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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



Devine is a thoughtful writer who gives us a political piece with a warm, beating heart.

—*Ottawa Citizen*

“A compelling exploration of a small piece of American history.”

—*Gay Vancouver*

A rare evening of theatre: intelligent, engaging, entertaining, and deeply thought-provoking.

—*MPMG Arts*

Re:Union provides a thorough moral and intellectual workout.”

—*The Georgia Straight*

In [Re:Union](#), [Sean Devine](#) explores a moment in American history and its complicated aftermath. It's November of 1965, and Norman Morrison drives to the Pentagon with his infant daughter, a jug of kerosene and a box of matches. With Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara looking on, the young Quaker carries out a final act of witness against the

horrors of the Vietnam War. Thirty-six years later, in the wake of 9/11, his daughter returns to confront the aging McNamara, the memory of her father, and the costly legacy of sacrifice.

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THE INTERVIEW

[Adam Meisner](#) was born in Moncton, New Brunswick and now lives in Ottawa on the unceded, unsurrendered Territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation. Adam's play [*For Both Resting and Breeding*](#) premiered at Talk is Free Theatre in Barrie, Ontario in 2018, and the company toured the play to the Adelaide Festival in Australia in 2020. Adam's writing has appeared in literary journals throughout North America, including *The Puritan*, *Poetry is Dead*, *Iron Horse Literary Review*, *Copper Nickel*, and *Ninth Letter*. Adam studied theatre at the University of Toronto and the University of Manchester and holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia.



Adam, your play *For Both Resting and Breeding* is set in a futuristic society where there is no longer any gender. How did you come up with this original concept?

For several years I tried to write a play about gender and sexuality set against the backdrop of my millennial suburban teenage years. I became frustrated by my attempts and decided to try something new: I would write a play that was without gender and sexuality, a play *not* set in the year 2000. This exercise brought me to the world of *For Both Resting and Breeding*, and the very subjects and setting the exercise meant to avoid.

I wrote the first scene of the play, and brought it to a playwriting group that I used to coordinate in Ottawa. I thought it would be no more than a standalone scene, but the group members wanted more, so I kept writing.

Having said all that, I think the idea for this play was evolving in my mind for several years as I read, and loved, many plays that explored the themes of gender, sexuality, and the future. I'm thinking, for example, of Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls*, both revelations to me when I read them in my first year as a drama student at the University of Toronto. I was also inspired by Anne Washburn's play *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*, and George Saunders' short story collection *Tenth of December*.

Talk Is Free Theatre, which first produced *For Both Resting and Breeding*, took the play on tour to Australia, and is currently touring to Chile and Argentina with it. Can you tell me more about the tours of the show and how the play is being received internationally?

Talk is Free initially performed the piece in a conventional theatre in Barrie. Their tours to Australia and South America have been different in that they're presenting the piece as a site-specific work in houses that audiences are meant to pretend are the millennial-era house where the play takes place. For that reason, the play on tour has been more intimate, with fewer audience members gathered in the close confines of a domestic space.

The company is touring the play to South America as I write this. The text was translated to Spanish, and Talk is Free Theatre is using a technology that allows the performers to deliver the play in English while audience members wear glasses that display the translated text. I tried the glasses at a rehearsal earlier this year—it was very much in keeping with the futuristic aspects of the play.

I was lucky to attend the performances in Australia. Before one performance, a local man who worked front-of-house suggested that Australians were generally conservative and might not easily embrace some of the radical ideas of the play. But I found Australian audiences to be receptive and warm. As in Canada, every audience experiences the play differently: some nights it seemed to be more of a comedy, others more a tragedy.

Notably, the Australian performances took place at the start of March 2020 with murmurings of the COVID pandemic all around. I don't think any of us noticed it at the time, but looking back I recall a mysterious tension in the air. Perhaps it was a prophetic sense that this would be the last theatre experience for many of us for several months. Though maybe the feeling I'm remembering was my own anxiety about whether the play would be well received or not.

The binary way of thinking about gender has been prevalent in our society for a long time. During rehearsals of the show, was it difficult for actors to portray characters who didn't identify with any gender?

The actors never mentioned any difficulty in portraying genderless characters when I was in the rehearsal room—though it's possible I wasn't around when those conversations took place.

From where I sat, it seemed to be a liberating process for many of the actors. I witnessed a lot of silliness and play happening in rehearsal, the actors using their bodies and voices with greater range than I often see, as a playwright, in the staging of new work. I wondered if this came with the freedom of not having to walk or talk in gender-normative ways, something that's often required in more conventional plays, especially those with cishet romances at the heart of their narrative. Of course, this is my interpretation—I can't speak for the experiences of the many actors who've performed the play.

Regardless, I think it's worth noting that the actors who have performed the piece have come from a diversity of backgrounds in terms of gender as well as sexuality, cultural heritage, race, and age. I think this has meant the process of becoming an *ish* has been vastly different for each actor. This has enriched how I understand my own text. There are many layers to how the play can be interpreted—by artists and audiences. I like this idea of diverse people coming together, adding to and nuancing the text.

[Read the Full Interview](#)

CLASS NOTES

Want to share your story about how you engage students with drama? Let us know. We'd love to talk to you!



This month we interviewed Kevan Ellis, Director of Education at Vancouver's [Arts Club Theatre Company](#), which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Kevan has been working at the Arts Club since 2015, overseeing, curating, and cultivating education programming as well as community engagement opportunities.

Kevan, the Arts Club offers an impressively wide range of programs to young people! Can you give us an overview of the various kinds of work that the Education and Engagement Department does?

Yes! The Education Department does a number of things at the Arts Club. First, we administer our main programs for youth and adults from entry-level programming like Creative Teens to more advanced skill-based programs such as the Actors' Intensive. We also work with equity-seeking communities with the view to find ways to lower barriers to accessing theatre education or exploring how drama can help with transferable skills such as building confidence and empathy through role-playing. Another aspect of our department is to support the Arts Club's shows with community engagement activities such as talk-backs, community cabarets, school workshops, and accessibility focussed events such as relaxed performances.

The Arts Club offers various workshops to educators and their students. Some of the choices listed on the website include workshops focused on musical theatre, the work of Jacques Lecoq, stage combat, or text analysis. Can you describe one of your favourite student workshops for us?

One of our most popular workshops is our Stage Combat workshop. There is a strong focus on safety in this workshop, but it is also amazingly fun for the students (and teachers)! Even the most-low-energy group that comes into this workshop ends up leaving exhilarated.

There are also a number of fantastic youth programs on offer, including a playwriting intensive, a musical theatre intensive, and a teen theatre group that creates devised theatre. Can you tell us a little about those programs and who can participate?

Of course! We want to be able to reach out to multiple levels of interest and experience, so we provide both programs for folks looking at making a career in theatre as well as those who just want to try things out and test the waters; often for the first time. Our LEAP Program is for youth ages 16 – 25 and provides a safe, supportive, and non-judgemental environment for young playwrights to develop their creative ideas through script-writing. This program has Tetsuro Shigematsu and Veronique West as instructors and culminates in workshopping and a public reading from professional actors. There is also no cost for the students to participate.

Our Creative Teens program is our devised theatre program where the students learn acting technique through the process of creating their own work. There is absolutely no experience needed for this programming, just a curiosity to explore their own stories with a group of like-minded participants in grades 7 – 12. One of my favourite moments in our season is to watch what the students come up as they perform their work on one of stages. This program happens in the Spring and runs for 10 weeks.

And finally, our Musical Theatre Intensive happens every summer and has for over 20 years (far before my time!)

Can you tell us about the Arts Club Drama Outreach Program initiative?

We have been fortunate to work with some fabulous partners through this program. The Arts Club Drama Outreach Program focusses on youth engagement outside the walls of our own spaces. We look at this program as a way to both introduce theatre and drama to youth, as well as reduce barriers by bringing the programming to them and to their communities.

There are currently four groups that we work with (and looking at expanding to more this year). We work with Ethos Lab, which is a program that works with the intersection of Black and BIPOC in Metro Vancouver and technology. Through drama experiences, we are looking at supporting and developing leadership skills for these youth.

We are also working with the ELL Welcome Centre in Surrey. This program works with youth that are new to Canada and through the use of role-playing exercises and sometimes non – verbal activities using things like gesture and tableaux, we hope to support their connections to this country and their local communities and peers.

A third organization that we are lucky to work with under this program is the Ray Cam Cooperative Centre. Ray Cam is a Vancouver inner-city neighbourhood facility that offers programming for youth outside of school. For this program, we work with younger students to provide an environment of self-discovery and allyship through drama activities. The hope is that these students can use these tools to build confidence and meet friends with mutual artistic interests.

And finally, we also have been working with the drama department at Britannia Secondary to support their activities. Whether that is providing tech support for their own showcases or working with them to facilitate creating their own work through their own stories, we value this relationship and hope to continue the work into the future.

What do you enjoy most about working with educators and young people?

I think what I enjoy the most is meeting students for their first class when they may be unsure about what they are about the journey they are about to embark on, then seeing the same students at the end of each program and observing how much change has occurred between this time. Not everyone becomes an artist, actor, or creator out of these programs, but if we play even a small role for youth to appreciate what theatre has to offer I

think that's all that matters in the end.

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.

LEST WE FORGET



[See More](#)

IN THE NEWS

We are thrilled to announce that Scirocco Drama titles picked up two nominations for the [2023 Governor General's Literary Awards](#)! Darla Contois is a finalist for the in the Drama category for [The War Being Waged](#), and Émilie Monnet is a finalist in the Translation category for [Okinum](#).

The annual [Tom Hendry Awards](#), presented by Playwrights Guild of Canada were

presented in a ceremony on October 29, hosted by the incomparable [Beau Dixon](#). The following Scirocco playwrights were honoured:

- [David Paquet](#) and [Leanna Brodie](#) won the Dorothy Lees-Blakey Theatre for Young Audiences Award for *The Weight of Ants*.
- [Catherine Banks](#) won the Bra D'Or Award, presented annually to someone who supports and promotes the work of Canadian women playwrights.
- [Mary Vingoe](#) received a Lifetime Membership in PGC.

Scirocco authors [David Paquet](#) and [Rébecca Déraspe](#), along with translator [Leanna Brodie](#), are nominated for the prestigious Quebec TYA prize, the [Prix Louise-Lahaye](#). David Paquet and Rébecca Déraspe are also finalists for the [2023 Michel Tremblay Prize](#) from Centre d'Essai des Auteurs Dramatic.

[Time Magazine](#) named *Little Bird* starring [Darla Contois](#) one of the five best new TV shows for fall of 2023.

The film version of [Les Filles du Roi](#) by Corey Payette and Julie McIsaac won the award for "Best Music" at [Hamilton Film Festival](#).

COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

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.

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.

Pals by Diane Flacks and Richard Greenblatt

[Winnipeg Jewish Theatre](#), Winnipeg, MB, November 9–19, 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.

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.

Casey and Diana by Nick Green

[Soulpepper Theatre](#), January 23–February 11, 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.

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.

Onion Skins and Peach Fuzz by Alison Lawrence
[4th Line Theatre](#), Millbrook, ON, July 1–20, 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 11-27, 2024.

Jim Watts, Girl Reporter by Beverley Cooper

[4th Line Theatre](#), Millbrook, ON, July 30–August 24, 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 MacIsaac

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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