

**Chez Nous (Two): A Staged-Reading Series**  
**Showcasing English-Language Drama in Quebec (1980-2010)**

Produced by Professor Erin Hurley, Department of English, McGill University in collaboration with Playwrights' Workshop Montréal, Alexis Diamond (series Literary Manager) and Dr. Alison Bowie (dramaturg and research assistant)

**EVENING ONE: "Musings, Muses and Memory"**

Director: Alessandra Tom

Stage Manager: Alyssa Razavi Mastali

Cast:

Danny Brochu\*

Espoir Segbeaya

Lucinda Davis\*

Patrick Park

Reading selections from the following plays:

*Swan Song of Maria* by Carol Cece Anderson

*A Very Modest Orgy* by Patricia Joudry

*Michel et Ti-Jean* by George Rideout

*Stuck* by Naila Keleta-Mae

*From the Main to Mainstreet* by Pan Bouyoucas

\*The participation of these Artists is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance•Opera•Theatre Policy.

## ***Swan Song of Maria* by Carol Cece Anderson (2009)**

### **Synopsis:**

Joe is a white writer in Canada in his early 60's taking care of his black wife, who suffers from Alzheimer's. Through the use of flashbacks, the play traces Joe's past in 1960s Cuba where he had met and fallen in love with Maria, his Hispanic muse, and how her memory continues to haunt him and his wife in the present. Maria becomes an allegory for the idealism and revolutionary fervour that gripped Latin America in this period, and how, despite its ultimate failure, those ideals haunt those who were a part of it.

### **About Carol Cece Anderson:**

Carol Cece Anderson is an actor, playwright and Artistic Director of El Destino Productions born in Montreal. She spent several years studying and working in New York City. Graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts (New York City) and Marianopolis College (Montreal). B.A.(Communication Studies) from Concordia University (Montreal).

As an actor, she has worked in film, tv, industrial videos, commercials, and CBC radio. As a writer, she has written primarily for theatre and CBC radio. Some pieces include: playwright-in-residence at the National Arts Centre (2008/2009) and Theatre Passe Muraille (1999/2000), work at the AfriCanadian Playwrights Festival, Black Theatre Workshop, Tarragon Theatre, Playwrights Workshop Montreal, Lunation (Oakwood Village Arts Festival). Critically acclaimed main stage production of her play, *Swan Song of Maria (A Tragic Fairy Tale)* at Black Theatre Workshop in Montreal (2009).

from: <https://carolceceanderson.com/about/>

## ***A Very Modest Orgy* by Patricia Joudry (1981)**

### Synopsis:

*A Very Modest Orgy* is a full-length comedy set in the home of Phoebe and Bertram, where they live with their children Francine and Nigel, located somewhere in the countryside. The play is set in the midst of the sexual revolution. Phoebe and Bertram's marriage is stale and their sex life even worse. They worry about their three odd children. They decide to "swing" and find two willing young people. As they plan their adventure, they grow closer as a couple and in the end choose not to "swing". Their children also change in a way that renders them more normative.

### About Patricia Joudry (1921-2000)

Patricia Joudry was raised in Montreal, but went to Toronto in 1940 to act and write where she became one of Canada's most frequently-produced radio drama writers, especially of comedy. Her play, *Teach Me How To Cry*, was a winner at the Dominion Drama Festival, and has been produced world-wide and filmed.

After 15 years in the UK, Joudry returned to her birth country (notably in the Notre-Dame-de-Grace district of Montreal and then Huntingdon, QC) in 1973. Tundra Books published two autobiographical accounts about her experiences in England. By the time she returned, Joudry's style of comic writing and spiritual themes failed to interest the newly emerging Canadian professional theatres of the 1970s and 1980s. Her comedy *A Very Modest Orgy*, produced by 25th Street Theatre in Saskatoon in 1981, was her first stage play to receive a production in Canada in twenty-four years.

from: <http://www.canadiantheatre.com/dict.pl?term=Joudry%2C%20Patricia>

## ***Michel et Ti-Jean* by George Rideout (2006)**

### Synopsis:

In this probing character study, Rideout fashions a hypothetical 1969 meeting in a bar in St. Petersburg, Florida, between Quebec playwright Michel Tremblay and an individual whom he believes to be a truly great writer–beat generation author Jack Kerouac, whose Francophone mother affectionately called him Ti-Jean. At the time of their meeting, Kerouac is forty-seven years old and only months away from death, destroyed by drink in an attempt to live up to the wild image of the “beatnik” stereotype he coined in his novel *On the Road*. Michel Tremblay is twenty-seven and his breakthrough play, *Les Belles Soeurs*, has premiered a year before.

As he encounters his writing idol, the younger man must break through the older man’s emotional barriers to establish common ground. Ultimately, Kerouac’s Québécois background helps Tremblay understand his work, recognize the role religion takes, and the place women play in his psyche, as stated metaphorically in the various female characters who populate *Les Belles Soeurs*.

### About George Rideout:

George Rideout was raised in Texas and moved to Canada in his teens. He taught theatre at Bishop’s University in Lennoxville, Quebec, where the annual New Plays Festival presents one-act plays written in his playwriting class. His own work as a playwright is more widely celebrated, winning numerous regional and national playwriting awards. His plays often reflect on cross-cultural relationships, particularly as they exist in times of great social change. They include *Texas Boy* (which has had more than thirty different productions), *The Longstreth Line*, *Walking on the Moon*, *689 Spadina Ave.*, *The Austin Texas Twist Championship*, *The Tall Girl*, and *An Anglophone Is Coming to Dinner*.

from: <https://talonbooks.com/authors/george-rideout>)

## ***Stuck* by Naila Keleta-Mae (2007)**

### **Synopsis:**

*Stuck* follows the story of “She”, born and raised in a middle-class suburb of the Greater Toronto Area to Jamaican parents. Grieving the loss of her father, the 22-year-old main character wrestles with her identity as a black woman questioning her sexuality and addicted to marijuana. The play explores her childhood memories and her desire to belong. *Stuck* also follows She’s processing of her father’s death, as her grief transitions from sadness and despair to anger towards God, and then ultimately to acceptance as she makes her final decision to take her own life at end of the play.

### **About Dr. Naila Keleta-Mae:**

Naila Keleta-Mae holds a PhD in Theatre Studies (York University), an MFA in Theatre (York University) and a BA with distinction (Concordia University). Her areas of research and teaching expertise are race, gender and performance. Dr. Keleta-Mae’s current artistic and research project is called Black And Free with a focus on Black expressive culture and it is funded by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts and the University of Waterloo. She has appeared as a media commentator for the BBC, CBC, CTV, The Canadian Press, The National Post, The Toronto Star, and The Fader and written op-eds for *The Globe and Mail* and Vice Network. She is also an award-winning poet, recording artist, and playwright who has performed in Canada, France, Jamaica, and South Africa.

from: <https://uwaterloo.ca/communication-arts/people-profiles/naila-keleta-mae>

## ***From the Main to Mainstreet* by Pan Bouyoucas (1986)**

### **Synopsis:**

Commissioned by the Centaur theatre, Pan Bouyoucas and a diverse cast created *From the Main to Mainstreet* in 1984. Through sketches, songs, and monologues, *From the Main to Mainstreet* foregrounds the experiences of second-generation immigrants to the city in the 1980s.. In a tone that is alternately satirical, comic, and touching, the multicultural cast wrestle attachments to both Montreal and their far-away homelands, and their conflicting desires to move from “the Main” to “Mainstreet” Canada.

### **About Pan Bouyoucas:**

Pan Bouyoucas is a playwright and novelist of Greek origin who has lived in Montréal since 1963. At the beginning of his career, while working as a journalist, translator, and film critic, BOuyoucas also wrote two novels (*Le dernier souffle* et *Une bataille d'Amérique*) and award-winning radio plays. *From the Main to Mainstreet (Divided We Stand)* played at the Centaur Theatre for 9 weeks, and then seven more at Canadian Stage in Toronto, where it was the company's biggest success of the 1990-01 season. Pan Bouyoucas continues to write plays, primarily in French: *Trois flics sur un toit*, *Le cerf-volant*, *Lionel*, *Nocturne*, et *Hypatie* (Prix des Journées de Lyon des auteurs de théâtre 1999), as well as a children's book, a collection of short stories and a dozen novels.

from: <http://www.dramaturges.qc.ca/bouyoucaspan.html>

Pre-show music from “Songs of the Resistance” (1980) by Barry Lazar, produced by David Gélinas; *Anglo! The Musical* (1984) by Rod Hayward; and *Ride* (2010) by Alexis Diamond (librettist) and Nick Carpenter (composer). Thanks to all for permissions to play these tracks. Moyses Hall is SOCAN licensed.

Thanks to: The research project team: Alexis Diamond (literary management), Alison Bowie (dramaturgy), and Emma Tibaldo (production and professional guidance). To Pascale Théorêt-Groulx for designing the posters and programmes; and Corinne Deeley for her production guidance and her supervision of the student stage-managers. Keith Roche for technical direction; and Stewart McCombie for live streaming.

Bon spectacle!

