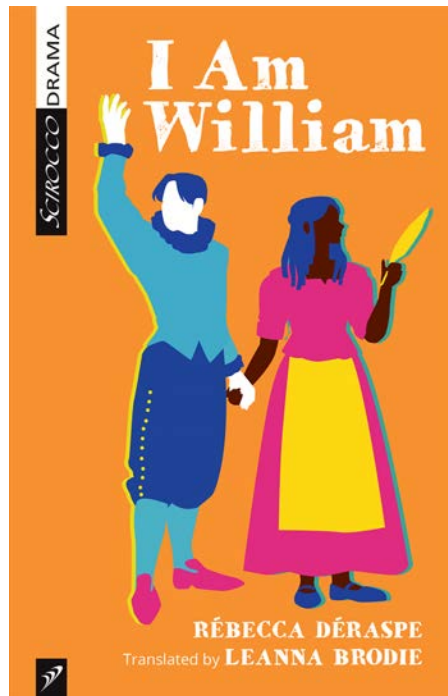




J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD
P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

ESSENTIAL READING



"I Am William radiates both charm and substance...Deraspe's clever faux-Shakespeare could be the real thing in terms of rhythm and rhyme, and I stand in awe of the playwright's long-time translator, Leanna Brodie, who rendered the lines into Shakespearean English."

— Paula Citron, *ludwig-van.com*

"The language dazzles. At times it seems we are witnessing linguistic gymnastics on the level of Simone Biles — words and syllables rhyme in triplicate. Women and girls are championed and credited with creativity and tenacity at a time when both were dangerous."

— *The Slotkin Letter*

Margaret Shakespeare, age 13, must write her remarkable plays in secret: it is 1577, and a girl who can read and write is in danger from the witch-hunters. After all, as her father keeps reminding her, a woman's place is in the home...next to a big pile of laundry. Once the sweet but dim William discovers his sister's astonishing talent, a chain of events is set in motion that will change both their lives forever. What happens to women of genius in a world that wants only their silence? Can a sister's determination—and a brother's unfailing love—really conquer all?

Seamlessly translated from the original French by Leanna Brodie, [I Am William](#) is a strikingly original play with music that tackles the big feminist questions with wit, heart, and infectious energy. Winner of Quebec's prestigious Prix de la critique and Prix Louise-

Lahaye, Rébecca Déraspe's *I Am William* has toured France, Spain, and the province of Quebec to great acclaim. This English version, commissioned by Theatre Le Clou, was also a hit at the Stratford Festival.

[See More](#)

THE INTERVIEW

[Sally Stubbs](#) is an award-winning playwright, screenwriter, and educator who sometimes acts, directs, and produces. Much of her writing is inspired by true stories, both personal and historical. Her plays include [Our Ghosts](#), [Wreckage](#), [Herr Beckmann's People](#), [And Bella Sang With Us](#), [Centurions](#), [Spinning You Home](#), and [Polly in the Penthouse](#). Sally studied and performed theatre in Canada and abroad. She completed a Master's degree in Art History and Writing at UVic, where she also taught playwriting. She is particularly pleased to have received the Canada Peace Play prize for *Herr Beckmann's People* and a Prime Minister's Award for her work with youth and theatre, and to be a co-founder and advisor of the CASA Project, which aims to support women playwrights living in South Africa. Sally, her partner, and their crazy kitty live in Vancouver, but spend as much time as possible on Vancouver Island.



Sally, many of your plays explore interesting eras in history: And Bella Sang with Us takes place in 1912 and is based on the story of Vancouver's first female police officers; Herr Beckmann's People deals with a family during WWII and its aftermath; Wreckage's story centres on a train crash in 1924; Spinning You Home takes us all the way back to the BC Gold Rush of the 1860s. What is it about these past eras that inspires you to write about them? Why do you think audiences love to see the past evoked onstage?

I grew up in a house of readers and storytellers, including my larger-than-life grandfather who fled Northern Ireland on a cattle boat when he was seventeen. In Canada he became a journalist. In search of truth and story, he took on adventure, e.g., partying with the notorious Grey Owl and traveling with bootleggers based in Moose Jaw on a run across the U.S. border and back. His reporting extended to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly

members who at one point decided to turn the tables and report on the journalists. They voted my grandfather “the most fearless reporter.” As a child, I wanted to be just like him. A part of me still does.

The stories I grew up with were often inspired by history, primarily my family’s. I was a kid who loved Canadian history up until the day I encountered Social Studies in school. I couldn’t believe it was possible to render our stories dull, lifeless, and virtually women-free. I think that’s why I write these plays. I want to explore little-known Canadians, events, and issues in a way that brings them to life, building on truth and the magic of imagination, while exploring our heritage and humanity – the good, the bad, and the ugly. I think audiences love to see the past evoked onstage when the seeds of imagination and truth conspire to bring complex historical characters and events to life in a way that also speaks to who and where we are now.

Your most recent play, *Our Ghosts*, deals with history of another kind, personal history. Would you tell our readers something about the play, and about the writing of it?

Virtually all my writing is inspired in some way by personal history, and no matter how different the stories—drama, dark comedy, cop/mystery, musical—they always feature a disappeared person. *Our Ghosts* is directly inspired by the true story at the root of my obsession with the disappearance of those we love.

When it was clear that my beloved mom wasn’t going to live too much longer, I asked for and received her enthusiastic permission to write the story that changed our lives forever. My dad, Flying Officer Gerald Stubbs, and his co-pilot, Flying Officer James E. Miller, mysteriously disappeared in a routine instrument flight from Comox RCAF Base in British Columbia on March 22, 1956. Inspired by that event, *Our Ghosts*, at its heart, is a testament to the love and tenacity of a woman determined to uncover the truth and a daughter’s journey toward learning to live with her ghosts.

I began writing *Our Ghosts* in the last, difficult years of my mom’s life. I’d take my research and text into my writing groups and cry. My colleagues were incredibly kind and generous. Their encouragement helped me to embrace my vulnerability, dig deep, and eventually find the shape, tone, voices, movement, and magic of the world inhabited by characters who are, yet aren’t, my family. It was a long, demanding, and, ultimately, beautiful way to grapple with love and loss.

Your screenplay *Centurions* has garnered a lot of international awards! Recently it won the Best Unproduced Script award at the [New Wave Film Festival](#) in London, England, was an official selection of the [Toronto International Women Film Festival](#) and the LA Independent Women Film Awards, was awarded Best Feature Script at Slovakia’s [Kosice International Film Festival](#), was a finalist at the Art of Brooklyn Film Festival and at the Santa Barbara International Screenplay Awards and a Top Ten finalist at the Emerging Screenwriters Genre Competition, as well as being named a Gold Script Writing winner at the [WRPN Women’s International Film Festival](#). How did you go about adapting the play to a screenplay? What are the challenges of writing in a new medium?

The work on the *Centurions* screenplay has been a blast and a great learning experience. Like many writers, I stalled during the pandemic. Then I thought, why not revisit the pilot I had begun to adapt from my women cop play, *And Bella Sang With Us?* That got me going. The pilot—*Underbelly*—is darker than the play and there is huge possibility in the serial narrative. *Underbelly* has also attracted some international attention, but it’s still evolving and one thing I’m learning is that I am probably better suited to writing features

than serial scripts. I think that may be where I head next with *Underbelly*.

For years I contemplated adapting my plays for the screen. I used to think it would be a better fit as my theatre scripts all want to travel to different locations, times, and even realities. Now I tend to think the two mediums are just different kinds of fit. It's exciting to work with theatre directors and designers who find the creative challenge of multiple locations and/or realities inspiring. Screenplays, however, demand much of what I what I naturally tend to do and, because of that, adapting the play *Centurions* for the screen has been thrilling. The camera opens narrative option after option, some of which I'm now planning to explore in the *Centurions* theatre script.

The big screenwriting challenge for me is structure. I'm growing into it, but I'm also learning to trust my choices and voice. What I need to focus on now is getting my first feature produced. Yikes!

[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 asked Rohan Kulkarni of Toronto's [Soulpepper Theatre](#) to tell us a bit about the theatre's educational programs.

Rohan Kulkarni is an arts manager and educator who is passionate about building strong communities, sparking important conversations, and empowering young people through the performing arts.



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

Soulpepper has a number of programs running year-round that encourage young people to explore and develop their artistic voices. And I'll mention something right off the bat because it brings me so much joy – all the education and community programs offered at Soulpepper are completely free, and some even pay youth a stipend for their participation! During fall and spring, we have Curtain Up workshops that focus on a particular area of theatre (scene study, music, design, etc.), as well as other workshop series specifically for newcomer youth, English Language Learners in schools, and more. Summer is a very busy time for us, starting off with Queer Youth Cabaret during Pride month, which gives 12 young LGBTQ2SIA+ identified artists a paid opportunity to train and perform at Soulpepper. With schools going on summer break, we begin two six-week intensive

programs – City Youth Academy and Summer Mixtape. City Youth Academy offers a group of young artists aged 16-19 a chance to delve deeper into theatre creation as they begin to seriously consider a career in the performing arts. Summer Mixtape, presented in partnership with the Lifelong Leadership Institute, is a program for Black youth to explore Black identity and culture through a mix of music, movement, playwriting, and acting, while building a community of creative peers. And, of course, we have the nationally renowned Soulpepper Academy.

For our young patrons, Soulpepper offers an incredible “Free 25 and under” program, through which anyone under the age of 25 can book free tickets to Soulpepper productions. We also host talkbacks and engagement events to connect young audiences to the industry leading artists on stage and behind the scenes of every production. Soulpepper has been welcoming school groups for many years now, with accessibly priced tickets and talkbacks at student matinees. Student audiences are truly a favourite for Soulpepper artists, who treasure the opportunity to perform in front of such a responsive group and then speak to them after the show.

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

We are increasingly investing our time in getting to know young people from communities outside arts high schools and Toronto’s downtown core. The virtual programming we offered during two years of COVID really connected us to those who were curious about the arts from further away in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. Our relationships with artists, educators, and other non-profits have also put us in touch with youth who have had limited exposure to theatre. We tell them that Soulpepper is a place for anyone who appreciates the art of storytelling, and that theatre is a medium where we can invite others into an active conversation. Our skilled artist educators encourage youth to tell stories in a way that sparks their creativity and feels meaningful to their lived experiences.

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

Honestly, every educator who goes through the effort and administrative steps to get their students to the theatre is an absolute hero in the first place. There are some who go above and beyond by building their entire teaching unit around a Soulpepper production, meaning that when their group arrives to see the show, they’ve already done an in-depth study into the themes of the play. It’s thrilling to hear students’ perspectives and feedback after they experience the work live on stage, and how passionate and analytical they can be.

Tell us about the Soulpepper Academy, a unique program that trains young artists. Who are the artists this season, and what will they be working on?

The Soulpepper Academy brings together a cohort of emerging artists for a six-month, fully-funded theatre training program. Academy members deepen their artistic practice through classes, writing and performing their own pieces, and working on a Soulpepper mainstage production. This year, we have a dynamic cohort that includes Will Dao, Varun Guru, Annie Luján, Shaquille Pottinger, and Kiana Woo. They were all part of *King Lear* as performers (and Dao as Assistant Director). In their remaining months with us, the Academy artists will be presenting short solo pieces they’ve been working on, as well as putting on a public showcase for Soulpepper audiences to experience their incredible talent.

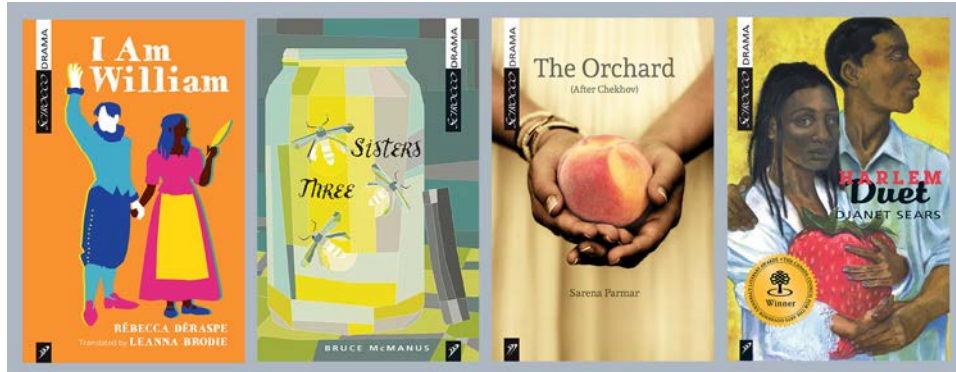
One of our Scirocco Drama authors, Haley McGee, will be performing her solo show [The Ex-Boyfriend Yard Sale](#) at Soulpepper this month. Can you tell us about any

outreach to young people that she'll be doing?

Haley is such a vibrant and engaging storyteller, and we're so lucky to finally have her back in Toronto for *The Ex-Boyfriend Yard Sale*. Haley also shares our passion for connecting with young audiences and will be engaging in as many talkbacks, pre-show chats, and school visits as we can schedule. She will be chatting with our "Free 25 and Under" audiences during preview performances, as well as hosting a special edition of her "Cost of Love" podcast that intersects with Soulpepper's Community Conversations series. This conversation will bring together a group of folks who are professionally invested in what love costs, from a divorce lawyer to a relationship counsellor and an adult film producer. We're hoping it'll be an insightful discussion about how our generation's idea and experience of love is so intertwined with material costs, and present different ideas of what love is "worth."

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.

REINVENTING THE CLASSICS



[See More](#)

COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

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.

Our Ghosts by Sally Stubbs
[Firehall Theatre](#), Vancouver, BC, March 18–April 2, 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.

IN THE NEWS

The [Playwrights Guild of Canada](#) announced the nominees for the Tom Hendry Awards at the end of September, and several Scirocco authors are in the running, including:

- *Mad Madge* by [Rose Napoli](#) and *The Gig* by [Mark Crawford](#) are nominated for the Comedy Award.
- [Marie Beath Badian](#) has been nominated for the PGC Drama Award for her play *Common: A Trilogy*.
- [Julia Lederer](#) (with co-creator Julie Ritchey) is nominated for the Plays for Young People Award for *Gather*.
- [Corey Payette](#) has been nominated for the Dan School of Drama and Music Award for his musical *Starwalker*.
- [Beverley Cooper](#) has been nominated for the Bra D'Or Award, which recognizes people who support and promote the work of Canadian women playwrights.

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