

Lunkamud presents a new show in development!

Letters, Leftovers and the Lottery - The Writing of Shirley Jackson is a thoughtfully curated, multifaceted portrait of one of America's finest writers. In this 85 minute show, composer Allen Cole and actor Melody Johnson combine reading, performance, and live piano underscoring to Jackson's newly published letters, lesser known psychologically charged stories, and a haunting retelling of Jackson's most well known short story *The Lottery*.

As we've retreated into our homes during this pandemic time many of us have turned to podcasts and streaming services to listen and watch stories. **Letters, Leftovers and the Lottery** is a gentle invitation for audiences to dip their toes back into performance venues to listen and conjure communally to a kind of 'podcast brought to life onstage' orchestrated by two of Canada's award winning artistic collaborators. Audiences do not have to be Shirley Jackson fans to enjoy the show. Everyone will recognize and *delight* in the everydayness of humorous letters and stories centered around family and community. They may also recognize and *shudder* at the horror of the everydayness of family and community!

Shirley Jackson, Writer

Writer Shirley Jackson has been described as “an unrivaled mistress of the macabre, groundbreaking domestic humourist, and subtle social satirist”. She rocketed into public awareness when her short story **The Lottery** was published in 1948. Initially highly controversial, it was later recognized as a gothic classic and has been included in more anthologies, and freaked out more high school students than perhaps any short story ever written. Her novels **The Haunting of Hill House** and **We Have Always Lived in the Castle** are also considered two of the greatest psychological thrillers of the 20th century, and recently had major film adaptations for Netflix.

Less remembered today are the “domestic comedy” stories that Jackson wrote in the 1950s. Based on her trials and tribulations as a 1950's housewife, and lampooning the antics of her husband and four children, they were wildly popular, and first published in magazines like *Good Housekeeping*, *Collier's*, and *McCall's*. They are the precursors of a genre now referred to as the “MomBlog”.

The fact that Shirley Jackson could write so authentically in these two hugely different genres has long bewildered readers and critics alike. Perhaps it's a true reflection of a dichotomy that challenged many women of that time: a great love of family life on one side, coupled with a deep desire to break free of its limitations.

