



[www.rcmmedia.org](http://www.rcmmedia.org)

## RCM RADIO DRAMA WRITING

### AWARDS

**Patron  
Louise Penny**

- Radio Communautaire Missisquoi's (RCM) goal is to promote new radio plays about some aspect of life in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, past or present. The purpose of the Awards is also to increase awareness of the possibilities and scope of radio in the field of drama.
- The RCM Radio Drama Writing Awards have been established with the aim of encouraging writers of drama who live in the Townships, or who have some close connection with it.
- RCM is seeking original scripts in English for radio plays of 55 minutes duration.
- The Competition closes December 17, 2010. Award winners will be announced in February 2011.

1<sup>st</sup> Prize \$500

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize \$350

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize \$150

RCM acknowledges with deep appreciation the encouragement and generous support of Louise Penny, internationally acclaimed Townships writer, and Michael Whitehead. It also thanks The Townships Foundation for its grant to help launch "*Townships Radio Theatre*".

# RCM RADIO DRAMA WRITING AWARDS

Radio Communautaire Missisquoi (RCM), a non-profit corporation, broadcasts to most of Brome-Missisquoi and to neighbouring Shefford County, an area with a population of around 85,000 people. Its community radio station CIDI 99.1 FM is located in the Town of Brome Lake, Quebec. The Eastern Townships of Quebec is home to many English-speaking Quebecers, and a significant number of its French and English residents are functionally bilingual. RCM broadcasts to Townshippers in both languages. It reflects and enhances the identity of the region in all its aspects: cultural, economic, educational, and recreational; and it does so through the quality of its locally produced and recorded entertainment and information programs.

RCM collaborates with arts and theatre organizations to promote the work of local actors, artists, musicians and writers, and to bring them to the public through radio as well as other media. This will be achieved gradually by creating opportunities for them to take part in the development of new initiatives such as *"Townships Radio Theatre"*. This program will present radio drama of all kinds over CIDI 99.1 FM.

The 2010 competition is only for English radio drama writers. RCM hopes to establish a similar competition for French radio drama writers in 2011.

The Entry Form and the Rules of the Competition, Notes on the Nature of the Medium, Some Practical Points on Construction and on Presentation, and a Sample Script Layout are attached. They may also be downloaded from RCM's website [www.rcmmedia.org](http://www.rcmmedia.org)

Entrants are required to submit four paper copies of the script with a completed entry form. All entries must be received by December 17, 2010.

Send entries to:

Radio Drama Writing Awards  
Radio Communautaire Missisquoi  
305B Knowlton Road  
Town of Brome Lake  
Quebec J0E 1V0

# RCM RADIO DRAMA WRITING AWARDS

## ENTRY FORM

Title of Play: \_\_\_\_\_

Writer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly Explain Your Townships Connection:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I hereby submit my original work named above which has not been previously published, performed or broadcast and agree to abide by the Rules of the Competition,

Writer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Writer's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit this entry form with four paper copies of your script. Your name should appear on the entry form only, NOT on the copies of the script. All entries must be received by December 17, 2010.**

**Send to: Radio Drama Writing Awards, Radio Communautaire Missisquoi, 305B Knowlton Road, Town of Brome Lake, Quebec, J0E 1V0**

# RCM RADIO DRAMA WRITING AWARDS

## RULES OF THE COMPETITION

1. The competition is for original radio play scripts of 55 minutes duration only, not previously performed, published or broadcast.
2. Plays must be specifically written for radio; stage plays, or plays requiring adaptation will not be considered.
3. Entries should be typed, double-spaced and on one side of the paper only. The standard size of a radio script is 8 ½" x 11" (216mm x 279mm). Please follow the SAMPLE SCRIPT LAYOUT.
4. The theme of the play is some aspect of life in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, past or present.
5. The writer should be or have been a resident of the Townships, or be able to demonstrate a close personal connection with the Townships.
6. The play must be in English, but limited use of French is permitted to establish context.
7. The competition is open to all, and only one entry per person is allowed.
8. No correspondence will be entered into regarding this competition, except notification of winners.
9. Please send 4 paper copies of your entry (3 for the judges and 1 for our file); and keep a copy of your play for yourself as no entries will be returned.
10. The closing date is December 17, 2010, and entries must be received by then.
11. An initial adjudicating panel will select the best scripts. A final adjudication will be completed in February 2011.
12. Radio Communautaire Missisquoi will have the right to broadcast each of the winning entries twice over its radio station CIDI 99.1 FM. Other entries of a high standard may also be broadcast by RCM in the usual way. RCM will have the right to make the above broadcasts available as streams on the RCM website simultaneous with each RCM broadcast of the Program, and on demand at any time from the date of recording. All broadcast contracts will be subject to existing arrangements within RCM and CIDI 99.1 FM.
13. Writers are required to fill in the official Entry Form, and where a pseudonym has been used, please also state your real name. Your name should only appear on the Entry Form, and NOT on the script.

# RCM RADIO DRAMA WRITING AWARDS

## NOTES ON THE NATURE OF THE MEDIUM

Radio is a deceptive medium. On the surface it has obvious attractions for the writer in its very simplicity and freedom from technical restrictions. It offers greater freedom from the bounds of time and space than any other medium. It can span centuries and continents and can present extremes of action and movement without the limitations imposed by the cost of sets and costumes. It can explore the recesses of a person's mind without the problem of how to fill the rest of a stage or screen. In short, it is only bound by the limits of the individual listener's imagination.

It would be wrong to assume, however, that this freedom makes radio easier to write for than other media. While it may be comforting for the writer to imagine that directors, designers, lighting and costume experts and so forth will not be imposing their creative ideas on the production of the play, there is a corresponding burden on them to supply, in the dialogue, a richness of content and implication.

The dialogue of the play, in most media, represents only a part, however important, of the total emotional and intellectual impact of the whole production. Indeed the burden of the emotional impact in many stage or screen plays is frequently conveyed by visual factors in the production which are wholly unspoken.

In radio the writer must provide everything in the dialogue. The producer can underline, heighten or embroider by skilful casting, timing and use of effects and music, but can seldom create from scratch an idea which is not originally planted in the dialogue. At the same time, the writer's dialogue must be capable of the same naturalistic style in radio as in any other medium.

It follows that radio dialogue and construction make the highest possible demands on the writer's skill. The idea that a radio play is "all talk" in a conventional, conversational sense is pure fallacy.

Some typical web references are provided below on the art of writing for audio theatre:

- [www.cbc.ca/soundxchange/media/CBC\\_Handbook](http://www.cbc.ca/soundxchange/media/CBC_Handbook)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/arts/features/howtowrite/radio.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/arts/features/howtowrite/radio.shtml)
- [www.crazydogaudiotheatre.com/writing.php](http://www.crazydogaudiotheatre.com/writing.php)

# RCM RADIO DRAMA WRITING AWARDS

## SOME PRACTICAL POINTS ON CONSTRUCTION

1. In radio, scenes should be only as long as is necessary to make their point. "Padding" is unattractive in any medium. In radio it is fatal. Radio is very easy to switch off. It is also worth noting that too many extremely short scenes do not work well on radio.
2. When nearing the end of a scene, it is important to prepare the listener, as subtly as possible, for the next one. It is easy enough to make a rapid change of scene from a technical point of view, but the listener needs help. They have no program and cannot see.
3. "Stage directions" for the producer's benefit only should be avoided. If it is important, it should be in the dialogue. If it is not, then nobody needs to know.
4. It should be remembered that the listener will always, quite involuntarily, supply their own mental images in response to what they hear. They should be given enough ideas to work on, but never have so many that they become restricted or confused. Radio is not a definitive medium. At all levels, it should stimulate only.
5. When deciding the number of characters in a scene, it should be borne in mind that the only way of establishing someone's presence unequivocally is to have them addressed by name. If there are too many characters in a scene, the listeners will lose track or become confused.
6. Sound effects, either singly or in sequence, should certainly be part of the writer's concept, but they should be regarded normally as useful additions to, and only rarely used as substitutes for, the dialogue.
7. Since radio involves only one of the senses, it is important to construct each individual scene, and the play as a whole, to produce a variety of sound which will hold the listener's attention. This variety can be achieved in length of scenes, number of people speaking, pace of dialogue, volume of sound, background acoustics and location of action. For example, the difference between an interior and an exterior acoustic is considerable.
8. There is no formula for writing a successful radio play. It requires all the basic techniques of good dramatic writing plus an imaginative awareness of the restrictions and advantages of a medium where nothing is seen. It is only by listening as often as possible to radio plays that a writer can begin to judge what works and what does not work well.

# RCM RADIO DRAMA WRITING AWARDS

## SOME PRACTICAL POINTS ON PRESENTATION

1. Submissions must be typed or printed, double-spaced, and should be on one side of the paper only. Please follow the SAMPLE SCRIPT LAYOUT.
2. Following the Sample Script Layout, the script for a 55 minute play should not exceed 55 pages. Dramatic monologues will be considerably shorter at about 30 pages. In either case the maximum word count should be 8,500 words. (Word count under Tools on the Toolbar is a useful guide).
3. The standard size of a radio script is 216mm x 279mm.
4. In the interest of clarity, it is important that the names of characters should be in capital letters and be clearly separated from their speech.
5. The names should be given in full throughout. You may know the characters well enough to call them, for example, Mr B, Ms C etc, after the first page, but the reader coming to the play for the first time does not, and their appreciation of the play will suffer if they have to continually check the first page to find out who is talking.
6. It is also important for clarity that any description of sound effects or other technical directions should be clearly differentiated from the parts of the script intended to be spoken.
7. It will be of great assistance to RCM's Radio Drama Awards panel if you attach a synopsis of the play to the beginning. A cast list, with brief notes on each character, is also very useful.
8. For ease of reference, the pages of a script should be numbered consecutively throughout. Please note that each speech should be numbered and each new page should begin with speech number 1.
9. Scripts should be firmly fastened together to prevent the loss of single pages in transit, and should be covered to protect the outer pages.
10. Every care will be taken of scripts submitted to the competition, but RCM cannot accept responsibility for scripts which may be lost or mislaid. Writers should keep a copy of their script, as scripts cannot be returned.

# RCM RADIO DRAMA WRITING AWARDS

## SAMPLE SCRIPT LAYOUT

Finding Hans (Episode One)

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1

➤ **FX: MOBILE PHONE.**

- 1 **DARIUS** Freya . . . where are you?
- 2 **FREYA** We've found her Darius . . . she was tied up . . .
- 3 **DARIUS** **(INTERRUPTING)** Salengra knows we've recruited you,.  
She's probably right behind you . . .
- 4 **GERDA** Look . . . coming out of the river . . . !

➤ **FX: THUNDER.**

- 5 **FREYA** There was a crash of thunder, then from under the water came a thick blue light. It threw out sparks of itself which danced in front of our eyes and made us dizzy. Then Salengra was there walking towards us out of the river. By her side was the biggest wolf I've ever seen. As Salengra came close he bared his teeth and then lifted his head to howl.

➤ **FX: WOLF HOWL.**

- 6 **DARIUS** **(FROM THE MOBILE PHONE)** Freya what's happening?  
Freya! Talk to me . . .
- 7 **SALENGRA** Oh, do shut up Darius!
- 8 **FREYA** Salengra simply clicked her fingers and the phone went dead.

➤ **FX: THE WOLF GROWLS.**