

BRONTË

BY JORDI MAND
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GRADE RECOMMENDATION

Suitable for Grades 9–12

CONTENT ADVISORY FOR STUDENTS

Includes discussion on addiction and issues of mortality

STUDENT MATINÉE DATES

June 8, 28; September 5, 27; October 3, 12

ABOUT THE PLAY

Brontë is a new Canadian play that explores the lives of the Brontë sisters: Charlotte, Emily and Anne. Literary siblings best known for their poetry and for Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* and Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, the play is an intimate and detailed account of their lives together as young, developing writers.

SYNOPSIS

The Brontë sisters are faced with multiple challenges as young women caring for their home, ailing father and addict brother.

Charlotte, Emily and Anne are struggling to make ends meet and to support their father who requires a procedure to aid his failing sight. Having always been writers, though never professionally, the three sisters decide to endeavour to get some of their work published using male pseudonyms rather than seeking employment as governesses or teachers, as they had in the past, or looking toward marriage as means of security.

In seeking to publish their work, they are met with rejection until finally each has a novel accepted, Charlotte's meeting with the greatest success. They struggle with the criticism they receive and argue over whether to make their true literary identities known among their family or more publicly.

Amid all of this, the sisters cope with their brother Branwell's sudden passing – and, soon after, Charlotte and Anne grieve Emily's death, working to repair their relationship and continuing to work as creative supports to one another.



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

1. **All grades:** Language/English (listening to understand, speaking to communicate, reading for meaning)
2. **All grades:** Drama, Music, Visual Art
3. **Grade 11:** Gender Studies (power relations, sex and gender)
4. **Grade 11:** Dynamics of Human Relationships (healthy relationships)
5. **Grade 12:** Canadian and World Studies (World History Since the Fifteenth Century: social, economic and political context; identity, citizenship and heritage; adventures in world history: society and community, politics and conflict, culture and heritage)

TOPICS

Writing and creativity

- Who they were, body of work, significance in English literature
- Creative artistry

Gender and Power

- Gender roles
- Domestic and public spheres

Family

- Caregiving responsibilities
- Sibling dynamics

THEMES AND MOTIFS

- Pride and honour
- Gender roles
- What it means to be a woman
- Literary success
- Coping with change and grief
- Individual and collective inspiration
- Talent and growth
- Private and public identities and expectations
- Independence and interdependence
- Ambition and rejection
- Illness and addiction
- Blindness
- Familial duty

CLASSROOM WARM-UP

Remind students that the Brontë sisters initially published their work using male pseudonyms, concealing their true identities. Invite students to consider the reasons why these sisters made this choice.

Then, have each student select a writer who we now know wrote (or writes) under a different name. Have them research those writers, responding specifically to the following questions:

- Why might those writers have chosen pseudonyms under which to publish their work?
- What are the benefits of concealing one's identity? What may be the drawbacks?
- Have the reasons why writers choose to write using a pen name changed over time? In what ways?
- Are certain writers more likely to conceal their true identities?

ENRICHMENT

Workshops and post-show chats may be arranged by calling the Education Department at 519.271.4040, ext. 2354.

Festival Theatre and Costume Warehouse tours may be arranged by calling the Box Office at 1.800.567.1600.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Online

You can order your group tickets online at any time right from your desk. You can even select your seats! To start planning your trip, go to stratfordfestival.ca/schools.

Email

groups@stratfordfestival.ca

Phone

1.800.567.1600 or 519.273.1600

Mail

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Attn: Groups and Schools
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