



Modern Canadian Plays: Volume 1

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“I don’t see how a play can be Canadian. I don’t think there are any plays that you could call strictly Canadian ... What does that phrase mean?”

Now, thirty-three years after Canadian directors spoke their minds, or rather shrugged their shoulders at the seeming hopelessness of de-colonizing Canadian theatre, this fourth edition of the “classic” *Modern Canadian Plays* sets out for us an even broader range of plays than previous editions, outlining a Canadian drama-scene that is far from colonial, inert, middle-class, or middle-aged. Spanning the years from 1967 to 1997, this anthology will likely continue to be the standard anthology for Canadian drama—and not without good reason.

Edited by Jerry Wasserman—professor at the University of British Columbia, theatre critic for CBC, and one of Vancouver’s most recurring (and memorable) faces on television— Volume I still contains plays such as George Ryga’s seminal and highly political *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* (first performed in 1967, it was described as a “cicatrice” of Canadian society that “showed the bleeding flesh beneath”), as well as Michel Tremblay’s *Les Belles-Soeurs* (one of the most critically acclaimed plays in Canada, translated from the original, controversial, joual). But more to the point, this edition of Volume I carries with it an even more distinct flavour of adventurousness in its juxtaposition of plays that are strikingly, even wildly, various—plays that can only be said to cohere around the difficulty of amorphous notions such as social justice, cultural belonging, and the existence of a collective past.

The plays in this fourth edition of *Modern Canadian Plays: Volume I* date from 1967 to 1986.

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