

Denise Lynde, ed. *The Breakwater Book of Contemporary Newfoundland Plays: Volume Three*. St. John's: Breakwater Books, 2016. ISBN 978-1-55081-636-5

Todd Hennessey

Volume 32, numéro 2, fall 2017

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/nflds32_2br03

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Faculty of Arts, Memorial University

ISSN

1719-1726 (imprimé)

1715-1430 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Hennessey, T. (2017). Compte rendu de [Denise Lynde, ed. *The Breakwater Book of Contemporary Newfoundland Plays: Volume Three*. St. John's: Breakwater Books, 2016. ISBN 978-1-55081-636-5]. *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*, 32(2), 539–540.

Denise Lynde, ed. *The Breakwater Book of Contemporary Newfoundland Plays: Volume Three*. St. John's: Breakwater Books, 2016. ISBN 978-1-55081-636-5

The Breakwater Book of Contemporary Newfoundland Plays: Volume Three is the latest in a series of anthologies edited by Denise Lynde. As with the previous volumes, this book gathers together an eclectic group of plays, carefully and thoughtfully introduced by Lynde. The introduction gathers together and contextualizes these works in an illuminating and insightful manner. Indeed, it would seem that any work meant for public performance first and foremost loses a little something in the translation to the page; Lynde's useful introduction serves to set up the action and provide some context for the reading of these plays.

For a performance-heavy work like Robert Chafe's "Belly Up," Lynde's introduction makes for an engaging and imaginative entry into the playworld. Furthermore, and without stretching the point, Lynde draws attention to the subtle thematic elements that serve to thread these pieces together while still highlighting the truly eclectic nature of the work. So, for example, a sense of loss and despair runs through plays as diverse as Chafe's "Belly Up" (with its integral use of video and projections) and Andy Jones's "Albert," a more traditionally scripted work; both teeter on the edge of the absurd. The ocean, and its thematic representation of loss and danger, is also represented, though again, the diversity is striking. The broad comedy of Berni Stapleton's "Rum for the Money" is paired with the delicacy of Lisa Moore's "February," a play based on Moore's own novel that deals with memory and time in an intriguing, theatrical fashion. Lynde's curation is to be commended, serving as it does to illuminate and provide context for this group of plays.

That variety and eclecticism have become something of a hallmark of this series, balancing work by a range of writers and styles. As with previous volumes, this group of plays ranges from the more traditionally scripted (Edward Riche's spot-on satire "Hail" and Stapleton's

“Rum for the Money”) to the more boundary-pushing work of Chafe and Moore (“February” is remarkable in its use of time). And while there is a mix of established and emerging artists, Lynde surely can’t be blamed if the truly emergent voices of writers like Megan Coles and Meghan Greeley (both featured in Volume 1) are absent this time out. Likewise, one can’t help noticing that while the works of two female writers are featured here, the predominant voice in these plays is male. And, as the third volume in this series, one wonders how much further Lynde can stretch the format. Chafe, Aiden Flynn, and Stapleton were all featured in the first volume (and Megan Coles was included in the first two volumes). Lynde carefully alludes to the complexity of the Newfoundland theatre scene in her introduction, and while it is no disservice to these writers (or their prolificacy) to be included multiple times, it hints at a theatre scene in which the writing and production of plays are not always directly connected enough to be captured in printed anthologies.

However, it must be said that this is another remarkable collection, and, thanks to the very mindful adjudication of Lynde, we are presented with a volume of plays that might not otherwise have been published. That makes this book sound important, which it is. It is also a lively and imaginative addition to the body of Newfoundland theatre, and for that it is very welcome.

Todd Hennessey
Dean, School of Fine Arts
Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland