

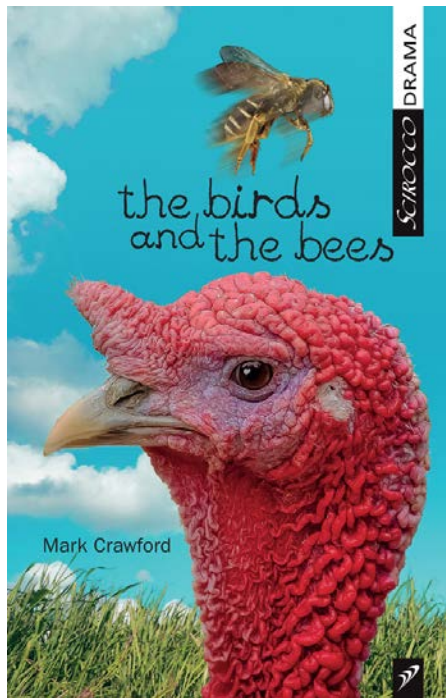
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**J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD**  
P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

## ESSENTIAL READING



“Belly laugh after belly laugh in this outstanding, warm-hearted comedy that confirms Crawford as one of this country’s finest up-and-coming playwrights... *The Birds and the Bees* has an emotional depth few other comedies can claim.”

—*London Free Press*

“Sweet as honey.”

—*London Times*

Sarah’s marriage is over, and she’s just moved back home to the farm with her beekeeper mother, Gail. As the women try to adjust to the many changes in their world, their lives are complicated by the community’s last-ever Turkey Days celebration, beehive troubles, an eccentric neighbour, and a handsome young researcher. [Mark Crawford's](#) laugh-out-loud comedy [The Birds and the Bees](#) has a huge, honeyed heart.

[See More](#)

# THE INTERVIEW

[Mary Vingoe](#) is a director, artistic director, festival director, playwright, teacher, and actor who has worked at theatres across the country. Vingoe is celebrated for co-founding four major theatre companies in Canada: Toronto's Nightwood Theatre, Ship's Company Theatre in Parrsboro, NS, The Eastern Front Theatre in Halifax and the Magnetic North Theatre Festival at Canada's National Arts Centre. Vingoe's plays include *Living Curiosities*, *Refuge*, which was short-listed for the 2016 Governor General's Award for Drama, and *Some Blow Flutes*, which was nominated for best new play at the 2019 Nova Scotia Merritt Awards. In 2011, Vingoe was made an Officer of the Order of Canada for her contributions to Canadian theatre.



**Mary, you have an incredible career as a director, actor, dramaturge, and producer. You've also written several plays, including Scirocco Drama publications *Some Blow Flutes*, a moving drama about two families in crisis whose lives intersect, and *Refuge*, a powerful examination of the difficulties facing refugees seeking asylum. How does your extensive experience as a director inform your playwriting?**

I would say I'm never far from the rehearsal hall when I'm writing. I think about staging possibilities and actors I know who could do the part. It's a blessing and a curse.

**You've worked all across the country, but you're based in Halifax. What keeps you in Nova Scotia? What do you love about the theatre scene where you are?**

I have been fortunate to work across Canada, but Nova Scotia is home. I lived in Toronto for thirteen years. I did a Masters at U of T Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama and then went on to be an actor at Theatre Passe Muraille with Nightwood, Theatre Direct school touring and even a season at the Shaw Festival before writing and directing became more interesting to me. I realized I loved the rehearsal hall more than the performance. I stay in Nova Scotia because I feel I belong here. I have watched it grow and change over 40 years.

My husband Paul Cram was from Vancouver. We met in Toronto and were there a few years before sky-high house prices and starting a family made us reconsider. I wanted to have the baby at home in Nova Scotia and I wanted to be closer to my mother, who was widowed. So, we agreed to try it for a year. The baby was born, we reconnected with folks here. Paul started Upstream Music with some jazz buddies and I joined forces with Wendy

Lill and Gay Hauser to start The Eastern Front Theatre, here in Dartmouth. Our second daughter was born. It felt like we were home. So, we stayed.

**Among the most remarkable of your achievements is the fact that you have founded or co-founded at least five successful theatres/theatre festivals in Canada, including Nightwood Theatre, Ship's Company Theatre, Eastern Front Theatre, HomeFirst Theatre, and Magnetic North Theatre Festival! What characteristics, if any, do they share? Can you tell us a bit about the challenges of founding a theatre company?**

Starting a theatre company is an act of faith. No matter how well you plan, your plans will mostly go awry. In my experience, you need to believe in something bigger than yourself. At Nightwood we were trying to make space for women artists directors and playwrights who were virtually invisible on Toronto and Canadian stages. At Ship's Company, located in an old ferry vessel beached at Parrsboro NS, we were developing stories from our own region, giving voice to Atlantic Canadian playwrights. At Eastern Front the mandate was similar but this time the audience was urban, and the plays began to be more diverse.

In 2002, I was asked to become the AD of The Magnetic North Theatre Festival. It was the most ambitious and challenging thing I had ever done. Bringing the country together in a different city every second year. My GM Barbara Howatt and I were managing three seasons, wrapping past in one city, planning future in another and performing in a third. I truly believe we changed Canadian theatre, introducing theatre artists and their work to artists from all parts of the country. I remember introducing the brilliant Indigenous playwright Marie Clements to Newfoundland comedy legend Andy Jones at the first press conference in Ottawa. They had never met. It was electric. That was true for most theatre artists in Canada. Magnetic North began to change all that. I still regret its demise.

[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 interviewed Kristi Friday, the Artistic Associate for Youth Programming at Saskatoon's [Persephone Theatre](#). Kristi has been an actor, director, puppeteer, puppet builder, and drama workshop facilitator for over 20 years. In 2022 she took on the role of Artistic Associate of Youth Programming at Persephone Theatre which includes directing Persephone's Young Company and overseeing the Youth Tour and School Matinees of the Persephone Youth Series and Mainstage Season.*

***Kristi, you work with educators who work to provide theatre experiences for their classes. What, in your opinion, are the most important things an educator can do to make a visit to the theatre meaningful for their students?***

The discussions and activities that happen before and after the show are *vital* for creating a meaningful and memorable theatre experience. Theatre is an opportunity to reflect on what it is to be human — to make one think, feel, reflect, and maybe even change— so engage those young minds! By utilizing the study guide and participating in the post-show Q&A, the students can absorb and internalize the information and themes of a play more readily. A theatre experience does not end when the show is over — this is the perfect time to create conversations and inform those young minds.

**Could you tell us a bit about the kinds of programs that Persephone offers to educators, students, young patrons, and aspiring theatre professionals?**

Every season Persephone Theatre Youth Series offers three shows for schools and the general public. One of these shows tours to schools throughout Saskatchewan for three weeks. Mainstage shows each have one school matinee per production. All school matinees are followed by a facilitated Q&A where students can learn more from the performers and creative team. We also offer theatre tours and workshops to educators and students.

Persephone Theatre School offers a multitude of classes and camps throughout the year for all age groups to learn a variety of skill sets in drama.

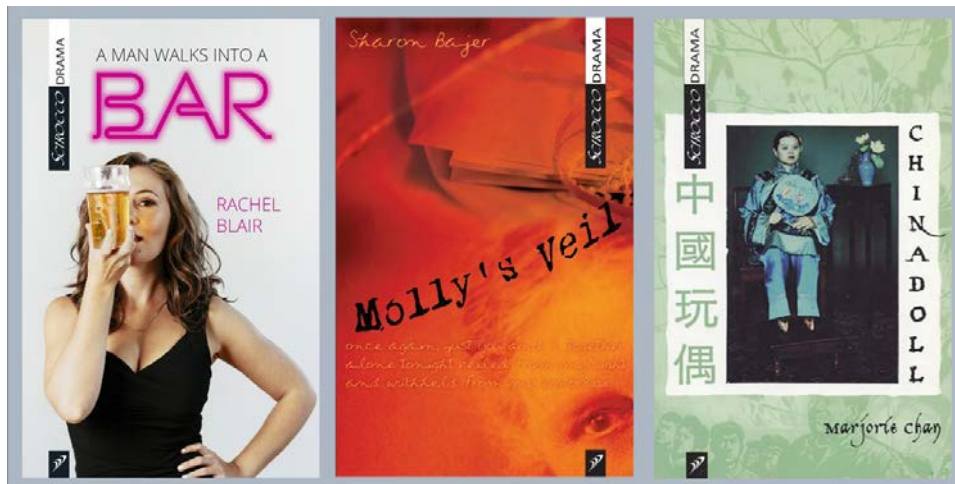
Persephone Young Company provides training at the highest calibre for a dedicated group of young people (ages 14-19) who are serious about pursuing a career in the theatre.

**Can you tell us more about Persephone's Study Guides and how these are developed?**

Study guides provide a more fulsome theatre experience for both educators and students. When we develop the guides, we try to take into consideration the various subjects and curriculum learning outcomes that a play covers. Our resources include news articles, documentary links, reading list recommendations, theatre etiquette and enjoyment tips (vital for students following Covid), pre-show and post-show discussion points, and activities that correlate to the show. On our Mainstage this past December we presented *The Fiancée* by Holly Lewis, a farce about two Black sisters sharing an apartment in Saskatoon at the end of WW2. When the play begins, one sister has just found out that she has lost her job because the men are returning home, as a result, they may lose their apartment. The other sister realizes that she has promised to marry 3 soldiers — all of whom will be returning home on the same day. Comedy ensues! For this show we provided social studies resources such as articles on what it was like for Black women during WW2, and the roles of women in the factories, plus pop culture references from the time. We also provided drama resources and activities regarding different forms of theatre comedy throughout history such as door farces and slapstick comedy.

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.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY-MARCH 8



[See More](#)

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

**Starwalker** by Corey Payette

[Urban Ink](#), Vancouver, BC, February 16–March 5, 2023.

**Hurry Hard** by Kristen Da Silva  
[Western Canada Theatre](#), Kamloops, BC, February 23–March 4, 2023.

**Controlled Damage** by Andrea Scott  
[Boardmore Theatre](#), Sydney, NS, February 28–March 5, 2023.

**Innocence Lost** by Beverley Cooper  
[Manitoba Theatre for Young People](#), Winnipeg, MB, March 3–4, 2023.

**The Gig** by Mark Crawford  
[Theatre Aquarius](#), Hamilton, ON, March 8–25, 2023.

**The Bluff** by Kristen Da Silva  
[Theatre Orangeville](#), Orangeville, ON, March 15–April 2, 2023.

**Jake's Gift** by Julia Mackey  
[Rosebud Theatre](#), Rosebud, AB, March 17–18, 2023.

**Our Ghosts** by Sally Stubbs  
[Firehall Theatre](#), Vancouver, BC, March 19–April 2, 2023

**The Birds and the Bees** by Mark Crawford  
[Persephone Theatre](#), Saskatoon, SK, March 29–April 23, 2023.

**Take D Milk, Nah?** by Jiv Parasram  
[Eastern Front Theatre](#), Dartmouth, NS, March 29, 2023.

**Take D Milk, Nah?** by Jiv Parasram  
[Festival Antigonish](#), Antigonish, NS, March 31–April 1, 2023.

**Take D Milk, Nah?** by Jiv Parasram  
[Highland Arts Theatre](#), Sydney, NS, April 5–8, 2023.

**Take D Milk, Nah?** by Jiv Parasram  
[Theatre New Brunswick](#), Fredericton, NB, April 13–15, 2023.

**New** by Pamela Sinha  
[Canadian Stage](#), Toronto, ON, April 25–May 14, 2023.

**The Curst** by Kelley Jo Burke  
[Dancing Sky Theatre](#), Meacham, SK, April 28–May 14, 2023.

**Where You Are** by Kristen Da Silva  
[Theatre Northwest](#), Prince George, BC, May 4–24, 2023.

**The Birds and the Bees** by Mark Crawford  
[Globe Theatre](#), Regina, SK, May 4–21, 2023.

**Boom X** by Rick Miller  
[Crow's Theatre](#), Toronto ON, May 10–28, 2023.

**Armadillos** by Colleen Wagner  
[Factory Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, June 3-24, 2023.

***The Waltz*** by Marie Beath Badian  
[Blyth Festival](#), Blyth, ON, July 12–July 29, 2023.

***New Canadian Curling Club*** by Mark Crawford  
[Drayton Festival Theatre](#), Drayton, ON, July 13–July 29, 2023.

***Prairie Nurse*** by Marie Beath Badian  
[Capitol Theatre](#), Port Hope, ON, July 14–30, 2023.

***New Canadian Curling Club*** by Mark Crawford  
[Huron Country Playhouse](#), Grand Bend, ON, August 3–20, 2023.

***Where You Are*** by Kristen Da Silva  
[Lighthouse Festival](#), Port Dover, ON, July 19–August 5, 2023.

***Bed and Breakfast*** by Mark Crawford  
[Orillia Opera House](#), Orillia, ON, July 26–August 12, 2023.

***Where You Are*** by Kristen Da Silva  
[Lighthouse Festival](#), Port Colbourne, ON, August 9–August 20, 2023.

***Where You Are*** by Kristen Da Silva  
[Port Stanley Festival Theatre](#), Port Stanley, ON, August 23–September 9, 2023.

***The Real McCoy*** by Andrew Moodie  
[Blyth Festival](#), Blyth, ON, August 24–September 9, 2023.

***Bittergirl: The Musical*** by Annabel Fitzsimmons, Alison Lawrence & Mary Francis Moore  
[St. Jacob's Schoolhouse Theatre](#), St. Jacobs, ON, October 4–December 24, 2023.

• ONLINE •

***Reckoning*** by Tara Beagan and Andy Moro, Article 11 Theatre  
[Prairie Theatre Exchange](#) digital production, available June 21–25, 2023.

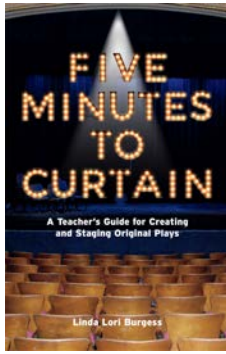
***Buffy***, a five-part podcast about Buffy Sainte-Marie by Falen Johnson.  
[CBC Listen](#). All episodes online now.

• ON SCREEN •

***With Love and a Major Organ*** by Julia Lederer.  
Starring Anna Maguire, Hamza Haq, and Veena Sood. Premiering at SXSW in Austin, March 10–19; coming to theatres soon!

***The Swearing Jar*** by Kate Hewlett.  
Starring Adelaide Clemens, Douglas Smith, Patrick J. Adams, and Kathleen Turner. Now available to buy or rent on various streaming services including Apple TV and Digital TIFF Bell Lightbox.

**IN THE NEWS**



Hybrid book launch of [\*\*Five Minutes to Curtain\*\*](#) by Linda Lori Burgess.

Linda will be joined in-store by three of her former students for a panel discussion. The event will also be live-streamed on YouTube.

[\*\*McNally Robinson Booksellers\*\*](#), Winnipeg, MB, March 17, 2023.

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