

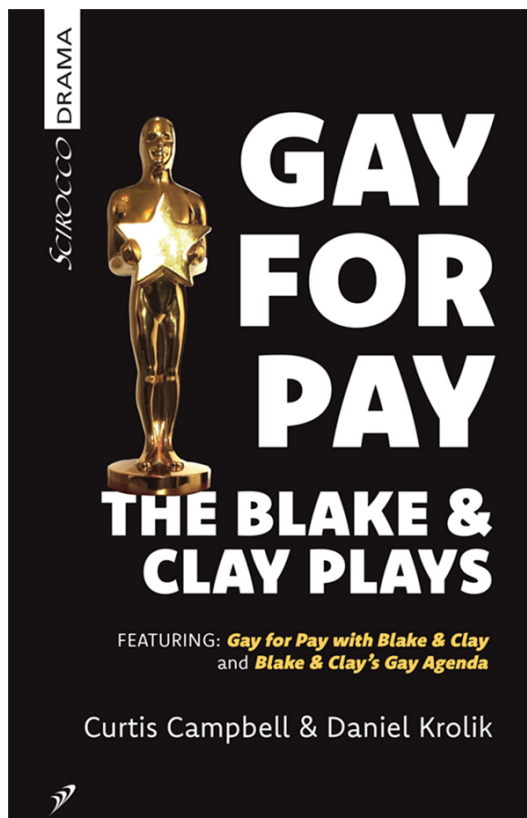
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J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD
P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

ESSENTIAL READING



"Razor sharp. Straight-up brilliant."

— *NOW Magazine*

"Pitch perfect satire. Perfectly calibrated mic-drops."

— *Toronto Star*

"Fast paced and dizzyingly witty."

— *Intermission Magazine*

"Quite simply the most uproariously funny period of time I have ever spent in a theatre."

— *My Gay Toronto*

[Gay for Pay: The Blake and Clay Plays](#) contains two smash-hit one-act plays by [Curtis Campbell](#) and [Daniel Krolik](#).

In *Gay for Pay with Blake & Clay*, two out-of-work gay actors teach straight men how to

play the gay roles that lead to awards season glory. Blake and Clay may not be leading men, but they are leading these men to greatness by teaching them to go from straight to straight-up booked. Because representation matters, but Blake and Clay's representation hasn't called them in ages.

Blake & Clay's Gay Agenda invites you to the fabulous book launch for the world's first how-to manual about the eternal conundrum that is gay living. Watch as Blake and Clay take the guesswork out of the queer experience and unite the community once and for all. Because if the gays can agree on one thing, it's that they can't agree on anything.

[See More](#)

THE INTERVIEW

This month we spoke with Toronto-based playwright/performer [Rose Napoli](#).

*Rose's plays include **Mad Madge**, **After the Rain**, **Lo (or Dear Mr. Wells)**, which was nominated for a Dora Mayor Moore award for Outstanding New Play, **Legacy**, **A Death and the Marias**, **That's Amore**, **Ten Creative Ways to Dispose of Your Cremains**, and **Oregano**.*



Rose, I'd like to start by asking you about two recent projects: *Mad Madge* and *After the Rain*. Let's start with *Mad Madge*, which has just rolled off the presses! Tell us about how you came to write the play and about your experience performing it.

I was working on a commission for Nightwood—the initial idea was a comedy about female rage inspired by the woman who threw a chair off a condo balcony onto the Gardiner

Expressway in Toronto. I was thinking a lot about the pursuit of online fame and saw the potential for something that was funny and vicious in equal measure. I happened to be simultaneously reading Danielle Dutton's novella, *Margaret the First*, and was introduced to Margaret Cavendish. The more I read about her, the more it dawned on me that this hunt for attention was nothing new. I pitched Andrea a new idea: a loosely factual contemporary comedy set in the 17th century about Margaret Cavendish.

***Mad Madge* was recently produced at the Neptune in Halifax, with another actor in the lead role. What was it like to see an entirely different version of the play?**

I loved it! Neptune played the show on their mainstage, a beautiful proscenium, with lavish production values. The premiere production in Toronto was scrappy and grounded, played in the round, which gave it an intimacy that worked well for particular moments. At Neptune, in a big theatre, the comedy was much broader, the approach much more stylized, which worked well for a whole new series of moments. It was excellent to see that the show could thrive with a different set of values. It helped me appreciate what I had created, helped me understand it more clearly. I've also continued to work on the script (cutting nearly ten pages after the premiere and another three after Neptune). I actually had the thought while reading the final proof of the published script: Oh! That's how I fix that problem! For me, it's never done. And I truly think a new work needs at least three productions before it finds itself. That's why I'm very grateful to Jeremy at Neptune for programming it. Those subsequent productions are so vital and rare.

The other big project you've been involved with recently is the musical *After the Rain*, which you co-wrote with Suzy Wilde. Is this the first time you've written a musical? Can you tell us about the process and the production?

Talk about something never being finished! Making a new musical takes, on average, a decade. By that metric, Suzy and I have just passed the halfway mark with *After the Rain*. The first production is really a fancy workshop. I'm proud of how experimental we've been on that project. We've really challenged ourselves to play with the form of traditional music theatre. Some of our spaghetti stuck and some fell right off the wall. We've had an incredible team on that show, our creative partners, Marie Farsi and Rachel O'Brien. Laurence Siegel and the Tarragon who initially supported Suzy and me. Michael Rubinoff and the Musical Stage Company that are continuing to invest in developing the show long after its premiere. We had a post-premiere workshop, a second production at the National Arts Centre. And even though we evolved the show in a major way from that Tarragon production to the NAC, the team agreed on opening night in Ottawa that there is still more work to be done. It's incredibly vulnerable to sit in process when you've got audiences buying tickets and reviewers writing about the show as though it were the definitive production, but Suzy is a perfect partner for me. She reminds me that we have to trust in our instincts, that we have to listen to what audiences tell us, but we also have to continue to be the protectors of our baby. I really torture myself when I'm working. Suzy is all joy. The collaborative nature of musical theatre is so thrilling. Like with television (which I also love writing for), you end up making something you simply could never have made on your

own. And that's really special.

[Read the Full Interview](#)

BEHIND THE SCENES



Recently, we spoke with Laura Mullin and Chris Tolley of [PlayME](#), an innovative platform that offers audio versions of Canadian plays.

Chris and Laura, for readers who may not have discovered PlayME yet, can you give us an overview of what you do?

Chris: Oh, sure. We take some of the best plays from across the country, turn them into full-fledged audio dramas with sound effects and music, and recreate the rooms and environments the characters interact in. We try to create a fully immersive audio experience that's almost like a movie without the visuals.

We want to bring theatre to anyone with an internet connection, a phone, or a computer. They can discover playwrights and plays, no matter where they live. And our hope is that it works like the music model, where you listen to music through Spotify or Apple Music, and it's freely available. You then discover an artist, discover work, and get hooked on it. And then, when you discover a live performance is about to happen in your city, you go, "Ah, I want to be in that room! I want to buy a ticket, now." So the goal is really to build future audiences for theatre.

How can people find PlayME programming?

Laura: We always say it's really wherever you listen to your podcasts. We're on CBC, so people can visit their website at cbc.ca/playme. Or they can visit our website at www.playmepodcast.com. But we're on Apple, Spotify, Amazon, and wherever you can listen to a podcast.

I'll just add something to what Chris said earlier: I think for us, as people who have created theatre, we know how frustrating it is for anyone who spends all that time creating a show...and then the time that it's on stage is so fleeting. For us, giving plays a second life and building awareness of playwrights, especially among people outside the theatre, has been a real pleasure.

Can you tell us a bit about how you choose which plays you will feature?

Laura: Honestly, there's no secret way that we do it. Basically, if a play is sent to us, or we see it, and it strikes a chord, we will pursue it. I mean, some plays translate better to audio than others, but most seem to do quite well.

I think we are also drawn to work that speaks to the zeitgeist of the moment. We did *Hypothetical Baby* by Rachel Cairns last year because there's so much talk about what's going on politically in the world regarding women's rights. It seemed like an important show to highlight, where it's discussing the right to have an abortion and the process, the hoops you have to go through. So anything that is "of the moment" is something that we will consider.

We try to do shows that represent different communities and places. It is a bit challenging because we are in Toronto and, unfortunately, don't have a budget to bring people in. We did all our recordings online during the pandemic, and we still do that occasionally, although we really love being in the studio and recording in person. I think there's a part of us that just wants to be off our computers and in a room with people. So the catalogue features more plays involving people who can get into the space with us, but we certainly hope to increase representation from across Canada.

Chris: In a way, it's very similar to you and what you do with Scirocco Drama. Because what we create lacks the ephemeral element of theatre, they have greater longevity; these stories will last a long time. So we're trying to think "What will be the Canadian story; what will be the Canadian identity that people will connect to in five years, ten years, twenty years' time?"

PlayME allows listeners to access lots of plays for free, but fans can also get a membership that allows them access to more of the catalogue. How many plays have you recorded so far?

Chris: About a year and a half ago, I counted it up, and back then it was around sixty or seventy plays in total for PlayME. We've also produced audio dramas for the National Arts Centre, and for Tarragon Theatre when it was their 50th anniversary. We did seventeen plays for them, a retrospective of the most pivotal shows Tarragon produced over its fifty-year history.

For PlayME, a show is available for free on CBC for three years, then we relicense it and make it available to our PlayME+ members, whom we consider friends of PlayME. They

also have access to other content: for example, we have a whole series of courses focused on different areas of professional development. You can get a little insight into subjects like how to transition from a playwright to a television writer, or how to write stand-up comedy or a novel. We have also held some one-off webinars and workshops with people like Jillian Keiley, who talked about pitching to theatre companies, and writers' relationships with agents, etc.

The courses are offered to our membership first. We're trying to create a community for theatre nerds who really love theatre and want a place to connect.

Click on Read the Full Interview for more on how a serendipitous mash-up of theatre, radio drama, and podcasting has brought theatre everywhere.

Read the Full Interview

NEW RELEASES



IN THE NEWS

- The recently announced Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations for Outstanding New Play include Sciocco Drama authors Anusree Roy (*Through the Eyes of God*), Michael Healey (*Rogers v Rogers*), and Kanika Ambrose (*The Christmas Market*). Anusree's play was also recently awarded the Toronto Theatre Critics Award for Best Production.
- On Sunday May 31, the Manitoba Association of Playwrights held a public reading featuring the four plays and playwrights from this year's Sciocco Drama Manitoba High School Playwriting Program. Manitoba Theatre for Young People Theatre School provided the performance space and their very talented acting students performed the roles. The playwrights were Adia Branconnier (Transcona Collegiate); Felix Jeffery (River East Collegiate); Jake Spence (Transcona Collegiate); and

Dominique-Maria Thompson (St. Mary's Academy). Congratulations to all the participants!

COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

Sugar Road by Kristen Da Silva

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

SubHuman by Natalie Meisner

[Osprey Arts Centre](#), Shelburne, NS, July 8–12, 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 Rimi
[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.

Dragonfly by Lara Rae
Vancouver Fringe Festival, Upstart & Crow, Vancouver, BC, September 10–20, 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 12–15, 2026.

The Night Logan Woke Up by Michel Marc Bouchard

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

Parfumerie adapted by Adam Pettie 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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