian theatres to evaluate whose stories are being told, and who is telling them. Why do you think it's important for white artists to examine racism alongside their Black colleagues?

Because it doesn't exist without them! In order to have a talk on racism, having the person who is being called on racism not being there seems counterproductive. As writers, we are a part of every play we write whether there is a character in the play named Steven or not. When I write about racism in my plays, I'm actively going outside of my experience and learning someone else's perspective. I want an audience to see where they are in the discussion, not talk down to them. And I can tell you that I get flak from people of colour and white people alike when I write. And that's good because maybe it calls out blind spots that I may have. I would rather bring the blind spots out than sit there and only write about me. That's boring theatre. Writing about someone who isn't you is a risk and I won't stop taking those risks.

Your play *Three Ordinary Men*, recently nominated for five Dora Mavor Moore Awards (including Outstanding New Play,) explores the tragic deaths of civil rights workers Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner. *The Seat Next to the King* explores what might have happened if Martin Luther King's trusted friend Bayard Rustin and Lyndon Johnson's aide Walter Jenkins had had a relationship. Both of these plays are set in the 1960s, both plumb the inequity between white men and black men. What do you see in that era that helps to inform 21st-century discussions about race?

It's interesting that my love of history is really for eras earlier than the sixties, but as we move forward in time, it's becoming a decade connected to us that seems long ago and yet is still within many people's lifetime. Race is a constant topic but looking at the 1960s allows us to see how far we have come and yet still see how far we need to go. I think that we truly see the integration of white and black lives in that decade in a way never before experienced. The start of seeing where equality was wanted by more people and Black voices were being heard—I might add, through mediums that reached larger audiences. We truly don't realize the contributions things like radio, TV and the internet have made to society, for good and bad.

[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!

This month we talked to Heather Caplap, Education and Community Engagement Manager at [Tarragon Theatre](#) about the programs they offer. Heather (she/her) is a disabled queer arts administrator whose practice focuses on fostering lasting community connection by creating spaces where artists and audiences can come together in a spirit of generous exchange and supportive experimentation.



Photo: Tarragon Theatre Staff

Heather, could you tell us a bit about the kinds of programs that Tarragon offers to educators, students, and young patrons?

Tarragon Theatre provides a wide array of educational programs for students and youth. For high school students we offer a variety of workshops in theatre creation. Led by

professional artists who are experienced youth facilitators, these workshops provide opportunities for students to further their in-class learning and connect with artists in the industry. We also offer student matinees, giving students the opportunity to experience new Canadian works from diverse creative teams. All of our shows are accompanied by educational Audience Resources Guides to help audiences dive deep into the themes and content of the plays.

Our East of Tarragon program is a partnership between Tarragon Theatre, U of T Scarborough Campus, Scarborough Arts, and a number of Scarborough and Markham area high schools. East of Tarragon provides free theatre creation workshops, multi-tiered mentorship opportunities, free public presentations and community connection in students' own neighborhoods. East of Tarragon is generously funded by TD's ready commitment program.

We have a number of training opportunities designed for post-secondary students. Our Young Playwright's Unit is a paid training experience for young artists (aged 18-28) who are curious and passionate about playwriting. This program offers a group of dedicated young creators a rigorous and supportive context in which to develop some of their first works. Our Audit the Season student subscription provides exclusive access to invited dress rehearsals for and pre-show 'industry chats' for every show, giving students an opportunity to connect with industry professionals and learn about the phases of theatre creation. It also includes tickets to all 7 of our plays, so they can experience the full breadth of what Tarragon has to offer.

How do you reach out to young people who may not be familiar with the Tarragon? What do you tell them about the theatre?

Much of our outreach to young people and emerging artists is facilitated by our strong relationships with teachers and our community partners. We work with educators, youth mentors and community leaders across Ontario to connect students and youth with the work we do here. By sustaining meaningful relationships with these communities, students are given the opportunity to connect with the theatre ongoingly and continue the artistic conversation with their peers and mentors beyond the walls of our theatre. Our partnerships with organizations such as Paprika Festival and Centre for Indigenous Theatre invite young creatives to grow their practices at Tarragon and know that this is a creative space they are always welcomed in. We've been building relationships with a number of new collaborators and community leaders, further opening our impact and scope to more young people.

You work with educators and see a lot of them come through the doors of the Tarragon. What do the best educators do to make their students' theatre experience a rich one?

Tarragon Theatre programs bold and at times challenging new works. As Canada's neighborhood theatre we are investigating what it means to tell contemporary Canadian stories. Students are likely to encounter new ideas, forms, and experiences at Tarragon. In my opinion, one of the best strategies is to provide a holistic theatrical experience. Prepare students for what their time at the theatre might be like. Engage in discussions around the themes, content, and cultural perspectives presented in the play. Follow up with group discussions and reflection on what was shared. We offer Audience Resource Guides, Visual Stories, theatre tours, and thematically specific workshops to support educators in this endeavour.

Today young people have a vast array of internet content and electronic entertainment available to them. Why do you think it's important for them to engage

with theatre?

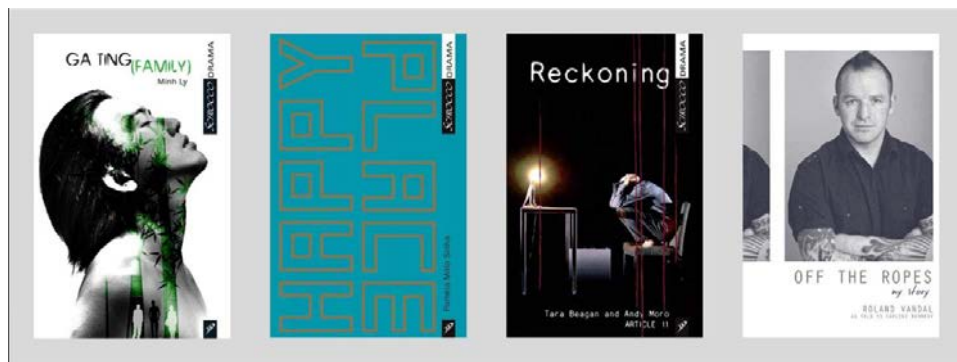
Theatre offers a uniquely embodied and collaborative experience unmatched by other forms of entertainment. The experience of each performance is unique—an experience shared uniquely by the people in the room never to be the same. Whether young people engage with theatre as creators or audience members, there is a specific type of magic and connection that is fostered in sharing live work where the literal medium is human life and experience. In my experience, the types of conversations around selfhood, narrative, and cultural critique that theatre allows for can't be fostered and nurtured in the same way in virtual environments. Whether or not students choose to pursue theatre as an artistic practice, the critical thinking, relationality, and empathy that theatre encourages is crucial to the development of young minds and supports all types of learning.

How did the pandemic affect your programs for students and young audience members? Has engagement returned to pre-pandemic levels yet?

I think we can all agree that lockdown, isolation, and the pandemic have been incredibly difficult for students, youth, and educators. I am seeing a real hunger for a return to in-person activities, especially from high schools who are now able to plan field trips. So many students have not had the opportunity to experience the performing arts in-person and I think it's so important that they get the chance to do that. When the pandemic hit, we quickly pivoted our educational offerings to be virtual. In some ways there was actually a silver lining to this. By providing virtual learning opportunities we were able to connect with schools and communities far outside of the GTA who normally wouldn't have access to all of our programming. As we move forward we are offering in-person and virtual options for the entirety of our 2022/23 season and our educational programs.

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.

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH



[See More](#)

COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

The Shape of Home: Songs in Search of Al Purdy by Beau Dixon, Frank Cox-O'Connell, Hailey Gillis, Marni Jackson, Raha Javanfar, and Andrew Penner
[Crow's Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, to September 25, 2022.

Salt Baby by Falen Johnson
[Theatre Aquarius](#), Hamilton, ON, to October 1, 2022.

Janet Wilson Meets the Queen by Beverley Cooper
[Campbell House](#), Toronto, ON, September 28, 2022.

Kate and Bianca by Marcia Johnson
[Campbell House](#), Toronto, ON, September 29, 2022.

The Runner by Christopher Morris
[Magnus Theatre](#), Thunder Bay, ON, September 29–October 15, 2022.

Shakespeare Club by Dave Carley
[Campbell House](#), Toronto, ON, October 1, 2022.

Children of Fire by Anna Chatterton and Shahrzad Arshadi
[Rutas Festival](#), Toronto, ON, October 6–9, 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.

The Waltz by Marie Beath Badian
[Factory Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, October 22–November 13, 2022.

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

Jake's Gift by Julia Mackey
[Rose Theatre, Brampton](#), ON November 10–12, 2022.

Hurry Hard by Kristen Da Silva
[Cow Patti Theatre](#), Lacombe, AB, November 17–December 18, 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.

Recently premiered at TIFF and [coming soon to CIFF and a theatre near you!](#)

IN THE NEWS

- Toronto’s Dora Mavor Moore Awards were presented this week, and we are happy to congratulate Scirocco author [Leanna Brodie](#), whose translation of *Wildfire* by David Paquet won the Outstanding New PlayAward as well as Outstanding Production in the General Theatre category. Congratulations, too, to [Rosa Labordé](#); Layne Coleman won the Outstanding Performance by an Individual in the Independent Theatre category for his performance as Roy in Rosa’s play *True*. And congratulations to [Steven Elliott Jackson](#), whose *Three Ordinary Men*, directed by Scirocco author [Tanisha Taitt](#), garnered five Dora nominations.

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