

### **The PLEDGE Project Expands its Mandate**

Canada-National, September 22, 2023 - The [PLEDGE Project](#), an online database of large cast (6 or more characters) plays by Canadian women, is pleased to announce that it has expanded its mandate to also include plays by two-spirit, trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming (GNC) playwrights. Pledge aims to provide theatre educators and practitioners with a resource to help redress inequities and promote greater access, diversity, and inclusion in post-secondary theatre training programs, and beyond. **Rebecca Burton** (Playwrights Guild of Canada) and **Barry Freeman** (University of Toronto Scarborough) created and co-lead the database project, which has grown from 100 large cast plays when first launched to over 500 plays to date.

Building on the PLEDGE Project's initial goal of showcasing and endorsing women playwrights, the new mandate will help promote plays by non-binary, GNC, trans, and two-spirit playwrights, since these communities have historically been marginalized and excluded from cultural representation. With PLEDGE, people can easily find and look at various works using the website's search and filtering features, which include play length, genre, theme, cast size, character identity categories, and the self-identifications of the creators.

Says Barry Freeman, "When we started this project, we didn't really know how many plays we'd find nor what the uptake would be in the community. It's been encouraging to see the database grow, and to be contacted regularly by producers and playwrights who see the site as one useful, accessible tool supporting the diversification of the repertoire of Canadian theatre schools."

Learn more about Pledge and help us celebrate the mandate's expansion by joining us for a one-hour excerpted online play reading event featuring **Adjani Poirier** (*Sinkhole [Or Six Ways to Disappear]*), **Andrea Scott** (*Controlled Damage*), and **Sunny Drake** (*Every Little Nookie*) on **Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm ET**. The event is free, but registration is required. **Sign up here:** <https://forms.gle/YEfuowafNfDrz4SYA>

Join us for this event and help support the recent expansion of Pledge's mandate!

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The **Department of Arts, Culture and Media (ACM)** at the **University of Toronto Scarborough** is home to eight undergraduate programs with over 1600 unique undergraduate students and over 40 faculty who are committed to interdisciplinary research, teaching, and study of the humanities as students, scholars, researchers, artists, and arts professionals. PLEDGE has been supported by ACM's IDEAS program (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Sustainability), which aims to cultivate and support a decolonial politics within a long-term horizon of accountability, solidarity, cooperation and non-competition.

**Playwrights Guild of Canada (PGC)** is a registered national arts service association mandated to advance the creative rights and interests of professional Canadian playwrights, promote Canadian plays nationally and internationally, and foster an active, evolving community of writers for the stage.

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