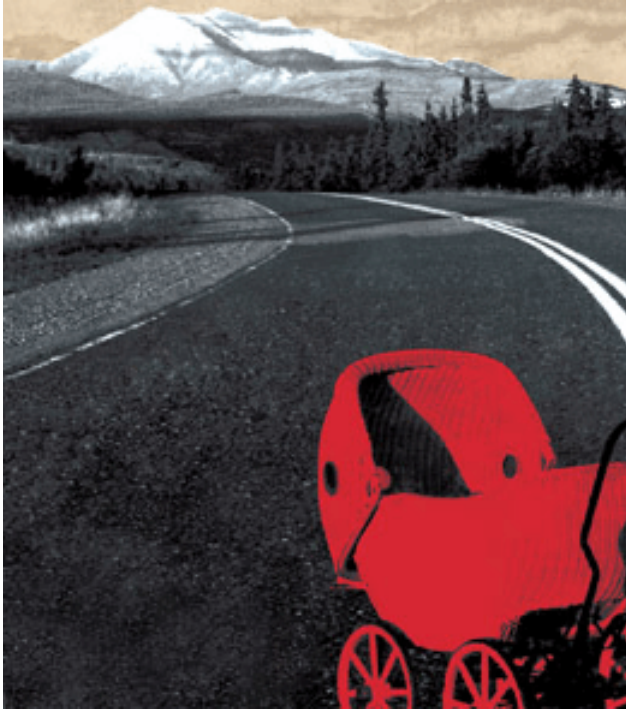


So Many Doors



by Celia McBride

A Playgoer's Guide

“I’ve always called the Yukon another character in this play” – Celia McBride

McBride and her work



Celia McBride is an award-winning playwright whose plays have been produced in Europe, the US and Canada. She graduated from the National Theatre School of Canada in 1995 and, having received the Fox Fellowship Award, travelled to Ireland to work with Dublin’s TEAM Educational Theatre Company and Limerick’s Island Theatre Company. In 1996, her play *Choke My Heart* was selected for the National Playwrights’ Conference of Ireland in Waterford,

which led to a production of the play by Waterford’s Red Kettle Theatre in 1998. In the spring of 2004, Celia returned to her hometown of Whitehorse, Yukon to complete a year-long stint as Playwright-in-Residence with Nakai Theatre. Friends since 1998 in Montreal, Celia and Moira Sauer, who had been living in Whitehorse since 2001, formed Sour Brides Theatre in the fall of 2004. [Sour Bride Theatre Web site]

McBride, whose critically acclaimed works include *What a Cad* and *Walk Right Up*, acknowledges the importance of women mentors and teachers in her career, notably Judith Thompson and One Yellow Rabbit Theatre’s Denise Clark. McBride made a conscious decision early in her career to write lead roles for women. “I try to write for women because I think ‘If women aren’t being produced more often, there’s more roles for men,’” says McBride.

“I was in Stratford for the unveiling of the new studio theatre. The press was there as well as a lot of important people, it was very exciting. They lowered this giant purple velvet banner with a poster of the 11 plays that were going to be produced for the studio’s first season. I looked at the list and realized I was the only woman on it. It was an eye-opening moment.” [Alexa Topolski, *NTS Journal*]

every parent's worst nightmare

"There's actually a line in the play that says, 'You hear it all the time: it's every parent's worst nightmare,'" McBride comments. "And it's true. When I was first given the intuitive idea to write about it, I went, 'I don't know if I can go there.' But a few things happened that made me realize that I needed to brave the fear and just open myself up to it. "It's a play about grief, but it's really a play about healing," she continues. "And it's a play about that incredible, devastating fear coming true, and how it's possible to not only survive it but heal from it. It's an incredibly difficult thing to do, but it's possible." McBride has endured her own share of disasters, including a miscarriage, but she says that universal experience, not personal catharsis, is what she's after. "I really feel like this is so not about me," she stresses, adding that during the writing process, the world kept giving her hints that she was onto something.

"Take your work outside"

Unique for a Yukon theatre company, Sour Brides, from the outset, has set a clear mandate to "tour critically successful theatre across Canada and around the world." The philosophy stemmed from a conversation the pair had with then Yukon Arts Centre director Chris Dray in 2003. "When we told him what we wanted to do, he said, 'That's great you guys, but do you really want to be just another Yukon theatre company that puts on plays and goes 'that was fun?'" said McBride. "He said, 'the only way that you're going to differentiate yourself from any other professional company that's here, the only way this company's going to go anywhere is if you take your work outside.'" The Yukon, for its size, has an extremely active artistic scene, but the territory also carries a



the company

clearly defined ceiling of how far an actor or company can develop. "There's only so much we can grow when we're so isolated – we need to bring in professionals from outside to work with us and we need to export in order to find out where we stand on the world market and where we stand on the world stage," said McBride.

Praise for the play

Even if her plays have not been set in the North, they all carry echoes of northern isolation, light and dark, and the concept of "the last frontier." – Tristin Hopper, *Yukon News*

Sharp dialogue that is extremely true to life... [the] characters are psychologically complex . . . solidly acted and well-directed . . . – *The Globe and Mail*

Moving, funny, thoughtful, inspiring . . . insightful . . . and very real. — Genesee Keevil, *Yukon News*

This guide was researched by

The *So Many Doors* Task Force

Ianic Roy Richard, Howard Outerbridge,
Alexandre Syvrais-Gallant, and Russ Hunt

and assembled and edited by the editorial team:

Bryan McDaniel, David Charters,
John Barry, and Russ Hunt

St. Thomas University

English 2223: The Page and the Stage

visit our Web site, at:

<http://people.stu.ca/~hunt/22230809/>