

The only Canadian theatre company awarding a \$5000 playwriting prize



And the 13th annual Write-On-Q! winner is...



Rachel Mutombo, *Vierge*

Montréal, November 2020- Every year **Infinithéâtre** seeks innovative and challenging new works by dedicated Québec and Indigenous playwrights for their **Write-On-Q!** Québec playwriting competition. This is the only Canadian theatre company with a playwriting prize that awards the substantial sum of \$5000, and the biggest literary prize in Québec. Known and respected for its playwriting initiatives (which also includes [The Unit](#) and [The Pipeline](#)), Infinithéâtre has [developed and produced](#) the world premieres of over 40 new Québec plays. **Write-On-Q!**'s winning and honourable mention scripts are selected by an independent jury, which this year includes Oren Safdie, Ivan Smith, Jacob Margaret Archer, Alexandra Laferrière and Gerry Lipnowski, chaired by Andrea Romaldi.

This year's winner of the **Write-On-Q!** playwriting competition's **Kevin** prize is ***Vierge*** by **Rachel Mutombo**. The award is named in memory of Kevin Tierney, renowned Canadian film producer, *Montreal Gazette* columnist & Infinithéâtre Board Member and tremendous supporter. Honourable mentions go to *The Trial of William Shakespeare* by Alex Poch-Goldin and *Beloved* by Arthur Holden. (see details below)

Infinithéâtre Artistic Director **Guy Sprung** is very pleased with the over 40 high-quality entries this year. "The plays submitted to **Write-On-Q!** continue to increase in number, cultural diversity, and overall quality as the competition itself continues to raise the bar for playwriting in Québec," he said. Winning this playwriting competition "means the world" to Mutombo. "Montreal is always home for me; it's where I fell in love with theatre for the first time. It's deeply humbling to have been recognized in this way by my Montreal theatre community," she added.

For the past twelve years, submitting their work are not only produced playwrights, but also unknown writers including students in writing programs at universities and theatre schools, along with plays coming from CEGEP & university professors, journalists, editors, actors, screenwriters, poets, directors, novelists and various literary award-winners. Previous seasons' **Write-On-Q!** successes include Oren Safdie's *Mr. Goldberg Goes to Tel Aviv* and *Unseamly*; *Battered* by Arthur Holden; Michael Milech's *Honesty Rents By The Hour*; Alyson Grant's *Conversion*, *Progress!* and *Trench Patterns*; and *The Elephant Song* by Nicholas Billon. The annual competition has been a major source of original plays for the company's repertoire. Works developed by Infinithéâtre have been performed all over the island of Montréal and beyond; in Stratford Ontario, Toronto, British Columbia, in Ottawa at the NAC, New York, Tokyo, Cairo and Edinburgh.

Write-On-Q! Kevin prize, \$5000: *Vierge* by Rachel Mutombo

Vierge is about four Congolese-Canadian teen-aged girls coming to terms with their sexuality, while also being virgins saving themselves until marriage. (Developed at the Emerging Playwrights' Unit, Factory Theatre, Toronto) From the jury, "The play touches on questions of faith, sexuality, friendship, and solidarity with an abundance of heart and humour. Rachel Mutombo's dialogue is real and refreshing; her characters feel true and alive, with all the kindness

and cruelty of teenagers as the four girls try to navigate between the expectations of their religion, their community and the more liberal values of their adopted home, Québec. This play makes one both tear up and laugh out loud, sometimes on the same page. One of the most exciting, original voices to come out of Canadian theatre in many years.”

Write-On-Q! honourable mention: *The Trial of William Shakespeare* by Alex Poch-Goldin

Against the backdrop of the birth of the Jewish state in the British mandate of Palestine, a travelling British theatre company is stymied in its intention to stage *The Merchant of Venice* in a local Tel Aviv venue on the grounds that the play is racist. When the theatre company objects, it is decided to settle the matter through a mock trial of Shakespeare on the charge of antisemitism.

From the jury, “*The Trial of William Shakespeare* is a clever and engaging way of confronting important questions about the purpose of theatre itself. This ambitious and highly accomplished play examines not only Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* but the very nature of antisemitism. Alex Poch-Goldin has written a thoughtful, imaginative and touching piece that weaves multiple thematic elements seamlessly into a compelling storyline in a nuanced and at times magical world.”

Write-On-Q! honourable mention: *Beloved* by Arthur Holden

In *Beloved*, a couple has been alerted that their teenage son has been downloading porn that involves minors on his high school computer.

From the jury, “Playwright Arthur Holden has crafted an emotional journey that explores parenting, homophobia, mental health, and our educational, medical and legal institutions. The result is a thought provoking and disturbing contemporary work, with engaging and complex characters that will challenge your perceptions, evoke your emotions, surprise you, and leave you with a better understanding of the human condition.”

Winner of Infinithéâtre’s **Write-On-Q!** Kevin prize, Rachel Mutombo is a Dora award-winning actor and writer. She is an acting graduate of John Abbott College’s Professional Theatre program as well as the National Theatre School of Canada. Select theatre performance credits include *Antigone* (Young People's Theatre), *School Girls; Or the African Mean Girls Play* (Obsidian Theatre/Nightwood Theatre) and *Selfie* (YPT). Through the support of Factory theatre, *Vierge* is the first full length play that Rachel completed. She is currently a participant in Studio180’s INDEVELOPMENT series where she is working on a new play called *6X10*.

For [contest rules](#) and further information: 514 987-1774 www.infinithatre.com/write-on-q.php

Great theatre begins with great writing. Infinithéâtre’s mission is to develop, produce and broker new Québec plays to ever-widening audiences.

-30-

Media Contact: Janis Kirshner, (514) 287-8912 jkirshner@sympatico.ca