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Theatre by the Bay used OTF Grant to work with high school students on new play about 1985 Barrie Tornado

BARRIE, ON (September 7, 2021) – In 2019, the Ontario Trillium Foundation gave Theatre by the Bay (TBTB) a \$67,700 Seed grant to help the popular theatre company pilot a development process through which it would partner with local high school students to develop and present new works of theatre inspired by local history.

“Theatre by the Bay continues to bring high quality, engaging performances to our area. Through the lens of theatre, this company has been able to tell stories that inspire and impact us in different ways,” said Doug Downey, MPP for Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte. “I am thrilled that this SEED funding will allow local students to explore our regional history and better understand the experiences of Barrie residents as they uncover stories of the 1985 tornado. Thank you to all of the creative minds involved in this project. I look forward to seeing a performance in the near future!”

Thanks to the Seed grant, professional theatre artists from TBTB worked with students from Barrie’s Eastview Secondary School and Georgian Bay District Secondary School in the development of a new theatre work set during the 1985 Barrie Tornado, entitled *Green Skies*. This initiative was overseen by TBTB Artistic Director, Iain Moggach. The playwright of *Green Skies*, Tomas Ketchum, was also deeply involved throughout the process. The idea behind exploring formalizing this process emerged as a result of the company’s 2019 critical hit, *The Cenotaph Project*.

“I have seen the impact that Theatre by the Bay’s local story productions can have - especially on the next generation of artists,” said Moggach when asked about the importance of this project. “Working with high school students, who may or may not be aware of all the details of our history, allows us to look at our community’s past with a fresh perspective.”

The program began in the Fall of 2019 and concluded in August of 2021.

Theatre by the Bay is a professional theatre company seeking to grow the Central Ontario arts community by empowering local theatre artists, engaging local audiences with high quality programming, and telling locally-focused stories that engage the diverse peoples of Barrie and Central Ontario.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada’s leading granting foundations. Last year, nearly \$112M was invested into 1,384 community projects and partnerships to build healthy and vibrant communities and strengthen the impact of Ontario’s non-profit sector. In 2020/21, OTF supported Ontario’s economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit otf.ca to learn more.