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BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

ESSENTIAL READING



"Hilarious and hypnotically honest."
—*Exeunt*

"One of the best shows of the year."
—*NOW Magazine*

"*The Ex-Boyfriend Yard Sale* captures
the unquantifiable beauty of love."
—*The Globe and Mail*

[Haley McGee](#) was on the phone with Visa, promising to pay off her bill by having a yard sale, when she realized that the only things she could sell were gifts from her exes. Inspired by this situation, [The Ex-Boyfriend Yard Sale](#) is a hilarious and daring play about the cost of love... or what love costs us. Can we translate sentimental value into cold hard cash? The play smashes together personal divulences, mathematics, interviews with Haley's ex-boyfriends, economics, and the politics of commerce in a quest to determine what our romantic relationships are actually worth.

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THE INTERVIEW

*[Kristen Da Silva](#) was born in Oakville, Ontario and raised in Nobleton, Ontario, a small farming community in King Township. She graduated from York University and continued her studies at Sheridan College. Her plays, which include Sugar Road, [Where You Are](#), Gibson & Sons, Hurry Hard, The Rules of Playing Risk, Beyond the Sea, and The Bluff have been produced at theatres in both North America and Europe. Kristen is a two-time recipient of the Playwrights Guild New Comedy award. *Where You Are* was published by Scirocco Drama in 2022, and *Beyond the Sea* is upcoming for 2024.*



Kristen, although your plays are often hilarious, most of them deal with very serious themes. You were once quoted as saying, “I think that comedy is a doorway to some tough conversations.” Can you expand on that for us? Why is comedy a good way to tackle life’s big questions?

I’ve always found laughing with someone the quickest way to connect with them. Maybe it’s the feeling of finding common ground combined with how good it feels to laugh, but there’s a magic in shared laughter. It makes us feel closer and more open to sharing vulnerable things with one another. I also think audiences go into a comedy with a certain sense of safety. Even if it’s going to go to some hard places, they have a reasonable expectation it’ll have, if not a happy ending, at least a hopeful one.

Your play *Where You Are* (Scirocco Drama 2022), about a pair of sisters on Manitoulin Island and their daughter/niece, has proved very popular with audiences and critics alike. Can you tell us how you decided to write *Where You Are*? Did the success of the play change your life?

I wrote *Where You Are* after losing my aunt to cancer, as a love letter to her and the lifelong friendship she shared with my mom. I was really struggling with the idea that I’d never see her again. Never see the two of them together again. Or all four sisters together, laughing and talking over one another at absolutely unnecessarily high volumes. It just didn’t feel possible. So, I wanted to write this piece to capture a bit of her spirit and the spirit of their relationship. That it’s been so widely embraced has meant a lot to me. It has changed my life because it’s opened many wonderful doors, been the reason I’ve visited some places I’d never been and helped me gain confidence in my voice as a writer.

***Beyond the Sea* is a beautifully crafted two-hander about a chance encounter between two people, Gwen and Theo. As the play progresses, we realize that these**

two characters are taking us somewhere quite unexpected. What was your process for this play—did you plot out how it was going to end before you began, or was it a more intuitive journey?

I knew how the play would end before I started writing it. Much of it took shape in my head during my first conversation with Derek Ritschel, the AD from Lighthouse Festival Theatre, who commissioned it. He came to the meeting with some ideas and a handful of restrictions due to Covid-19 — cast of two, simple set, no tech. I toyed with some higher-concept ideas but abandoned them, which was the intuitive part of the process. They just weren't right on a gut level. So, the play became about a single, long conversation between strangers but, obviously, it couldn't be just any conversation, it had to be an important conversation, maybe the most important conversation of their lives. Once that was the concept, I knew exactly what the story was leading to.

[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 spoke with Bronwyn Steinberg, Artistic Director of Calgary's [Lunchbox Theatre](#).

Bronwyn is a theatre director and community builder; she's passionate about making theatre an inclusive gathering space where we share stories that celebrate the diversity of human experience. Based in Calgary/Mohkinstsis in Treaty 7 territory, she has been the Artistic Director of Lunchbox Theatre since November 2020.

Bronwyn, Lunchbox Theatre occupies a unique place in the theatrical landscape. For people who aren't familiar with the theatre, can you tell us a little about it?

49 years ago, Bartley and Margaret Bard and Betty Gibb had the idea to bring live entertainment to Calgary's downtown shoppers and office workers by presenting one-act plays at lunchtime. And we're still doing it half a century later! It's always been a priority at Lunchbox to make the theatre welcoming and fun. It's an intimate, accessible space, and we encourage people to eat their lunch during our shows, which are uplifting and meaningful. And they're only about an hour, so you can fit them into even a busy day!

And we're not just accessible and welcoming for audiences, but we also want our doors to be wide open for artists. When I first came to Lunchbox, one of the first things I did (in deep covid lockdown) was do my best to meet the local theatre community. I had the incredible privilege of sitting down for twenty-minute one-on-one zoom calls with over 200 folks. Over and over, I heard from local artists about how their first professional gig was at Lunchbox, or how they'd gotten the chance to try out a change in their career focus, like actors becoming directors. I also loved hearing how many were able to balance work at Lunchbox with other big things in their lives, thanks to the schedule and supportive atmosphere. It was clear that I had found myself in a truly special theatre company, and I knew I wanted to do my best to keep up the good work.

From November of 2022 to June of this year, Lunchbox invited seven emerging theatre artists to form an Associate Artist Company. Tell us more about this mentorship/training program.

The Associate Artist Company is a new initiative to support emerging theatre artists, particularly in disciplines other than performance. This paid program is a unique opportunity for promising artists from Calgary's next generation of theatre practitioners to train with professional mentors in their chosen disciplines of Design, Directing, Dramaturgy, Playwriting, Production Management and Stage Management at Lunchbox Theatre. The AAC are a cohort of artists who learn from our staff, contracted artists and each other throughout the season, and they also participate in our work as artists in their own right. Our pilot year of the program was incredibly successful, and we are currently seeking funding to be able to continue to offer it.

The Associate Artists shadowed and/or assisted artists working in their discipline on multiple Lunchbox productions, they met for monthly cohort meetings with our staff and invited industry guests, and most of them also worked on the Stage One Festival of New Canadian Work. The Associate Playwright worked on a script throughout the season that we then workshopped in the festival, the Associate Director led one of the other Stage One workshops, and the Associate Dramaturge worked on three of the workshops. The Playwright and Dramaturge also served on the selection jury for Stage One, and the Director assisted with casting and the Associate Production Manager took the lead in coordinating the production needs of the festival. Meanwhile, it became clear quite early in the season that our two Associate Designers were ready to design at Lunchbox in their own right, so we brought them on to design lighting and sound (respectively) for the final production of our season, *Cottagers and Indians* by Drew Hayden Taylor, and our Associate Stage Manager worked on that show as our ASM.

One of the most meaningful successes of this pilot program has been getting to see each of the seven artists going on to new opportunities with other companies. And even better is seeing them continue their relationships and collaborations with each other, with Lunchbox, and with me. I feel so grateful for the opportunity to share what I know and hopefully offer useful support to these artists on their journey, and I'm truly honoured by the trust each of them showed us.

One of Lunchbox Theatre's missions is to be "a hub for artistic learning — for audiences, artists as well as new plays." What are some of the ways that you work to accomplish that?

The Associate Artist Company is a big part of that for sure, as was our previous RBC Emerging Director program, and we also have been developing new one-act plays in our Stage One Festival of New Canadian Work for over 35 years. We also recently added our Stage Two Festival, which gives projects selected from Stage One a more advanced

development workshop, which adds in additional artists like designers, choreographers, and the possibility to incorporate technical elements. So there are lots of opportunities for new artists to learn and for new works to grow. And our format of offering one-act plays at lunch fosters audience development as well, because it is accessible and welcoming in a way that is different from other professional theatres. Our relaxed atmosphere makes us a great spot for people to have their first exposure to professional theatre. And we are still constantly learning as a company, and I'm excited to continue to see how we can continue to grow as a "hub for artistic learning."

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.

SCARY TALES FOR HALLOWEEN



[See More](#)

IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to all of the nominees for the Playwrights Guild of Canada's [2023 Tom Hendry Awards](#), which honour Canadian playwriting. Scirocco Drama authors nominated include:

- David Paquet and Leanna Brodie, who are nominated for the Dorothy Lees-Blakey Theatre for Young Audiences Award for *The Weight of Ants*.
- Catherine Banks and Norm Foster, who are both nominated for the Bra D'Or Award, which recognizes an individual or individuals for efforts in supporting and promoting the work of Canadian women playwrights.

The awards will be presented on October 29 at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre at an evening hosted by Scirocco Drama playwright Beau Dixon! J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing is proud to be one of the sponsors of the Tom Hendry Awards.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

Jonas and Barry in the Home by Norm Foster
[Theatre Aquarius](#), Hamilton, ON, to October 14, 2023.

The Birds and the Bees by Mark Crawford
[Arts Club Theatre](#), Vancouver, BC, to November 12, 2023.

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

The First Stone by Donna-Michelle St. Bernard
[Buddies in Bad Times Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, to October 23, 2023.

Feast by Guillermo Verdecchia
[Prairie Theatre Exchange](#), Winnipeg, MB, October 10–22, 2023.

The Dark Lady by Jessica B. Hill
[Lunchbox Theatre](#) and Shakespeare Company, Calgary, AB, October 10–29, 2023.

Pop! Pop! by Linda A. Carson, with Monica Dufault and Kim Selody
[Young People's Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, October 14–22, 2023.

The Secret Life of Canada podcast live by Falen Johnson and Leah-Simone Bowen
[Hot Docs Cinema live presentation](#), Toronto, ON, October 21, 2023.

Doc Wuthergloom's Here There Be Monsters by Eric Woolfe
[Eldritch Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, October 25–November 5, 2023.

For Both Resting and Breeding by Adam Meisner
[Talk Is Free Theatre](#), touring to Chile and Argentina, November 1–10, 2023.

The Rocking Horse Winner by Gareth Williams & Anna Chatterton
[Crow's Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, November 1–12, 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.

The Waltz by Marie Beath Badian
[Prairie Theatre Exchange](#), Winnipeg, MB, November 14–29, 2023.

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

The Funeral to End All Funerals by Steven Elliott Jackson
[KWLTI](#), Kitchener, ON, November 17–December 3, 2023.

Here Lies Henry by Daniel MacIvor

[Factory Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, November 23–December 17, 2023.

A Christmas Carol by David van Belle

[Citadel Theatre](#), Edmonton, AB, November 25–December 23, 2023.

A Christmas Carol adapted by Geoffrey Simon Brown

[Theatre Calgary](#), Calgary AB, November 30–December 31, 2023.

Benevolence by Fanny Britt, translated by Leanna Brodie

[Great Canadian Theatre Company](#), Ottawa, ON, December 5–17, 2023.

On a Night Like This by Beau Dixon

[Soulpepper Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, December 20–31, 2023.

Beneath Springhill by Beau Dixon

[Arts Club Theatre](#), Vancouver, BC, January 5–February 4, 2024.

Better Living by George F. Walker

[Alumnae Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, January 19–February 3, 2024.

The Runner by Christopher Morris

[Touchstone Theatre](#), Vancouver, BC, January 24–26, 2024.

Truth by Kanika Ambrose

[Young People's Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, January 29–February 23, 2024.

MacBeth: A Tale Told by an Idiot by Eric Woolfe

[Eldritch Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, February 8–18, 2024.

The Waltz by Marie Beath Badian

[Great Canadian Theatre Company](#), Ottawa, ON, February 13–25, 2024.

I Am William by Rébecca Déraspe, translated by Leanna Brodie

[Carousel Theatre for Young People](#), Vancouver, BC, February 14–18, 2024.

Boom YZ by Rick Miller

[Western Canada Theatre](#), Kamloops, BC, February 22–March 2, 2024.

Father Tartuffe: An Indigenous Misadventure by Herbie Barnes

[Touchstone Theatre](#), Vancouver, BC, February 22–March 24, 2024.

3 Fingers Back by Donna-Michelle St. Bernard

[Tarragon Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, February 27–March 24, 2024.

Diggers by Donna-Michelle St. Bernard

[Prairie Theatre Exchange](#), Winnipeg, MB, February 27–March 10, 2024.

Café Daughter by Kenneth T. Williams

[Globe Theatre](#), Regina, SK, March 6–24, 2024.

By the Light of a Story by Kristen Da Silva

[Theatre Orangeville](#), Orangeville, ON, March 7–24, 2024.

Rise, Red River by Tara Beagan

[Prairie Theatre Exchange](#), Winnipeg, MB, March 8–23, 2024.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls by Dave Deveau

[Roseneath Theatre](#), on tour in Ontario, March 2024.

In the Kitchen by Fatuma Adar, Augusto Bitter, Olivier Choinière, and Rosa Labordé

[Factory Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, March 8–31, 2024.

Mad Madge by Rose Napoli

[Nightwood Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, April 9–21, 2024.

The Comeback by Trish Cooper and Sam Vint

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), Winnipeg, MB, April 24–May 18, 2024.

Boys, Girls & Other Mythological Creatures by Mark Crawford

[Theatre Orangeville](#), Orangeville, ON, May 6-17, 2024

The Outside Inn by Sharon Bajer and Elio Zarrillo

[Prairie Theatre Exchange](#), Winnipeg, MB, May 7–19, 2024.

The Birds and the Bees by Mark Crawford

[Alberta Theatre Projects](#), Calgary, AB, May 7–May 25, 2024.

Doris and Ivy in the Home by Norm Foster

[St. Jacob's Country Playhouse](#), St. Jacob's ON, June 19–July 6, 2024.

Halfway There by Norm Foster

[Drayton Festival Theatre](#), Drayton, ON, July 3–21, 2024.

Doris and Ivy in the Home by Norm Foster

[Huron County Playhouse](#), Grand Bend, ON, July 3-21, 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 •

Les Filles du Roi by Corey Payette and Julie Maclsaac

Premiered at the Rhode Island International Film Festival, with upcoming screenings at the Vancouver International Film Festival, the Hamilton Film Festival, the St. Louis International Film Festival, and the Orlando Film Festival.

With Love and a Major Organ by Julia Lederer

Starring Anna Maguire, Hamza Haq, and Veena Sood. Nominated for the Grand Jury

Prize, 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.

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