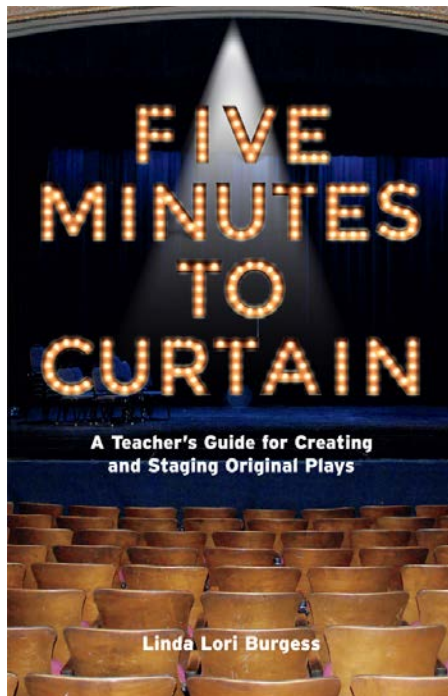




J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD
P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

ESSENTIAL READING



Incorporating multiple examples and anecdotes drawn from the author's twenty years of experience, *Five Minutes to Curtain* is a blueprint for providing more meaningful and engaging theatrical experiences for participants and audiences alike.

"The samples and guidance within this book represent years of layered experience, dramatic discovery, playful anecdotes, and sobering truths—an invaluable tool for all directors who dare to embark on roads less travelled. A must for performing arts teachers everywhere."

—Patti Caplette, from her Foreword

[Five Minutes to Curtain: A Teacher's Guide for Creating and Staging Original Plays](#) by [Linda Lori Burgess](#) is an invaluable resource for teachers who want to create original productions in collaboration with their students.

Burgess provides a step-by-step guide to her unique system for developing devised plays, along with solid advice about all the other aspects of producing high school theatre: directing student actors and working with tech crew, scheduling and running rehearsals, promoting the play, dealing with school administrators, and making connections to the larger community.

[See More](#)

THE INTERVIEW

[David Gow](#)'s plays include [Cherry Docs](#), [Relative Good](#), *Bea's Niece*, *The Flight of Peter Pumpkineater*, *Stream*, *The Wake of the Bones*, *Boilerplate*, *The Friedman Family*, *Fortune* and *Elephant*.

Gow's first feature film, *Steel Toes*, which is based on his hit play *Cherry Docs*, has won numerous awards in the US and Canada, including Best Feature Film (Beverly Hills Film Festival) and Best Independent Feature in America (Cine Golden Eagle). David is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America and the Playwrights Guild of Canada.



David, one of your best-known plays is the two-hander [Cherry Docs](#), a drama about a Jewish public defender who is appointed to represent a neo-Nazi skinhead charged with a racially-motivated murder. What inspired *Cherry Docs*? In these polarized times, why is it important for us to see plays like *Cherry Docs*?

Cherry Docs was inspired, over twenty-five years ago, by the strong presence of Neo-Nazis (white supremacists) committing violent and fatal attacks in our society, fifty years out from World War II. Now, seventy-five years out, the presence of this group is so strong, they are rated as the number one terrorist threat in the USA, and they are also quite strong in Canada. A real argument can be made that the USA is in the midst of a culture war, and that the rights of many are being violated, due in large part to white supremacist views. The play, strangely, still reads as very current, not by offering a cure for these challenges, but by looking at the issues in an in-depth and personal manner, which can be engaging and galvanizing for audiences. *Cherry Docs*, although it is in some ways a dialectic, is strongly engaging as fiction. While the play might have seemed to portray a very tiny radical fringe when it was written, that is no longer so, and we are seeing this daily in the news, both here and abroad.

Your plays have had productions all over the world, from Sao Paolo to Krakow, from San Francisco to Jerusalem. Have you been able to travel to see some of your international productions? Can you tell us about one or two of them?

Seeing my plays produced here and abroad has been beyond gratifying. Seeing a production of *Cherry Docs* in Israel, I was astonished to hear the actors had memorized three versions of the play, an hour-long version, a ninety-minute version, and a "full-length" version, which ran over two hours. How the play stretched to such a length in translation was a mystery to me, as was the actors' ability to keep three versions in their memories. Watching the play in other languages such as Polish or Hebrew, which I do not speak, gives me the odd sensation that I understand the language, as I know the lines

pretty well. Every production changes the play: set against a cliff in nature with live hawks and a rattlesnake turns it into Epic Naturalism, another design schema renders it into Science Fiction, and perhaps—in the same production—as a voyage to the eternal. I did not see the production in Berlin or others in Germany or in Poland and would have liked to. The play ran in both countries for many years, in Poland for a decade and more in the country's national repertoire. It's very moving thinking of all the theatre workers and artists, preparing a play, crossing town on subway systems, or bicycles, carrying a prepared lunch in a bag...all this work to support the world of the play, which is ultimately what I think of and call "the pretend."

Can you tell us a little about your work in film and television?

I've worked for decades in film and TV, and my most cherished role was as the director of my own film called *Steel Toes*, which is based on my play *Cherry Docs*. It took me years to bring the thing to production, and it would not have happened without my producers Francine Allaire and Arnie Gelbart. The film has been seen by millions of people around the world in many languages. It was quite a thrill to make a kind of "living," or durable record of how I see the material.

David, you were born in Ontario, started your career in Montreal, and have lived on the west coast in both Canada and the USA. What do you like about each of those places?

I have lived in Montreal quite a lot, Toronto for a decade, the Eastern Townships of Quebec, Los Angeles, coastal BC, New Orleans and NYC for shorter durations. I love experiencing the topography in particular, and climate of a place and surrounding areas, but I also deeply enjoy the people of all those places, and hearing how they speak, the cadences, the rhythms, and hearing in how they talk a kind of history, or trace of history, in phrases, idiom, and mindset.

[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!



Children participating in the “Prince Caspian Needs You!” pre-show workshop alongside Alexis Milligan, Outreach and Engagement Specialist at The Shaw. Photo by Jonathan Tan, Embedded Artist, Shaw Festival.

This month JGS interviewed Pragna Desai, Director of Community Engagement and Outreach at [The Shaw Festival](#) in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. Pragna came to The Shaw from Toronto-based multiple award-winning company Theatre Direct. Previously, she was artistic director at several European and North African companies that focused on theatre and music for young audiences. Pragna firmly believes that participating and experiencing arts and culture is crucial in the development of every child, and fundamental to life-long learning.

Pragna, The Shaw Festival actually partners with universities to deliver post-secondary programming. Can you tell us about some of the programs that are available for post-secondary students?

The Shaw Festival hosts many post-secondary institutions from Canada and the United States throughout the year. We provide access to students through backstage tours, engage them in workshops where they can try something new or hone existing skills, and involve them in chats with our creative artists and production teams – all of which enrich their experience. We’re delighted to partner with Brock University and University of Toronto for more immersive multi-day programming that effectively embeds them in North America’s second-largest repertory theatre company, giving them unique access to our art and artists. Students have an opportunity to explore the plays they see in-depth with the professionals that bring them to life and participate in some of our specialized programming, such as “Manners of the Mandate,” which immerses them in the fashion and social customs prevalent during Bernard Shaw’s lifetime but are not generally taught in detail at theatre schools. This year, we also began offering an experience in our spectacular Spiegeltent (a unique outdoor performance venue with coloured glass and mirrors that was imported from Europe). Students taking part can chat with Shaw company members from virtually every department – exposing them to the plethora of careers available in the performing arts sector.

The Shaw Festival has a number of unique programs for young people and for aspiring theatre professionals. What types of workshops and programs does the festival run?

We want people of all ages to be inspired by the magic of theatre! Each season we offer a pre-show workshop where the whole family (or school class) can participate and prepare to fully experience one of our productions. We have events for young people such as teen workshops. The “Beyond the Stage for All” programming explores various aspects of the shows in our season – from dancing to singing to learning about theatre history – and as the title states, it’s open for all. Our 2023 “The Art of Ideas” lineup featured the pairing of

creative artists with special guest experts/academics such as Jaime Watt, executive chairman of Navigator; Tim Johnson, executive producer of *RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked the World*; and Dr. David Moscrop, political scientist/columnist, as they grappled with some of the big themes in our season. We expect the program to grow with some additional special events in 2024. We also invite patrons to “Continue the Conversation” following select matinees and discuss what they just saw. Though theatre is a shared experience, it is one where everyone sees through the different lenses of personal experience. Talking about how we perceive different parts of the play and exploring those thoughts and feelings leads to really enriched discussions.

Shaw offers a wealth of materials for educators. Can you tell us more about some of the resources you provide to teachers?

Part of The Shaw’s mission is to support educators and students across Canada and the United States, extending beyond simply arranging class trips or post-secondary educational opportunities. Every year, we invite educators to join us for Teacher’s Day – a professional development opportunity where teachers participate in workshops and learn techniques they can implement into their classrooms. The day isn’t just for theatre teachers, and most will return to their schools with LOTS of ideas and exercises to introduce to their students. To end the day, participants will get a chance to relax and watch one of our incredible productions! This year’s Teacher’s Day is scheduled for November 24th, 2023.

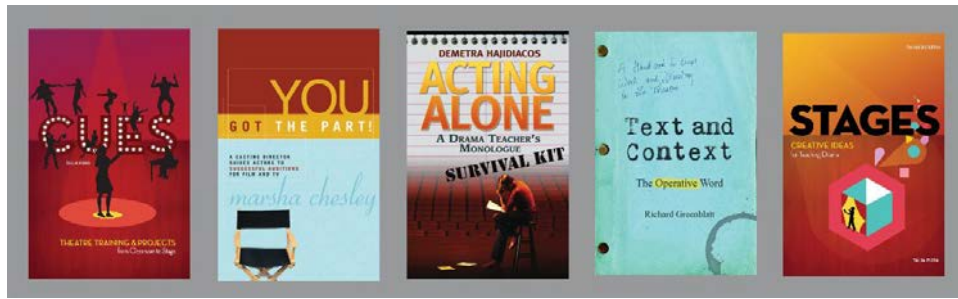
Finally, what is the Monologue Derby? Sounds like fun!

The Monologue Derby is a week-long program for teens to explore their interest in theatre and get “audition ready” through engaging sessions with our talented creative artists. Whether they are looking to get started in the theatre industry or simply to have something fun to do, participants learn to better express themselves, think on their feet, and gain self-confidence through various exercises. At the end of the session, everyone shares the results of their hard work in front of friends, family, and Shaw Festival staff on the Spiegeltent stage.

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.

We’re also happy to supply free desk copies of titles you’d like to consider for your courses. Send us the details on what you’re teaching, the class enrolment and where you’d like books sent.

ON THE CURRICULUM



[See More](#)

COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

Bittergirl: The Musical by Annabel Fitzsimmons, Alison Lawrence & Mary Francis Moore
[Thousand Islands Playhouse](#), Gananoque, ON, August 18–September 16, 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.

The Waltz by Marie Beath Badian
[Factory Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, September 6–17, 2023.

Jake's Gift by Julia Mackey
[Sunset Theatre](#), Wells, BC, September 8, 2023.

Reading: *Yolanda Bonnell*
[Word Vancouver](#), Vancouver, BC, September 16, 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.

The Runner by Christopher Morris
[Thousand Islands Playhouse](#), Gananoque, ON, November 2–19, 2023.

Jake's Gift by Julia Mackey
[Rose Theatre](#), Brampton, ON, November 9, 10, and 11, 2023.

Monster by Daniel MacIvor
[Factory Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, November 16–December 10, 2023.

Here Lies Henry by Daniel MacIvor
[Factory Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, November 23–December 17, 2023.

The Waltz by Marie Beath Badian
[Great Canadian Theatre Company](#), Ottawa, ON, February 13–25, 2024.

Café Daughter by Kenneth T. Williams
[Globe Theatre](#), Regina, SK, March 6–24, 2024

In the Kitchen by Fatuma Adar, Augusto Bitter, Olivier Choinière, and Rosa Labordé
[Factory Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, March 8–31, 2024.

• ONLINE •

A Time to Dream, a documentary about the extraordinary women of the CASA project.
[Playwrights Guild of Canada](#) production, available online now.

Inose/Field Trip, a sound walk created by Yolanda Bonnell in partnership with Dr. Jesse Popp that encourages participants to connect with the natural world.
[Common Boots Theatre](#). (A video ASL version of *Inose/Field Trip* is now available.)

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. Screening September 17, 2023 at the [Atlantic International Film Festival](#) in Halifax and September 29, 2023 at the [Nashville Film Festival](#).

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. BMG recently released the movie's [soundtrack](#), with 21 tracks featuring original songs by Kate Hewlett.

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