

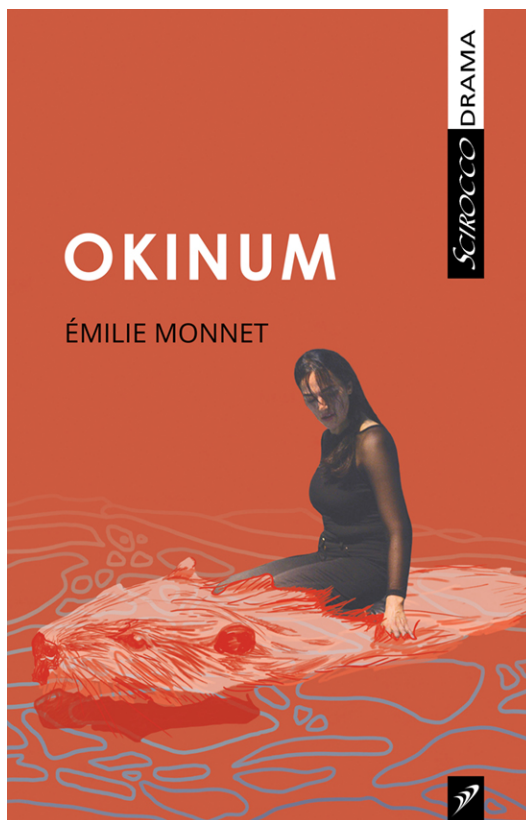
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J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD
P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

ESSENTIAL READING



“A vast healing ritual, it’s impossible not to be moved.”

— *Le Devoir*

“Extraordinarily relevant.”

— *Le Délit*

“*Okinum* speaks of the importance of transmission to the new generation, but also openness to others.”

— *Mon Theatre*

In deciphering a recurring dream about beavers, [Émilie Monnet](#) discovers how to break down interior barriers, to trust in the power of intuition, and to deconstruct cultural walls. A circular and immersive experience that interweaves three languages — English, French and Anishnaabemowin — [Okinum](#) is an ode to reclaiming language and reconnecting to

one's ancestors.

Okinum was a finalist for the Governor General's Award for French-language Drama in 2021 and a finalist for Governor General's Award for Translation in 2023.

[See More](#)

THE INTERVIEW

Rachel Mutombo is an award-winning actor and playwright based in Montreal. Her first play, ***Vierge***, won first prize in Infnitheatre's Write-On-Q playwriting competition in 2020 and was shortlisted for the 2024 Quebec Writers Federation Prize for Playwriting. Her TYA play, *Homeroom*, won the Playwrights Guild of Canada's Tom Hendry Award in 2021. Rachel has been a mentor for Black Theatre Workshop's mentorship program and the Paprika Festival.



Rachel, I'd like to begin by asking you about your play *Vierge*, which we recently published.

I was always interested in the difference in how girls and boys are treated in the church. As somebody who grew up in the church, it was so evident to me—the gap in expectations placed on girls versus boys. And yet, somehow, we're all supposed to get to the same result. We're all supposed to get to this marriage finish line, have children, be holy... But depending on your gender, the way it was talked about with you—or not talked about—felt kind of wild to me, honestly. There was something in that I wanted to explore.

And something that I love is that theatre can show us conversations that we would never

see otherwise. It gives us a sneak peek into another side of the world—another way of living that isn't necessarily our own lived experience. So, I wanted to explore that, too.

Those two ideas just kind of brewed in me for years. At some point, it turned into this thought: "I'm going to have these four girls in a church basement having a youth group meeting, and we'll see what happens."

You studied acting at the National Theatre School. What led you into writing?

I did, I chose NTS specifically because I was dead set on only being an actor. A lot of other theatre schools, especially the universities with BFA programs, tend to offer a broader experience of theatre training. And I was like, "No, I don't want to get sidetracked. I don't want to end up a director or a playwright. I'm solely going because I just want to be an *actor!*" And here we are.

But I was always a writer. As a kid, I enjoyed writing short stories and poems. ~~and so that~~ It has always existed in me. I didn't realize it for year, but my love of text and language was very tied into my practice as an actor. I would never get tired of doing table work in rehearsal. And whenever I had the chance to workshop a new play, I'd jump at the chance. It was always exciting to me to watch playwrights work. To watch the way they made dialogue and scenes appear like magic in an instant. And I think a lot of other artists saw something in me that I hadn't yet. I'd get asked a lot if I was going to write a play or if I'd considered it, but it took a while to click.

But then in 2019 I was in a show called *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* by Jocelyn Bioh. That experience for me was so profound. It was one of the most beautiful experiences I've ever had as an actor on stage, from rehearsal all the way through to performance. A large part of that was feeling so connected to the story of these African girls — and being in a play that talked about hard things but was a *comedy*. And there was such authenticity in Bioh's writing of those characters. They never felt like caricatures or stereotypes. She allowed all eight of us in that show to be seen as unique and distinct and wholly African. That experience gave me the courage to dive in *Vierge*.

So the marriage of all those things came together bit by bit. And that's when I decided to join the Playwrights Unit at Factory. I wrote the first scenes of the play in that program. And then I was gifted with a global pandemic several months into that, which meant I had all the time in the world to write that play...and several others.

[Read the Full Interview](#)

BEHIND THE SCENES



This month we spoke to director/actor/playwright [Molly Thom](#) about Toronto's venerable Alumnae Theatre.

Molly's play [The Bush-Ladies](#) is published by Scirocco Drama.

Molly, for readers who don't know the Alumnae, can you give us a capsule history of the theatre?

The Alumnae Theatre was established in 1918 by a group of women from the University of Toronto (University College) who had enjoyed theatre as undergraduates and decided they would like to continue. The men were all still away at the war, so that first year they played all the roles themselves, but by the following year, they decided to invite gentlemen to come and assist — to play the men's roles and build the sets and help with tech. Some of those women were still alive when I first became a member very many years ago, and they were formidable women, I can tell you! They were all very serious, and bluestockings, every one of them, really determined. The Alumnae is the oldest women-run theatre in North America. And it continues to be run by women.

I just finished writing a piece about the theatre for Clare Hopkinson for the Theatre Museum that focused on the Alumnae's dedication to women writers, which has always been a focus for my work with the theatre. In the 1970s, I came across a work called *La Nef des sorcières* by a group of French-Canadian feminist writers, a series of monologues about life as a woman. I found this so intriguing that I managed to get a grant to have it translated, and it became Linda Gaborieau's first translation for the theatre. I worked with her on this, and it was really an extraordinary experience. It was very well-received. From then on, I was totally hooked: all I wanted to do was to focus on women writers. And so in the 80s and 90s, I directed a number of Toronto premieres—I'm not sure whether they were all Canadian premieres but certainly they were all Toronto premieres—of international plays by women writers. Plays by Pam Gems and Timberlake Wertenbaker, and Carol Churchill's *Fen*, which was a great highlight of my directing career. It culminated in the all-time hit at the Alumnae, Carol Shields's *Thirteen Hands*. (It came right on the heels of her winning the Pulitzer Prize for *The Stone Diaries*.) We had sold-out houses for the entire run. I also directed a number of other premieres of works written by Alumnae members: a couple by Shirley Barrie, *The Pear Is Ripe* and *I Am Marguerite*, and *GuineaPigging* by Catherine Frid. At the same time, I was producing my own play, *The Bush-Ladies*, which also focused on women writers.

Read the Full Interview

CELEBRATE MOTHERS ON MAY 10



COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

Hurry Hard by Kristen Da Silva

[Rosebud Theatre](#), April 10–May 23, 2026.

Casey and Diana by Nick Green

[Belfry Theatre](#), Victoria, BC, April 21–May 17, 2026.

Jonas and Barry in the Home by Norm Foster

[Dancing Sky Theatre](#), Meacham, SK, April 29–May 15, 2026.

Beside Myself by Jennifer Wynne Webber

[Belfry Theatre/hpax theatre](#), Victoria, BC, April 30–May 9, 2026.

Your Show Here by Daniel MacIvor

[The Bus Stop Theatre](#), Halifax, NS, May 5–8, 2026.

Hurry Hard by Kristen Da Silva

[Hudson Village Theatre](#), Hudson, QC, May 13–24, 2026.

Sugar Road by Kristen Da Silva

[Thousand Islands Playhouse](#), Gananoque, ON, May 22–June 14, 2026.

I Am an Island by Julia Lederer

[Here for Now Theatre](#), Stratford, ON, May 27–June 7, 2026.

Sisters of '78 by Kristen Da Silva

[Blyth Festival](#), Blyth, ON, June 10–August 9, 2026.

The Bean by Norm Foster

[The Foster Festival](#), St. Catharines, ON, June 10–21, 2026.

The Long Weekend by Norm Foster

[Port Stanley Theatre Festival](#), Port Stanley, ON, June 10–July 4, 2026.

Dry Streak by Leeann Minogue

[Blyth Festival](#), Blyth, ON, June 17–August 16, 2026.

Hurry Hard by Kristen Da Silva

[Mayfield Dinner Theatre](#), Edmonton, AB, June 23–July 26, 2026.

Schoolhouse by Leanna Brodie

[4th Line Theatre](#), Millbrook, ON, June 30–July 25, 2026.

Sugar Road by Kristen Da Silva

[Watermark Theatre](#), July 3–August 29, 2026.

Sugar Road by Kristen Da Silva

[Port Stanley Theatre Festival](#), Port Stanley, ON, July 8–25, 2026.

The Rules of Playing Risk by Kristen Da Silva

[Hudson Village Playhouse](#), Hudson, QC, July 8–19, 2026.

The Long Weekend by Norm Foster

[The Foster Festival](#), St. Catharines, ON, July 9–19, 2026.

The Last Mayor of Rusty River by Gil Garratt and David Scott

[Blyth Festival](#), Blyth, ON, July 29–September 13, 2026.

Euchre Night by Norm Foster

[The Foster Festival](#), St. Catharines, ON, August 6–16, 2026.

Sexy Laundry by Michele Riml

[Drayton Festival Theatre](#), Drayton ON, August 12–30, 2026.

Farley Mowat's And No Birds Sang by Dave Carley

[Capitol Theatre](#), Port Hope, ON, August 14–September 6, 2026.

Ship to Shore by Norm Foster

[Port Stanley Theatre Festival](#), Port Stanley, ON, August 19–September 5, 2026.

Beyond the Sea by Kristen Da Silva

[Globus Theatre](#), Bobcaygeon, ON, August 19–29, 2026.

A Woman's Love List by Norm Foster

[Lighthouse Theatre](#), Port Dover, ON, August 26–September 12, 2026.

A Woman's Love List by Norm Foster

[Lighthouse Theatre](#), Port Colbourne, ON, September 16–27, 2026.

Wake by Rachel Mutombo

[Persephone Theatre](#), Saskatoon, SK, September 23–October 4, 2026.

The Lodger adapted by Susie Moloney and Vern Thiessen

[Vertigo Theatre](#), Calgary, AB, September 26–October 25, 2026.

A Woman's Love List by Norm Foster

[Globus Theatre](#), Bobcaygeon, ON, September 30–October 10, 2026.

Sisters of '78 by Kristen Da Silva

[Theatre Aquarius](#), September 30–October 17, 2026.

Jordan by Yvette Nolan

[Manitoba Theatre for Young People](#), Winnipeg, MB, October 2–11, 2026.

Jonas and Barry in the Home by Norm Foster

[Hildebrand Schoolhouse Theatre](#), St. Jacob's, ON, October 6–November 8, 2026.

Rogers v. Rogers by Michael Healey

[Canadian Stage/Crow's Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, November 8–December 13, 2026.

Jordan by Yvette Nolan

[Geordie Theatre/Carousel Theatre for Young People](#), Vancouver, BC, November 11–15, 2026.

The Night Logan Woke Up by Michel Marc Bouchard

[Tarragon Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, November 17–December 13, 2026.

Parfumerie adapted by Adam Pettle and Brenda Robins

[Soulpepper Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, November 18–December 20, 2026.

A Christmas Carol adapted by David van Belle

[Citadel Theatre](#), Edmonton, AB, November 22–December 24, 2026.

A Christmas Carol adapted by David van Belle

[Grand Theatre](#), London, ON, November 24–December 27, 2026.

A Christmas Carol adapted by Geoffrey Simon Brown

[Theatre Calgary](#), Calgary, AB, November 26–December 27, 2026.

The Office Christmas Party and ***Widow Wonderland*** by Norm Foster

[The Foster Festival](#), St. Catharines, ON, December 2–19, 2026.

The Thrill of Hope: A Holiday Concert by Beau Dixon, Raha Javanfar, and Luke Reece

[Soulpepper Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, December 15, 2026–January 3, 2027.

Munschbusters adapted by Debbie Patterson

[Prairie Theatre Exchange](#), Winnipeg, MB, December 18, 2026–January 3, 2027.

Intrepid by Alex Poch-Goldin

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), Winnipeg, MB, January 13–February 6, 2027.

The Veil by Keith Barker and Thomas Morgan Jones

[Vertigo Theatre](#), Calgary, AB, January 16–February 14, 2027.

Wake by Rachel Mutombo

[Western Canada Theatre](#), Prince George, BC, January 21–31, 2027.

She Shoots, She Scores! by Michele Riml

[Gateway Theatre](#), Richmond, BC, February 15–20, 2027.

Sense and Sensibility adapted by Jessica B. Hill and Daryl Cloran

[Theatre Calgary](#), Calgary, AB, March 30–April 25, 2027.

The Ghosts of Mariupol by Christopher Morris

[Crow's Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, April 20–May 9, 2027.

Age is a Feeling by Haley McGee

[Theatre Orangeville](#), Orangeville, ON, April 29–May 16, 2027.

Six Degrees in May by Santiago Guzmán

[Neptune Theatre](#), Halifax, NS, May 4–23, 2027.

fareWel by Ian Ross

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), Winnipeg, MB, May 5–29, 2027.

Salesman in China by Leanna Brodie and Jovanni Sy

[Mirvish Productions](#), Toronto, ON, June–July 2027.

Closing Time at Maple Leaf Gardens by Beau Dixon and Frank Cox-O'Connell
[Soulpepper Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, July 29–August 15, 2027.

• ON SCREEN •

Starwalker by Corey Payette

Starring Dillan Chiblow, Jeffrey Follis, and Stewart Adam McKensy. The film version of *Starwalker* opened at the Inside Out Festival in Toronto in May and went on to play at the Vancouver Queer Film Festival; the Flickrs Rhode Island International Film Festival, where it won the Grand Prize Alternative Spirit Award; the Asinabka Film Festival in Ottawa; the Whistler Film Festival, and the Portland Film Festival, where it was the opening night narrative feature film.

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.

Café Daughter by Kenneth T. Williams

Starring Violah Beauvais, Tom Lim, and Sera-Lys McArthur and is directed by Shelley Niro. Now streaming on Paramount+.

Steel Toes by David Gow (adapted from *Cherry Docs*)

Starring David Strathairn, Andrew W. Walker, and Marina Orsini. Directed by Mark Adam and David Gow. Now streaming on Amazon Prime.

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