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Theatre by the Bay's new OTF Grow grant raises the curtain on new theatre education programs

BARRIE, ONTARIO – Recently, Theatre by the Bay learned that it had received a 26-month, \$370,900 Grow grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) to expand the number of playwriting and theatre production mentorship opportunities for local artists.

“Difficult times such as these remind us all of the intrinsic value of artistic expression,” said Doug, Downey, MPP for Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte. “They provide participants a creative outlet, and the audience an entertaining escape. I am pleased to see Theatre by the Bay continue to innovate and grow our local arts community. I am happy to see their efforts supported by the province, and cannot wait to see their next lineup of exciting productions.”

Over the past few years, Theatre by the Bay has created several impactful educational programs. The Barrie Theatre Lab has developed more than 100 scripts from across Ontario by playwrights as young as 14. The Indie Producer's Co-op has provided unparalleled training for aspiring producers for the past six years. With OTF's grant, Theatre by the Bay can build upon this foundation of educational success to develop the playwrights, and local professionals, of the future. Funds from the OTF grant will be used to help with the costs associated with staffing, running workshops and readings, marketing and promotion and some administrative costs.

This initiative will be overseen by Theatre by the Bay's Artistic Director, Iain Moggach, as well as the company's new Education Coordinator.

“If Theatre by the Bay is going to tell the stories of our community, we need a broad pool of artists and perspectives to draw from. Support from the Trillium Foundation means we can see Theatre by the Bay better reflect our community,” said Moggach, Artistic Director of the award-winning company.

While the Barrie Theatre Lab and the Indie Producer's Co-op will continue, the local arts community can expect exciting new initiatives to be announced in the coming weeks. These will include a combination of formal instruction, impromptu collaboration sessions called “spark sessions”, and even a festival of new works. **Programs will begin in the Fall of 2020. Information will be announced on Theatre by the Bay's website, newsletter, and social media channels, as it becomes available.**

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. In 2019, Theatre by the Bay was recognized as Barrie's ‘Most Innovative Not-for-Profit’ at the Mayor's Innovation Awards.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. OTF awarded \$115 million to 644 projects last year to build healthy and vibrant communities in Ontario.