

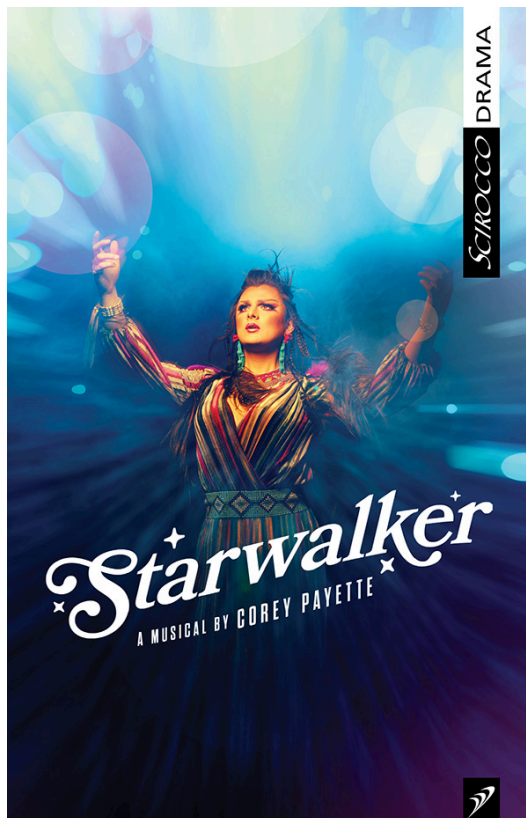
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J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD
P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

ESSENTIAL READING



"*Starwalker* is a deeply moving story of love, loss and self-discovery beautifully realized within the fabulous world of drag."

— *My Vancity*

"A genre-bending, groundbreaking stage musical...combining charm, camp, and Indigenous culture into an uplifting celebration of self-expression."

— *Review Vancouver*

[*Starwalker*](#) follows the journey of Star, a young Indigi-Queer Two-Spirit person whose life is transformed upon discovering the House of Borealis, a vibrant and revolutionary drag house in East Vancouver. As Star blends their Indigenous heritage with drag artistry to create an unforgettable drag persona, they realize that what they've been searching for is

more than just a stage, it's a home and a community where they can be fully themselves. [Corey Payette](#)'s unforgettable musical invites audiences to embrace the beauty of living authentically and fearlessly in a world that tries to silence those who dare to stand out.

Winner of the 2022 Tom Hendry Best New Musical Prize from the Playwrights Guild of Canada and the 2023 Best New Musical Award from the Ovation Awards.

[See More](#)

THE INTERVIEW

[Daniel Maclvor](#) is one of Canada's most acclaimed playwrights. He is also an actor, a director and a screenwriter. In 1986, Maclvor founded *da da kamera*, the company that produced many of his plays and which has influenced the direction of Canadian theatre over the ensuing decades. Maclvor's works have been performed around the world, and he has received numerous honours and awards. Maclvor's plays include: [Monster](#), Marion Bridge, [The Soldier Dreams](#), [In On It](#), House, [How It Works](#), Who Killed Spalding Gray? and many more. His screenplays include [Trigger](#) and Weirdos.



Daniel, I wanted to begin by asking you about something you said in an interview with Aisling Murphy. She was talking to you about updates you made to *Monster* and *Here Lies Henry* for the Factory productions in 2023. You said, "The world has unarguably changed since the plays' first outings ... The world has become both more tender, and more brutal." Could you expand on that a little? How has the world changed since you first started making theatre?

Well, when I first started making theatre I wrote on a typewriter and phones were not portable, so in some ways *everything* has changed. When I was speaking with Aisling in

2023, I was very focused on how cavalier we had been in the past with themes and stories (addiction, suicide, Israel) that now require trigger warnings or emergency board meetings. Some of that feels like progress: finding ways for communities to centre, protect, and uplift their most vulnerable members shows humanity at its best—and some of that feels like censorship: shutting down uncomfortable conversations to placate donors or sponsors feels akin to banning books. *Uncomfortable* is a word that feels key to what's different—especially in the theatre world. Back in the '90s we sought discomfort—in the rehearsal room, on the stage, in the audience. Discomfort was an important tool—along with communion, laughter, irreverence, and ritual—that we used in order to enact what we regarded as the theatre's purpose: transformation. As well, back in the day, our rehearsal rooms were first *rigorous*—perhaps dangerously so in some cases—which led us to a movement toward safe spaces. But the theatre has never felt “safe” to me; I'm not sure it can do its real work if we approach the process “safely.” It has been suggested to me that we should consider “brave spaces” over safe spaces. I like how that feels. But this journey from ruthless rigor to over-protectiveness has been an essential one I think, in order for people who have felt themselves to be othered and outsided in the process to find their place and their voice in the theatre.

You're an innovative and prolific playwright as well as an accomplished performer and director. Your work has been seen across North America, in Britain, Europe, Australia, and Israel, and has been translated into multiple languages; you've won many major awards, including an Obie, a Governor General's Literary Award and the prestigious Siminovitch Award. How did a boy from Cape Breton become one of the most influential theatre makers of his generation?

I was raised in a faith-based home and I have always had room for faith—I have always known that for me believing in something was essential. And when I rejected the tenets of the faith I was raised with (Catholicism), I allowed a belief in the theatre to fill that space. And why not, it's all transformation in the end isn't it—not to mention having been raised with a hard-core belief in magic and miracles—it all sounds very *theatre* from my POV. So for me, since the work I do is essential to my *being human*, I am able to work around proving myself, or impressing others, or pure achievement-seeking, and I can find ways to use my ego to feel like I am contributing positively to the lives of others. If I have been influential, it is because I believe this work matters.

Your solo shows such as *See Bob Run, House, This Is a Play, Let's Run Away, This Is What Happens Next, Here Lies Henry, Wild Abandon, Cul-de-Sac, Who Killed Spalding Gray, and Monster* have been hugely successful. What is it about that one-person format that fits your aesthetic so well?

My first artistic impulses were as a writer and my training was as an actor and so it felt very much like home to bring those two pieces together in the form of solo performance. For years I felt that inside my own work was the only place I could express myself as an actor. But recently I've had the opportunity to work as an actor on other texts (Matthew Lopez' *The Inheritance* under the direction of Brendan Healy and Bernard-Marie Koltès' *Roberto Zucco* under the direction of Ted Witzel) and I have been wonderfully challenged and rewarded.

One label sometimes applied to your work is “metatheatrical.” Your play *In On It* is a wonderful example of this: two actors play characters who then create two characters, who are, in turn, rehearsing a play, playing two characters. What do you like best about metatheatres? What does it offer to audiences that more naturalistic work does not?

Again, I think this relates to my actor training. When I began writing for the theatre I had no playwriting training, so it just made sense to speak to the people in the room; it felt (to use an over-used word) authentic. There's that wonderful tension in metatheatres between the artifice of the seats and the stage and the authenticity of performance (and the acknowledging of that artifice) that feels like communion in the truest sense.

Over the course of your career, you worked often with the brilliant Daniel Brooks; he directed many of your plays, and I believe you acted as dramaturge on his last play, *Other People*. Why do you think the “two Daniels” made such a great team?

Love.

If you were to describe your body of work, what are some of the adjectives you'd apply to it?

Wow, that's a tough one. I'm not sure I can really come up with adjectives (I keep going to “flawed” and “confounding” and “irreverent,” but those feel like judgements). I think the work is often funny. Often dark. I think I would apply *themes* more to define the body of work. I feel like everything is about *family* in some way, abolishing them or creating new ones, everything is about *presence*, stepping into it or avoiding it, and it seems to me, thinking about it now, that everything is in some way or another about theatre, in that *all-the-world's-a-stage* way.

Can you give us a sneak peek of something that you're working on currently?

There are a few things currently in development. A solo show called *Your Show Here* that's an investigation of grief and theatre where I centre my relationship with Daniel Brooks. I'm hoping to premiere it in Calgary in January. I'm also working on a multi-character play called *Wherever You Are* about re-constructing families which I'm hoping will find a home on the summer theatre circuit. As well I'm working with a couple of other theatre artists on collaborations. I'm directing and dramaturging Breton Lalama's *Lucky Bastard*—a kind of underworld cabaret that will have a development presentation in Toronto in August at Summerworks, and I'm co-creating a two-hander with Qasim Khan called *Fraught!* that we're very excited about but we're keeping the content under wraps currently.

It's Pride Month! As a gay artist and a longtime queer activist, do you have any words of encouragement for young, queer theatre artists?

I've been working for the last couple of years with Pink Triangle Press as a creative consultant and producing work for them (check out the podcast “Queer Joy” available on all major streaming platforms) and I have come to understand that queerness in the largest sense is made up of equal parts joy, heartbreak and protest. I feel like that's something we can really bring to the theatre as queer theatre makers. Laugh big, cry hard, and don't let the bastards get you down.

BEHIND THE SCENES



This month we talked with Lynda Hill, founder and Artistic Director of the [WeeFestival](#), an annual arts and culture event dedicated to the presentation of inspiring theatre and performing arts created especially for very young children and their families.

The WeeFestival began as a project of Theatre Direct Canada, the acclaimed Toronto theatre for young people, where Lynda served as Artistic and Executive Director from 2001–2019.

Lynda, for people who may not know about the WeeFestival, can you give us an overview?

[WeeFestival](#) is an annual international festival dedicated to the presentation of theatre and performance for the very young. What we mean by “very young” is zero to six years old. Those boundaries are stretching and blurring a little as we start to imagine very young audiences alongside what others would call extraordinary audiences or excluded audiences. When we start to look in that way, then we’re talking zero to eight years old for school groups. We’re looking at elders; we’re looking at children with developmental disabilities, with autism and so on. And in these areas, age is not really the appropriate way to define the audience.

But we start with this idea of “very young” and those would be pre-school audiences from birth to Grade One, who are traditionally underserved and under acknowledged as legitimate audiences. We curate a program from the international movement, the very interesting pioneering theatres working in Europe and UK, and as well as artists and companies from Quebec and—more and more through our own instigation and support—

artists from right around the corner and across this country.

How many years has the festival been running?

Last year we celebrated our tenth year of existence. This is our eleventh year of operating. We began as a biennial festival; 2014, 2016, and 2018 were the first three editions, and then we moved to an annual event in 2019. And, with the exception of the 2020 festival, which was cancelled, we have held an edition every year. 2021 was an entirely digital program that was targeted at kindergarten to Grade Two students. We reached 17,000 students with a program called "A Play a Day." Children all tuned in at the same time to watch a well-filmed, well-executed performance, and then met the artists and then engaged in an afternoon of different arts responses. We were proud about that.

The shows in the WeeFestival are an eclectic mix—they feature theatrical styles from around the world, different languages, puppets, dance, music, mime. In many cases, BIPOC voices and artists are centred. Can you tell us more about how shows are chosen?

We really are looking at a range of different styles and performance approaches and so on. Often I look for works that incorporate multiple styles and disciplines. Really, I'm trying to bring a range of aesthetic experiences and different themes into the festival. This work is not really about arts education as much as it's about an *aesthetic* education for young children: exposing very young children to a range of complex and sophisticated art forms. Theatre is a perfect gathering place of all the pure arts.

I like work that is physical, that is well-designed and well-researched. I'm always trying to find something for babies and something for preschoolers and something for kindergarteners, because in an age range of zero to six, there are so many different developmental phases within that audience. Of course, work can speak to everybody, but even in the work for babies, there's work that's specifically for four months to twelve months. and then there's work for zero to twenty-four months. That's a very different type of vibe than the work for preschoolers or the work for kindergarteners.

I adore puppetry; I've always loved puppetry. And there are some fantastic puppetry works. So much of this work is non-text-based and that's great because it can transcend every linguistic and cultural barrier. We don't have to worry about translation, per se. It's the universality of early childhood, because every child is really the same from zero to three. And then, as Andrea Busetti from La Baracca says, then they start to become contaminated with their own cultural biases or enriched with their own cultural traditions. But there's a universal baby, and then from there it changes.

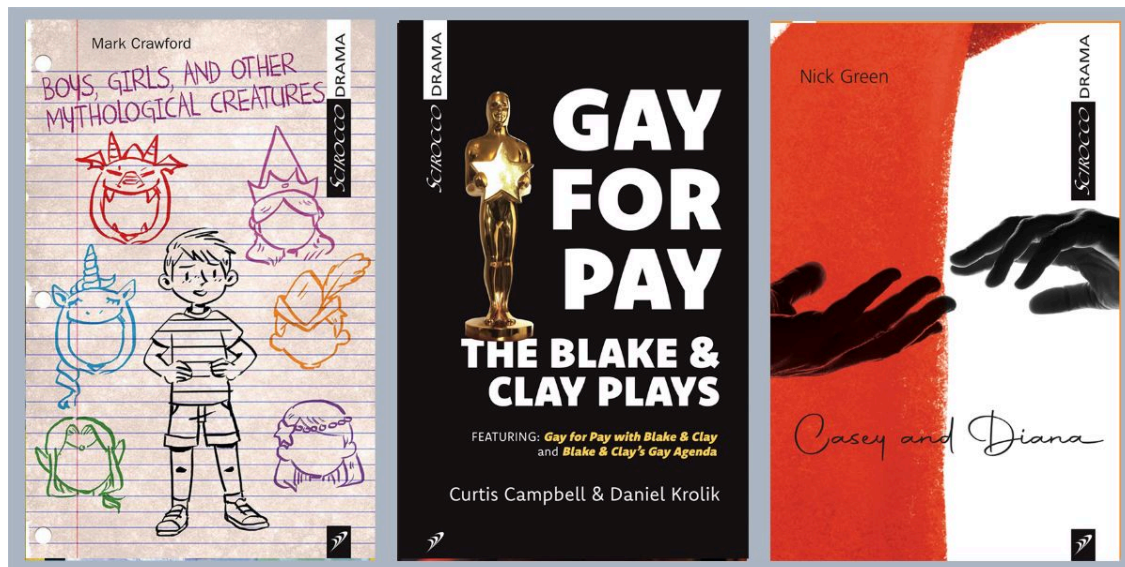
Dance? Yes! Dance, theatre, puppetry, circus, to a certain extent. But circus in that kind of pure sense; it's not Big Top Circus, it's that physical performance rooted in circus. We commissioned and supported the development of *TWEET TWEET!* which is a piece by the company Femmes de Feu that is entirely a circus-based performance that's toured and toured since it premiered in 2018.

And of course, at every single edition, we're committed to ensuring that our unique context here in Canada is acknowledged. There is always work by Indigenous artists, and there's always work that reflects our own Black, Indigenous and Persons of Colour here in Canada. And that's an ongoing effort because that's at the heart of our commissioning, our Seedling Projects, because the European scene does not have a tremendous cultural diversity. In Canada, TYA is not often the first choice of vocational focus for an artist of colour. And so you can imagine, making work for babies is certainly not! Through our Seedling Program, we're trying to invite more and more artists from different cultural contexts into this beautiful early-years world.

Click on [Read the Full Interview](#) to discover how theatre makes regal babies and helps kindergarteners forge community connections.

[Read the Full Interview](#)

CELEBRATING PRIDE MONTH



COMMEMORATING INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH



IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to The Muses' Company author [Rosanna Deerchild](#), who recently received an honorary degree from the [University of Manitoba](#). The citation reads, in part: "Ms. Rosanna Deerchild is a Cree storyteller, journalist, poet, playwright and radio host whose voice has transformed the Canadian media and literary landscape. She is a band member of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation with deep family roots in O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation, and has used her platforms to amplify Indigenous voices, challenge racism and spark national conversations about truth, justice and healing."

Congratulations also to Scirocco Drama author [Theresa Tova](#), who is the 2025 recipient of the [Equity Showcase Cayle Chernin Award for Woman of the Year](#). Tova is perhaps best-known for her musical *Still the Night*, which garnered multiple Dora Mavor Moore Awards. The Cayle Chernin Award recognizes Tova's contributions to the arts, performance, community and union leadership and advocacy.

Congratulations to Scirocco Drama author [Ali Joy Richardson](#), whose play *Dad* received the second annual [Jenny Munday Atlantic Canadian Play Award](#) from Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre!

Congrats to the following Scirocco Drama authors, who have been nominated for [Betty Mitchell Awards](#):

- [Alex Poch-Goldin](#), nominated for his work as part of *The Lehman Brothers* ensemble
- [Andy Moro](#), who was nominated in the Lighting Design and Projection and Video Design categories
- [Donna-Michelle St. Bernard](#), nominated for her direction of *Our Fathers, Sons, Lovers, and Little Brothers*

And congrats also to Scirocco Drama author [Colleen Murphy](#), whose play *Jupiter* received an [Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Award](#) nomination for Outstanding Production of a Play.

IN MEMORIAM



We are saddened to note the passing of Scirocco author [Tom Walmsley](#) on April 17, 2025, at the age of 77. Tom rocked the theatre world in the 1970s with plays like *The Jones Boy*, *Something Red*, and *The Workingman*, which portrayed sex, addiction, and violence in urban Canada honestly and unapologetically. His later plays, such as *White Boys*, *Blood*, and *mr. nice guy*, as well as his novels, screenplays, and poetry, were every bit as uncompromising—and just as fiercely funny. Our sympathy goes to Tom’s wife, Diana Clifford, and to his many friends. A celebration of Tom’s life was held at VideoCabaret in Toronto on June 8. A moving remembrance from filmmaker Jerry Ciccoriti can be found [here](#).

COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

The New Canadian Curling Club by Mark Crawford
[Lighthouse Theatre](#), Port Colbourne, ON, June 11–June 22, 2025.

Doris and Ivy in the Home by Norm Foster
[Port Stanley Theatre Festival](#), Port Stanley, ON, June 18–July 12, 2025.

The Haunting of Sleepy Hollow by Fire by Allen Cole and Ken Schwartz
[Two Planks and a Passion Theatre](#), Canning, NS, June 28–August 16, 2025.

On a First-Name Basis by Norm Foster
[Foster Festival](#), St. Catharines, ON, July 3–17, 2025.

A Woman's Love List by Norm Foster
[Orillia Opera House](#), Orillia, ON, July 3–18, 2025.

Bed and Breakfast by Mark Crawford
[Hudson Village Theatre](#), Hudson, QC, July 9–20, 2025.

Humour Me by Beverley Cooper
[Here for Now Theatre](#), Stratford, ON, July 9–26, 2025.

Hidden Treasures by Norm Foster
[Lighthouse Festival](#), Port Dover, ON, July 9–26, 2025.

Chase the Ace by Mark Crawford
[Ship's Company Theatre](#), Parrsboro, NS, July 9–27, 2025.

A Question of Character by Steven Elliott Jackson
[Hamilton Fringe Festival](#), Hamilton, ON, July 17–27, 2025.

Screwball Comedy by Norm Foster
[Foster Festival](#), July 23–August 3, 2025.

Hurry Hard by Kristen Da Silva
[Orillia Opera House](#), Orillia, ON, July 23–August 8, 2025.

Chase the Ace by Mark Crawford
[Charlottetown Festival](#), Charlottetown, PEI, July 30–August 9, 2025.

Hidden Treasures by Norm Foster
[Lighthouse Festival](#), Port Colbourne, ON, July 30–August 10, 2025.

The Rules of Playing Risk by Kristen Da Silva
[Here for Now Theatre](#), Stratford, ON, July 30–August 16, 2025.

Hurry Hard by Kristen Da Silva
[Gravenhurst Opera House](#), Gravenhurst, ON, August 12–22, 2025.

Stag and Doe by Mark Crawford
[Thousand Islands Playhouse](#), Gananoque, ON, August 22–September 14, 2025.

Here on the Flight Path by Norm Foster
[Lighthouse Festival](#), Port Dover, ON, August 27–September 13, 2025.

Hurry Hard by Kristen Da Silva

[Upper Canada Playhouse](#), Morrisburg, ON, September 4–28, 2025.

The Drawer Boy by Michael Healey

[Thousand Islands Playhouse](#), Gananoque, ON, September 5–28, 2025.

Here on the Flight Path by Norm Foster

[Lighthouse Festival](#), Port Colbourne, ON, September 17–September 28, 2025.

Home to Roost by Kristen Da Silva

[Chemainus Theatre](#), Chemainus, BC, September 26–October 19, 2025.

Casey and Diana by Nick Green

[Yes Theatre](#), Sudbury, ON, September 27–October 19, 2025.

The Stakeout by Norm Foster

[Foster Festival](#), Fenwick, ON, October 2–5, 2025.

The Christmas Market by Kanika Ambrose

[Crow's Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, November 4–30, 2025.

Serving Elizabeth by Marcia Johnson

[Prairie Theatre Exchange](#), Winnipeg, MB, November 11–23, 2025.

The Right Road to Pontypool by Alex Poch Goldin (staged reading)

[Winnipeg Jewish Theatre](#), Winnipeg, MB, November 22–23, 2025.

Rogers vs. Rogers by Michael Healey

[Crow's Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, December 2–28, 2025.

Munsch Upon a Time by Debbie Patterson

[Prairie Theatre Exchange](#), Winnipeg, MB, December 19, 2025–January 3, 2026.

Easter Someday by Tanisha Taitt

[Cahoots Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, January 17–24, 2026.

Mad Madge by Rose Napoli

[Neptune Theatre](#), Halifax, NS, January 20–February 8, 2026.

Boom X by Rick Miller

[Theatre Aquarius](#), Hamilton, ON, January 21–February 7, 2026.

Casey and Diana by Nick Green

[Western Canada Theatre](#), Kamloops, BC, January 22–February 1, 2026.

The Golden Anniversaries by Mark Crawford

[Arts Club Theatre](#), Vancouver, BC, January 22–February 15, 2026.

Holland by Trish Cooper

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), Winnipeg, MB, February 4–21, 2026.

Rogers vs. Rogers by Michael Healey

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), Winnipeg, MB, February 18–March 14, 2026.

Queen Maeve by Judith Thompson

[Tarragon Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, March 3–29, 2026.

A Killing Snow by Paul Ciufo

[Vertigo Theatre](#), Calgary AB, March 14–April 12, 2026.

Chase the Ace by Mark Crawford

[Neptune Theatre](#), Halifax, NS, March 24–April 12, 2026.

The Golden Anniversaries by Mark Crawford

[Western Canada Theatre](#), Kamloops, BC, April 2–12, 2026.

On Native Land by Corey Payette

[The Cultch](#), Vancouver, BC, April 8–19, 2026.

• ON SCREEN •

[Starwalker](#) by Corey Payette

Starring Dillan Chiblow, Jeffrey Follis, and Stewart Adam McKensy. The film version of *Starwalker* opened recently at the Inside Out Festival and will be playing at theatres soon.

[With Love and a Major Organ](#) by Julia Lederer

Starring Anna Maguire, Hamza Haq, and Veena Sood. Finalist for the Grand Jury Prize, 2023 Nashville Film Festival, winner Best Feature Film, Reelworld Film Festival, winner, Best Feature, Canadian Film Festival. Available to rent or buy on Google Play, AppleTV or Amazon Prime.

[The Swearing Jar](#) by Kate Hewlett

Starring Adelaide Clemens, Douglas Smith, Patrick J. Adams, and Kathleen Turner. Now streaming on Amazon Prime!

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