



MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

Playwrights Guild of Canada

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Protecting, promoting, and preserving Canadian playwrights and their work

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Playwrights Guild of Canada Mandate

Playwrights Guild of Canada (or PGC) was established in 1972 as the Playwrights Co-op. The group’s purpose at that time was to publish and distribute scripts to encourage more productions of Canadian plays. Since then, PGC has grown in leaps and bounds, providing programs and services for over 800 members.

Mission:

Playwrights Guild of Canada 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.

Vision:

PGC champions the role of the playwright in the creation of vibrant Canadian theatre.

Values:

Playwrights Guild of Canada is an organization that:

- Is inclusive and representative (e.g. in terms of geography, diverse backgrounds, age, stage of development, gender, and sexual orientation);
- Maintains the standards and practices of the profession;
- Affirms the importance of playwriting as an art;
- Safeguards freedom of expression in Canadian theatres;
- Contributes to the development of the art form;
- Strives to remain relevant within the larger community.

Funders:

Playwrights Guild of Canada acknowledges the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the City of Toronto, and the Toronto Arts Council.

Types of Membership

Full Member Eligibility Criteria:

To become a Full Member of PGC, a playwright needs to have achieved one of the following two milestones:

- 1) S/he has written, collectively written, adapted, or translated a play, musical book, or libretto that was produced by a professional theatre or by a company or juried festival that receives funding from a municipal, provincial, territorial or national arts funder (that means that for the purposes of membership eligibility, we will count self-produced Fringe or Summerworks shows as professional productions).

OR

- 2) S/he has written, collectively written, adapted or translated a play, musical book or libretto where the production of the work meets all of the following criteria:

- The decision to present the work was made by a jury of professional peers or an artistic director;
- The play was presented for a minimum of six performances;
- The production was open to the public, tickets were sold, and the playwright was paid (shares are an acceptable form for payment).

Professional Canadian playwrights living abroad or foreign playwrights immigrating to Canada are eligible to join PGC if they satisfy equivalent milestones outside of Canada.

Dues are \$175.15 (\$155 + 20.15 HST) for a one-year period (that's 365 days starting from the time of activation).

Supporting and Student Membership:

This category of membership is available to individuals, such as students, emerging playwrights, educators, arts enthusiasts, theatre supporters, and the like. Anyone who does not qualify for Full Membership can support and receive continued contact with PGC by becoming a Supporting Member.

Dues for Supporting Membership are \$39.55 (\$35.00 + \$4.55 HST) for a one-year period.

Dues for Student Membership are \$22.60 (\$20.00 + \$2.60 HST) for a one-year period.

Lifetime Membership:

To be honored as a Lifetime Member, a playwright must be nominated by a PGC member and approved by the National Forum. Criteria include recognition for a body of work, and/or service to PGC and the theatre community. Lifetime Members may vote at the AGM and stand for office. Lifetime Membership is bestowed every second year and is announced and celebrated as part of the Tom Hendry Awards.

Honorary Membership:

Honorary Members do not need to be playwrights. Individuals must be nominated by a PGC member and approved by the National Forum. The individual is recognized for his/her support of Canadian playwrights and/or contribution to Canadian theatre. Honorary Members do not vote at the AGM. This honour is bestowed every second year (in off years from Lifetime Membership) and is announced and celebrated as part of the Tom Hendry Awards.

Membership Dues Payment Policy

Members are asked to pay their dues in full at the time of initial activation.

PGC's annual memberships run for a one-year period of 365 days. Membership renewal requests are sent out by email two months in advance of expiration to provide ample time for members to prepare for the renewal payment. Periodic email reminders follow thereafter. Invoices are available upon request.

To ensure that **PGC's membership renewal requests** reach you in a timely fashion, please ensure that you have provided the office with up-to-date contact information.

Once a person's membership has expired, s/he will enter a complimentary grace period for up to five months. If dues continue to go unpaid, then the member's programs and services will be cancelled.

As a non-profit art service organization, PGC relies on the support of its membership to maintain its day-to-day operations, which includes providing a host of membership services. Thus, the timely and orderly payment of membership dues is the responsibility of each and every member of PGC.

Payment Plans:

If finances are a concern, then a member may pay dues in monthly installments instead of one lump sum. You must contact the [Membership Manager](#) in advance to make the necessary arrangements. There are two ways to go about this: the playwright may send in a series of post-dated cheques totaling the amount owing, or s/he may provide PGC with credit card information and a monthly charge date (e.g. the 1st, 16th, or 30th of the month). Any configuration is allowable, so long as the dues are paid off in nine installments or less (e.g. eight installments of \$19.46 plus one installment of \$19.47 pays for a full membership). In most instances, monthly payment plans are available only to full members.

Retraction of Membership:

A retraction of membership applies when a member chooses to discontinue his or her membership. A clearly stated notice of membership retraction should be submitted in writing (an email will suffice).

Services and Benefits for Members – An Overview

Programs and Services for Full Members:

- Receipt of CanScene, PGC's monthly membership newsletter, which includes important news, such as calls for submissions, residencies, workshops, and other opportunities;
- A profile presence with biography, photo, and listed plays for sale on PGC's website;
- The sale and distribution of published and unpublished but previously produced plays (assigned ISBN numbers for copyright protection) through PGC's Copyscript Program;
- The sale and distribution of unpublished or out of print plays considered complete by the playwright through the Stage-Ready Program;
- The sale and distribution of your plays through PGC's bookstore, the Canadian Play Outlet;
- Advertising of Copyscript and Stage Ready plays in Canadian Plays OutNow!, a bi-monthly catalogue that is distributed to interested parties around the globe;
- Promotion through PGC's regular publications and social media channels;
- Use of PGC/PACT standard production contracts, which include minimum fees, RRSP contributions, and a dispute resolution process via a Joint Standing Committee;
- Inclusion in the Actra Fraternal Benefit Society's RRSP investment plan, and the option of joining the Writers Coalition Insurance Program;
- Advice on various issues, including contract negotiation, publishing, artists' rights, copyright procedures, and other pertinent matters;
- Access to the Member Lounge section of PGC's website, which houses a myriad of useful resources (e.g. contract templates, contract guides, sample script formats, and more);
- Administration of amateur production rights, if so desired;
- Access to PlayConnect, the Canada Council's Readings program, administered by PGC;
- Discounts on Canadian play publications in hardcopy format sold by PGC;
- Invitations to PGC events, including workshops, regional caucus meetings, and the AGM;
- The ability to stand for office on PGC's National Forum and various committees;
- Voting privileges at the Annual General Meeting.

Programs and Services for Supporting and Student Members:

- Receipt of CanScene, PGC's monthly membership newsletter, which includes important news, such as calls for play submissions, residencies, contests, workshops, and other opportunities;
- Access to PGC/PACT negotiated production contracts, which include minimum standards;
- Advice on various issues, including contract negotiation, publishing, artists' rights, copyright procedures, and other pertinent matters;
- Discounts on Canadian play publications in hardcopy format sold by PGC;
- Discounts on or free admission to all PGC workshops and webinars; and
- Invitations to all PGC events, including the annual conference and Annual General Meeting.

NB: While supporting and student members do not have access to the Member Lounge section of the website, we will provide members with any of the documents housed there. A list of resources is sent to supporting and student members when they join, and items are available upon request at any time.

Services and Benefits for Members – Specifics (in alphabetical order)

Administration of Amateur Production Rights:

Upon signed approval by the playwright (which is granted on the Script Submission Form described below), PGC will administer amateur production rights for its members. An amateur production is the production of a play by a school, community group, or amateur theatre company.

How the program works:

- Fill out the Performance Rights section of the online Script Submission Form found here: <https://playwrightsguildcanada.wufoo.com/forms/w1pf0ytn10vit60/>.
- When a school, a community group, or other amateur theatre company wants to produce your play, they will request permission directly from PGC.
- You will receive notification of where, when, and by whom the play will be produced. At the end of the run, the amateur producer will submit royalties and reviews to PGC.

Royalties:

- The suggested royalty fee for amateur productions is \$100 for the first performance of a full-length play, and \$85 for each subsequent performance. For One-Act plays, the suggested royalties are \$85 for the first performance and \$70 for each additional presentation. These are the standard royalty rates recommended by PGC, however, royalty rates can be set and adjusted as the playwright sees fit.
- With full membership, the playwright receives 90% of the amateur royalties, while PGC retains 10% to cover administration costs. For supporting members, 80% of the royalties go to the playwright, and 20% go to PGC to cover administration costs.
- Once final payment from the producer has been received, royalties are paid out to the playwright, accompanied by a statement of accounts (NB: it often takes two months after the closing of the show before the playwright receives his/her/their royalty cheque).

Advocacy:

PGC advocates for the rights and interests of its members in a number of different ways. Staff members take part in various (often interdisciplinary) umbrella groups, such as the Creators' Copyright Coalition, CPAMO's shared arts platform, and many Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives. PGC also has an Advocacy Committee that is active year-round, and it focuses on a

number of civic and government issues that affect playwrights and their ability to make a living and protect their work. An Advocacy section is also included in CanScene when required in order to keep members abreast of developments affecting the cultural landscape. The Regional Caucuses, referred to collectively as the National Forum, have Caucus Representatives who likewise inform their members about noteworthy regional issues, and who also bring such matters to the attention of PGC. If you are passionate about **artists'** rights, copyright law, EDI initiatives, or any other issue we advocate for, consider joining the Advocacy Committee or getting involved in another Committee or individual project. Your regional Caucus Representative or office staff will assist you in finding the best means of contributing to the well-being of playwrights and other artists.

Amateur Rights Contracts:

PGC handles amateur rights for many of its members (see Administration of Amateur Production Rights above), facilitated by the Programs and Office Manager. If you already have representation with a literary agency, then PGC will pass on requests that it receives for playwrights with agents.

Annual Conference and General Meeting:

Once a year in the spring, PGC hosts an annual conference and general meeting. Members are welcome to attend the conference and AGM at their own expense (travel subsidies are not available for these events). The conference and AGM are held in Toronto in even years, and in a different rotating host city in odd years. The conference features a unique theme and various panels each year, providing opportunities for professional development, creative inspiration, and community building, while the AGM, Executive, and Women's Caucus gatherings provide important opportunities to discuss and decide upon future courses of action and business matters affecting the organization. If you can attend, it is highly advisable to do so, since the conference/AGM is one of the highlights of the year!

CanScene: PGC's Monthly E-Newsletter and E-Bulletins:

PGC sends out a monthly e-newsletter exclusive to its members. It contains messages from the Executive Director and office staff, a listing of new members who join each month, occasional advocacy articles of interest, member play productions, and perhaps most importantly, a detailed listing of submission and contest calls, residency programs, and professional development opportunities. Upon occasion, PGC will also send out individual e-bulletins containing important information, such as program updates or special feature items such as webinars. All members are added to the CanScene email and e-bulletin list when they join PGC.

Canadian Play Outlet (CPO):

The Canadian Play Outlet is a physical bookstore solely dedicated to the work of Canadian playwrights. Opened in May 2017, the CPO is located at 401 Richmond St. West, Suite 350, in the lobby of PGC's office. It is open Monday through to Friday, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. The CPO is YOUR bookstore, and it is just one of the many ways that PGC promotes your work! The store showcases over 2000 plays (hardcopy books, digital and paper cypscripts, and audio plays), it has a space for live play readings on a pop-up stage, and it features an audio station for listening to plays (the PlayME podcast) and playwright interviews. Be sure to have your plays promoted in the Canadian Play Outlet, and contact us if you would like to hold an event at the CPO.

Canadian Plays OutNow! PGC's Bi-Monthly Play Catalogue:

This electronic publication, published every two months, helps to promote the latest plays entered into the Cypscript and Stage Ready Programs (see below for more information on those programs). All new plays submitted in a three-month period by PGC's members are included in the next installment.

There are also special theme issues of Canadian Plays OutNow! (such as a Romance-themed edition in February for Valentine's Day), which draw from the entirety of PGC's database of available Copyscripts. Watch for calls for these special theme issues in CanScene. Canadian Plays OutNow! is sent out by email around the globe through the PGC Community Newsletter (for non-members), and it is posted on PGC's website for download as a PDF.

Canadian Plays OutNow! Custom Catalogue:

This is a customized version of Canadian Plays OutNow! and it is a service that PGC offers to help people find specific types of plays related to theme, genre, or other searchable factors. For example, if a person is looking for large cast comedies about family relations, then they can order a personalized catalogue that meets the parameters of their search terms. To request a custom catalogue specifically tailored to your needs, fill out [this form](#).

Contracts (Professional):

Every three years, PGC re-negotiates our set of standardized contracts with the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT). The Contracts Committee represents PGC during these negotiations, and it is comprised of three or four volunteer members and a staff representative.

The PACT/PGC contract documents set industry standards and serve as a template for playwrights when they negotiate their own contracts with an independent theatre. PGC strives to create the best possible working situations and benefits for playwrights by setting standards for royalty payments, copyright protection, commission fees, RRSP contributions, billing credit, dispute resolution, and more. The current set of negotiated contracts are in effect from June 30, 2017 until June 29, 2020.

Full members are entitled to use the standard PGC contracts when engaging with PACT theatres, and may access them through the PGC website (www.playwrightsguild.ca), or by request from the [Professional Contracts Manager](#). There are eight different PGC/PACT contract forms to choose from, related to different production scenarios:

- Stock Contracts for regular or TYA (Theatre for Young Audiences) productions;
- Premiere Contracts for regular or TYA productions;
- Commission Contracts for regular or TYA productions;
- Development Letter of Understanding (LOU);
- Workshops and Readings Letter of Understanding (LOU);
- Standard Clauses (to be read in tandem with all of the above contracts).

PGC staff, as well as members of the Contracts Committee, can offer general advice about your rights as a playwright. Members are asked to inform PGC about their experiences negotiating with theatres, including any difficulties that they encounter. Professional contracts may be submitted to the Professional Contracts Manager for review before you sign a contract. At any time during your contract negotiation process, PGC staff are available to answer questions and address your concerns.

It is mandatory for all members, when engaged with a PACT theatre, to file a copy of their signed contract with PGC by sending it to our office. Filing contracts is the only way PGC is able to track RRSP payments and compile statistical data in preparation for future negotiations.

For an individual parsing and interpretation of the various contract documents, please refer to the current Contracts Handbook, which can be found on PGC's website, or requested in person.

If you have a production of a play with a theatre company that is not a member of PACT, then PGC has Independent Contract documents (Stock, Premiere, Commission, TYA Stock, TYA Premiere, TYA Commission, Development LOU, and Workshops LOU) that can be used for most situations, whether at home or abroad. These contract documents are quite similar to the PACT/PGC forms, except that they do not include mandatory minimum fees, the RRSP clause is optional, and there is no dispute resolution mechanism via a Joint Standing Committee. To obtain copies of PGC's Indie Contracts, contact the [Professional Contracts Manager](#).

Contract Guidelines:

In addition to the formal contract documents described above, PGC also has a repertoire of contract guides to assist playwrights when they engage with creators or producers in other kinds of situations. The guides are available on PGC's website or by request, and they include:

- Devised Work (or Collective Creation) Guidelines
- Music and Opera Guidelines
- Translation Guidelines
- Adaptation Guidelines
- Commission Guidelines

These guides provide helpful information and tips about working relationships in the above situations, and they also contain contract templates and advice for creating legal agreements.

Copyscript and Stage Ready Programs:

These two programs constitute a stop-gap measure to help playwrights with the publication and dissemination of their work. Currently there are over 2,500 scripts available for purchase from PGC due to these programs.

The Copyscript Program is a copying and distribution program for professionally produced Canadian plays that have not been published or are out of print. For a play to be eligible for the Copyscript Program:

- It must be unpublished;
- It must have received at least one professional production.

Eligible scripts can be submitted to the program using the [online Script Submission Form](#). If you would prefer to submit your script using a hard-copy form, the form is also available in the Member Lounge of the PGC website, or you can contact us [by email](#), or phone the office to request a form.

After a Copyscript is entered into the program:

- It is assigned an ISBN (International Standard Book Number);
- It is advertised and promoted on PGC's website, by PGC's staff, in the Canadian Play Outlet, and through the organization's publications;
- It is made available for purchase through PGC's bookstore and website. When ordered, copyscripts are available in hard copy, or they can be e-mailed in pdf format. The average scripts cost is \$12 (plus HST).
- The playwright is paid royalties at a rate of 10% per sold copyscript. A minimum of 20 scripts must be sold in order for a royalty cheque to be sent to the playwright.

The Stage Ready Program is for unpublished plays that have not yet been produced, but the playwright feels that they are ready for the stage. The Stage Ready program functions in the exact same manner as the Copyscript program, only Stage Ready plays are not assigned ISBNs.

Discounts on Published Plays:

Members receive discounts on many hard copy play publications distributed by PGC through its website and the CPO: 20% off books published by Playwrights Canada Press (PLCN), and often 20% off books printed by other Canadian publishers. Be sure to take advantage of this discount!

Featured Playwrights:

Each month PGC chooses two members to be “Featured Playwrights.” A staff member interviews the playwright, writes up the exchange, posts the text on the homepage of the PGC website, and disseminates the feature through PGC’s other publications and social media network. Featured Playwright spots are a useful promotional tool used to explore various topics of import.

National Forum:

Each member of PGC is assigned to a regional caucus, which is overseen by a PGC member who volunteers to be the region’s representative. There are 14 regional caucuses in total, and combined, they are referred to as The National Forum (NF); a body that is Chaired by PGC’s Vice President of the Board. The NF meets by conference call twice a year, ensuring that PGC maintains a national focus by reaching its membership across the country, guaranteeing that each region is given a voice, and, in turn, informing the regional caucuses of PGC’s activities. Each NF Rep hosts at least one caucus event in their region per year, providing an opportunity for members to gather together, network, and engage in creative exchange. The NF Reps solicit feedback and advice from their members, which they then share at the bi-annual meetings, providing a written report about their region’s theatre scene, mentioning any pressing concerns, and ideas for improving PGC and/or the larger theatrical landscape. The NF Reps also vote on the PGC’s Lifetime and Honorary Membership Awards (see the Tome Hendry Awards section below for more about that).

PGC Video Shorts:

PGC has created a series of short videos for its members that provide useful tips on a number of services and programs, such as the annual conference, the PlayConnect program, the Tom Hendry Awards, webinars, and more. Visit the PGC website to view [Video Shorts](#) on a number of topics.

PlayConnect (previously named the Canada Council for the Arts’ Reading Program):

This program creates opportunities for playwrights to read from their work for community organizations, schools, associations, and in all kinds of public venues by subsidizing the playwright’s reading fees and travel expenses. The program is funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, and it is administered by Playwrights Guild of Canada.

Eligible Playwrights:

- Full Members in good standing (meaning your dues are all paid up) are eligible for two readings per fiscal year (PGC’s fiscal year begins on April 1 and runs to March 31);
- Playwrights are not guaranteed the maximum amount of readings, as limited space is available. It is recommended that you apply as early as possible.

How the Program Works:

- Requests for readings can be made by organizations or playwrights. Playwrights should fill out [this form here](#), and host organizations or venues should fill out [this form here](#);
- Reading requests must be made at least one month in advance of the scheduled reading;
- Hosts pay an administrative fee of \$50 per reading, unless they are eligible for a subsidy.
- If approved for funding, PGC will cover the following expenses:

- Reading Fees: Playwrights receive \$250 for a full-length reading, or \$125 for a shorter or shared reading;
- Travel Expenses: Playwrights may request up to \$600 per reading. The most economical form of travel must be used, and travel funds must be requested and approved in advance of the reading (since funds are limited);
- Hotel or other accommodations, meals, and per diems are not covered.
- Venues must be open to the general public free of charge for the reading (school readings excepted), and they must advertise the reading to the general public;
- If the reading is approved, playwrights must watch a required video in order to take part in the program.
- There are two application intake periods:
 - Intake 1: Applications open March 1st and are open the entire fiscal year. Two-thirds of the funding is allocated for this first intake period.
 - Intake 2: Applications open October 1st and are open until March. These are saved slots for readings later in the fiscal year. One-third of the funding is saved for members who need to wait for this intake date.
- After the Reading, both the host and the playwright are required to submit evaluation forms to PGC.

To learn more about this program or to book a reading, visit the [Services for Visitors](#) page in PGC's website, or contact Monique Renaud, Public Relations Manager at monique@playwrightsguild.ca.

Play Map of Canada:

PGC compiles a visual geographic map every month, noting professional and community shows by Canadian playwrights being produced across the nation, which it then promotes through its various publications and social media platforms. If you would like to submit a Canadian production of your work to The Play Map of Canada, please fill out this [form](#). For questions about The Play Map of Canada, email Monique Renaud at marketing@playwrightsguild.ca.

Promotion on the PGC Website and its Social Media Channels:

To help promote its members, PGC lists all full members in alphabetical order by last name in its "Playwrights and Plays" section on the website. Each full member has a personalized profile that consists of a bio, headshot, personal website (if applicable), awards catalogue, and a list of the plays (both Copscripts and published editions) that are available for performance rights or purchase through PGC, online and at the CPO. As well, the social media functionality of the website allows playwrights to publish their own twitter feeds as part of their member profiles. PGC also features member activity on the home page of our website on a regular basis, as with the Featured Playwright interviews. As well, PGC promotes the work of its members by compiling [professional](#), [amateur](#), and [readings](#) listings of current and upcoming productions, which are posted on the PGC website, advertised via social media, and linked in PGC's various publications (CanScene, the Community Newsletter, *Educators' Corner*, etc.). PGC further promotes the work of its members by disseminating production information and other news through our social media networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. If you have a show coming up, or important news to share, be sure to inform the office so we can help spread the word about your work!

Public Lending Right and Access Copyright:

If you are a Canadian citizen and have published work in Canada (includes plays entered into PGC's Copscrip Program, but not the Stage Ready Program), then you are eligible to register with the Public

Lending Right (PLR) Program, and as an affiliate with Access Copyright. There is no cost to register for either program, and both organizations pay out royalties to authors.

PLR administers payments to registered Canadian authors for eligible works found in Canadian public libraries. The registration form is available on the PLR website during the registration period (15 February to 1 May annually). For more information about this, visit : <http://www.plr-dpp.ca>.

Access Copyright is a not-for-profit agency established by publishers and creators to license public access to copyrighted works. Once you have affiliated and registered your works with Access Copyright, you will receive royalties whenever your works are copied. Access Copyright is also developing a host of additional services for its affiliates in response to the rapidly changing digital landscape. You can register as an affiliate online at: <http://www.accesscopyright.ca/royalties>.

RRSP Program:

PGC has negotiated a minimum RRSP payment on regular and TYA Stock, Premiere and Commission PGC/PACT Contracts (the contribution does not apply to the PGC/PACT Development LOU or the Workshops and Readings LOU). Half of the contribution comes from the playwright's royalties, while the other half is matched by the theatre. The relevant section in the Standard Clauses reads:

The Theatre will deduct three (3%) percent of payments to the Playwright, with a minimum deduction per contract of \$150.00 to a maximum of \$450.00 per contract. The Theatre will add its own contribution of three (3%) percent, with a minimum contribution per contract of \$150.00 to a maximum of \$450.00 per contract, for a total contribution of six (6%) percent.

PGC has chosen the ACTRA Fraternal Benefit Society (AFBS) to administer the RRSP funds for our members. They charge a reasonable administrative fee of only 1%. The annual fee is charged quarterly at a rate of .25% of the market value of each account at the end of the quarter. No additional fees are charged, with the exception of early withdrawal from an individual RRSP account (which will incur a \$25 administration charge). AFBS's fee of 1% is well below the 2.25% industry median, and the organization is familiar with administering financial services for other arts service organizations.

The RRSP program is mandatory for all full members of PGC, while supporting and student members do not qualify. The process for registering with the RRSP program is as follows:

- 1) You must establish an account with AFBS by filling out two forms: an RRSP Application Form, and a Beneficiary Designation Form, both of which are sent to new full members in an introductory email when they first join PGC (these forms may also be requested from the PGC office at any time). General information about AFBS can be found online here: <https://www.afbs.ca/>, or you may contact AFBS by phone at (416) 967-6600, or toll free at 1-800-387-8897. As well, PGC's [Contracts Manager](#) can answer any questions you have about AFBS and the completion of the Application Forms.
- 2) Once you have completed the forms, send them to the [Contracts Manager](#) at PGC (do not send them to AFBS). New members should register for the program and return the forms to the office as soon as possible, as RRSP contributions received from theatres cannot be processed until registration in the program is complete. If you already have an RRSP account with AFBS, you will still need to complete the RRSP Application Form (but not the Beneficiary Form, since AFBS will already have that information on file for you), as it will be used to assign you a PGC identification

number. RRSP contributions generated from your playwriting activities are tracked with your i.d. number and will be deposited into your existing account.

- 3) When you have a signed PACT/PGC Production Contract, submit a copy of it to the PGC office (both the playwright and the theatre are required to file a copy of the contract with PGC). The theatre will send the first installment of your RRSP contribution to PGC with a copy of the contract, covering both the playwright and theatre's minimum contribution (\$150 dollars from each party for a total contribution of \$300). PGC deposits the money, remits it to AFBS, and then sends the playwright an email notifying them that the funds have been deposited into their AFBS account.
- 4) Once the run of your play is completed, ensure that the theatre makes the final RRSP contribution if required, according to your contract. The initial remittance only covers the guaranteed minimum, but a second payment may be required, depending on the production's box-office performance. The theatre should provide you and PGC with a box-office statement following the end of the production, and along with it, the second and final RRSP contribution (up to a maximum of \$900 - with each side contributing \$450), if applicable.
- 5) Register for online access to your AFBS account, so you can view it anytime, and be sure to review your AFBS statements. Contact PGC if there are any discrepancies. If a theatre has failed to submit an RRSP contribution, PGC will approach the theatre on your behalf.

Staff Tours:

PGC staff works closely with the National Form Representatives to host staff tours. PGC's Staff Tours usually include a staff member visiting the region to conduct an information session, and often a professional development opportunity, such as an in-person workshop or a Creator Exchange (see Webinars, Workshops, and Creator Exchanges below for more information about that).

Tom Hendry Awards Program:

PGC hosts an annual awards program, usually at the end of October. Calls for submissions go out in January, and the deadline for applications is set for the spring (usually May). The awards program currently features eight prizes: The Carol Bolt Award for a premiered play (\$5000 prize and the possibility of publication), the Stage West Pechet Family Comedy Award (\$5000), the Stage West Pechet Family Musical Award (\$5000 prize), the RBC Emerging Playwright Award (\$2000 Prize & mentorship), a Lifetime Membership (PGC membership fees are waived for life), an Honorary Membership (PGC membership fees waived for life), and the Women's Caucus' s Bra D'Or Award, which recognizes an individual who has supported the work of women playwrights. For more information about each of Tom Hendry Awards, [visit the PGC website](#).

Website Access:

When people join PGC as full members, an account is created for them on the PGC website. Members can log onto the website where they can update their bio and profile page, renew their annual dues, download the standard PACT/PGC contract documents and guides, find the Script Submission Form to register their plays with the Copyscript and Stage Ready programs, access resources found in the Member Lounge section, and more. While supporting members are not able to log onto the PGC website, they are sent a list of all the resources housed in the Member Lounge section of the website in an introductory email when they first join PGC. Any member can request access to PGC's resource material at any time. For more information or assistance accessing the website, contact the office.

Women's Caucus:

The Women's Caucus was established to meet the particular needs of women playwrights, and it spearheads related initiatives that address gender-based challenges in the industry (the most recent being the [CASA Award](#), an annual mentorship program involving a South African woman playwright as mentee and a PGC Women's Caucus Member as mentor). The Women's Caucus meets once a year in person at PGC's conference and AGM, and it publishes a monthly *Women's Caucus E-Newsletter*, which features submission calls for women, production listings, the occasional special article (such as AD Interviews or writing Tips), and news about the activities of its members. To submit news or contribute to special feature articles, contact the publication's Editor. All PGC members who identify as women are automatically included in the Women's Caucus, but people may opt out if they so desire.

Workshops, Webinars, and Creator Exchanges:

PGC offers professional development workshops on the business of playwriting. These workshops take place in person all around Canada. As of 2014, PGC started to livestream its workshops, and in 2016, we started offering online seminars, or "webinars." PGC now offers free monthly webinars on such topics as PGC/PACT Contract Changes, Marketing and Self-Promotion, and Social Media Usage. There is also an International Webinar Series for Playwrights, this year in partnership with New Zealand's Play Market. Online webinars make our programs and discussions more accessible to playwrights outside of major city centres. If you have a webinar or workshop idea, let us know.

Creator Exchange events are based on a model created by the Dramatists Guild of America. In its most common form, ten playwrights and ten directors are invited to come together to discuss their current projects. The purpose of this gathering is to encourage new partnerships and artistic collaborations amongst theatre practitioners. Variations on the director/playwright theme are also held (e.g. playwrights and composers, playwrights and designers, playwrights and dramaturgs, etc.).

Articles

["Ask Not What PGC Can Do for You..."](#)

By Mark Leiren-Young

Years ago, when PGC membership rates were raised to \$155 (a rate that hasn't changed since 2006) members wanted to know what "services" they could use to justify convincing new playwrights to join PGC.

What is PGC doing for you?

For just a moment let's forget about the fact that PGC produces an online member's directory; administers readings; negotiates professional and amateur royalties; offers an opportunity to network with 700+ professional playwrights (many of whom are also artistic directors) and makes every one of your plays available to a global audience through the Copyscript program, and an increasingly more sophisticated website. And let's leave aside the argument that if you think your play might be worthy of future productions, or you'd like to see it live or in a few libraries, that the Copyscript program alone should be worth more than the annual price of admission.

What PGC is doing for you – whether you're a member or not – is offering a national voice to lobby for playwrights' rights on issues like copyright and fair use.

What PGC is doing for you is making sure that when the Canada Council and regional arts councils give out money they don't forget to include money for playwrights. If you've ever successfully applied for a creation grant from the Canada Council you can thank PGC for that money, because without the Guild to lobby for it, direct funding for play creation would be the responsibility of theatres. PGC also fought for residency programs and the grants theatres receive to give out for play creation.

What PGC is doing for you is lobbying for programs like CanCopy and Public Lending Rights and making sure that when those programs are created and they decide how to divvy up the funds, playwrights get their fair share. If you've ever cashed a cheque for CanCopy or PLR, that's because PGC fought for you.

What PGC is doing for you is making sure that when governments introduce bills about "status of the artist" the politicians remember that playwrights are artists too.

What PGC is doing for you is fighting to protect your copyright and the integrity of your work both within Canada and abroad.

If you've ever been produced at a theatre that paid you a ten percent royalty without blinking -- that's because of PGC playwrights who sat on contracts committees for years and fought

for a standard ten percent model that is followed by the majority of Canadian theatres like it's a commandment. And even if you've been "screwed" with a lower royalty -- chances are that it would have been a lot lower without that ten percent minimum in place. PGC also fought to enforce the principle that only playwrights can change the words in a script and that playwrights are welcome at rehearsals and have a variety of other rights screenwriters would kill for. If you question the "value" of a PGC contract, walk into your next negotiating meeting with a general manager and inform her that you don't believe in the standard PGC agreement so you're hiring a lawyer to draft a new contract. From scratch. See if your royalty cheque covers the cost of drafting that contract.

What PGC is doing for you is helping to create an atmosphere where foreign artistic directors don't throw out envelopes covered with Canadian postage stamps. If you've ever had a sniff from a foreign market, that just might have been because of the time, money and effort PGC has invested in promoting Canadian plays and playwrights within Canada and around the world.

What PGC is doing for you is making sure Canadian theatres produce Canadian plays.

Have you ever been produced at a Canadian theatre? Then unless you started your career in the 1970s and the age of LIP grants, you can probably thank PGC for that too -- for keeping the heat on Canada Council and governments at all levels to ensure that incentives exist to fund and support Canadian work. You don't have to look back very far in Canadian theatre history to see an age when Canadian work was relegated to second stages, co-ops and amateur drama festivals. In fact, you only have to look back almost 40 years ago -- when PGC's predecessor, the Playwrights Union of Canada, was founded.

The fact is that if you've ever had a play professionally produced in this country, you've already benefited from the work done by your fellow playwrights at PGC.

If you're a Canadian playwright, joining PGC shouldn't have to be about "what can PGC do for me now" it should be about acknowledging what PGC has already done for you and sharing in the responsibility of putting Canadian playwrights at the centre of Canadian theatre.

What is Playwrights Guild of Canada doing for me? Supporting Canadian playwrights and playwriting and fighting to make sure that when politicians, courts, tribunals, granting bodies and artistic directors are making decisions that affect writers and artists in this country, someone is making sure that playwrights aren't forgotten.

The "services" are just a bonus.

["Making the Most of Your Residency"](#)

by Sara Graefe

When Joan MacLeod visited my playwriting students at UBC a few years back, she spoke glowingly about her years in residence at Tarragon Theatre in the 80s. She laughingly referred to that time as her "glory years," and emphasized how important it was to her development as a writer to be affiliated with a theatre company—and in fact, to participate as a living, breathing part of that company: having a place to go to work every day, where she had an office and a desk to write on. A place where she was surrounded by other artists actively making theatre. A place where she

was recognized for who and what she is: a working playwright. She spoke of the significant relationships she forged with other writers during that time, including Ken Garnhum, Don Hannah, and Judith Thompson. She mentioned the plays which not only were nurtured by Tarragon, but also premiered in that theatre, the Governor General Award winning Toronto, Mississippi and *Amigo's Blue Guitar*.

With the Canada Council now funding playwright-in-residence opportunities through its Grants to Theatre Artists program, there has been an exciting increase in the number of playwrights doing residencies in Canadian theatres.

When I was BC rep, I talked to many fellow PGCers in BC and across the country who were resident writers in theatres during the first year of the funded program. People overall were excited to have the opportunity to create new work in affiliation with a company, and to participate in the activities of the theatre. However, I have also heard some horror stories from people—cases where things weren't running as smoothly as they could have been, where playwrights were feeling short-changed, exploited or underused...situations that make Joan's experience seem like pie in the sky. Even those who reported positive experiences nonetheless raised some questions and concerns. As I continued to listen to everybody, I noticed a pattern of pitfalls emerging. Yet many of the playwrights involved remain hesitant to discuss these issues publicly, for fear of alienating the theatres and artistic directors who have taken them in.

This conundrum has been discussed at length. It's important for playwrights to keep the dialogue open around this issue.

As a place to start, we put our heads together and came up with some suggestions for those playwrights considering residencies for the upcoming year. These are things that writers might want to start thinking about while approaching a theatre and making the application, to set the foundation for a positive residency experience.

Keep in mind that we've compiled these suggestions from fellow playwrights' stories and experiences, and from our own lives in the trenches—it is by no means a definitive list. Take what's useful to you, and modify to suit your individual situation:

Do your research before you approach a theatre. What's the theatre's mandate? What type of plays do they produce? Who is their audience? Do they have a commitment to Canadian theatre, to producing new work? Does their work match your sensibilities? Would you be able to work with the Artistic Director? Other artistic staff?

Talk to other playwrights who've been through the residency experience. What worked and didn't work for them? Call the Canada Council and talk to the Theatre Officers — about what you want to do, what's reasonable to expect of a company during a residency, etc.

Apply to the Canada Council as a unified team—playwright and theatre, side by side. Work together with the Artistic Director on the proposal. Use this time to negotiate the terms of the residency agreement with the theatre (e.g. workload, commitment, nature of activities. Patti speaks of working out a 60:40 split between her own writing time and time spent with the company).

Dare to dream big as you plan your residency, and encourage the host company to do the same. You're likely working with a theatre where there *hasn't* been a playwright-in-residence in years, or maybe ever. Challenge any limited vision of what "playwright-in-residence" might mean. Break down those boundaries together. A rich experience like Joan's is possible—as are a million alternatives of your own creation. Here's your chance to lay the groundwork and ask for what you want.

Get the terms down in writing. This may be the last thing on your mind: you and the theatre are likely both excited about the prospects of the residency at this early stage, and a written contract may seem overly formal or unnecessary. But remember, this is a contractual agreement for a business relationship. Don't rely on word of mouth or good faith. If you run into problems later on, it really helps to have something in writing to fall back on.

Be really clear about what you are willing to do during your residency—and what you will not do. Of course, as a resident, you will be expected to participate in the life of the theatre—otherwise, why not just get a regular creation grant and stay home and write? But participating can mean a whole host of things. You may agree, for example, to mentor local playwrights, facilitate a playwrights' unit, or sit in on rehearsals of new plays in development. You may, however, decide that answering the phones or reading the company's pile of unsolicited scripts is not the best use of your time. One playwright doing a residency at a prominent regional theatre was horrified to learn, the first day on the job, that one of the core tasks was to wade through a slush pile that had sat there untouched for thirteen years. The residency grant is not intended to fund the reading of scripts, unless that's something the playwright wants to do. Sort this out beforehand with the AD, so everyone's clear and there are no nasty surprises. And if later, you find yourself confronted with an unreasonable task that's not in the agreement, remember that you can say no (as hard as that can be sometimes!).

Negotiate details about your work environment. Will you write on site? Will the theatre provide an office for you? Will this be a private space, or Grand Central station? Will they provide a computer, access to a printer? What do you need in place in order to create? What can the theatre reasonably be expected to provide? What's negotiable, and where do you draw the line?

When I last checked, a few years back, the success rate of Canada Council applicants for playwright-in-residencies was one in three. While these odds look pretty good, keep in mind that just because a theatre agrees to apply with you *doesn't* mean it's a done deal. Is there a backup plan if the grant *doesn't* come through? Will the residency still take place without Canada Council support (i.e., does the theatre still want you there, have access to other funds, etc?) If the theatre expects you to start the residency before you hear from the Council, be sure to have a written contract in place with a commitment from the theatre to pay you for your time even if the grant *doesn't* come through (and no, it's really not okay for a theatre to credit you publicly as "playwright-in-residence" for that season if the funding *hasn't* come through and you *aren't* being paid! The title sure looks nice on the resumé, but being treated this way devalues your worth as an artist and sets a nasty precedent.)

Being a playwright-in-residence *doesn't* automatically guarantee a production by that theatre. Discuss expectations from the start: how will the theatre be involved in the new work you develop during your residency? Will there be dramaturgical assistance, workshops, staged readings? Is the AD open to considering your play for production? Next season or down the road?

What about money? Will your work be fully funded by the Canada Council program? Is the theatre willing to kick in more or not? Are you expected to be “in-residence” full-time—in which case, will you be earning enough to live on during the course of the residency? If not, how else do you plan to support yourself and how will this be worked out in terms of the residency requirements?

During the course of the residency, address problems as they arise. It is usually best to diffuse things before they get out of control. Take your concerns to the AD. Many issues rise out of simple misunderstandings that can be resolved quickly and efficiently, just by getting things in the open. Again, having an agreement down in writing helps tremendously—you can then revisit that contract with the theatre if things are going off the rails. If things get really bad, don't isolate. Talk to another playwright who is, or has been, in residence and get their advice. Call PGC with your concerns. Be honest in your final report to the Canada Council—note problem areas or concerns. If the theatre breached your contract and the issue could not be resolved, say so! Some playwrights have been scared of speaking out—not wanting to stir up bad feelings and to potentially alienate themselves from the company and/or the AD. This fear is legitimate—we all need to survive professionally—but it's important to consider what your silence is costing you, and what it will cost other playwrights in the future.

Of course, we hope that your residency experience will be a positive one! That like Joan and Patti, you'll still be glowing when you speak about it for years to come. So, keep in mind that positive feedback is also important. It's so easy to gripe about the stuff that's not working that often we forget to congratulate each other when things are going well. Remember to share and celebrate the high points of your residency—with the theatre, fellow playwrights, PGC and the Canada Council. Because it's through knowing what works—as well as what doesn't—that we collectively move towards creating standards for what a playwright-in-residence can and should be.

“Respect Copyright”

by Angela Rebeiro

As a national writer's organization which has fought for copyright protection, and which remains vigilant in its defense of these protections, PGC cannot be involved in their circumvention. As a writer, you would not want your own work to be used without your permission; it is incumbent upon you to behave the same way with others.

During my time as the Executive Director, a number of plays would come into the office for publication in Chapbook or Playwrights Canada Press format books, in which other writers' copyrighted work had been quoted, sometimes quite liberally. Sometimes the writer had been noted somewhere in the dialogue, and sometimes not at all.

You can't do this.

In one case when we called the American publisher for permission to use some poetry quoted in a play, she noted that because we were publishing the play, presumably there had been a professional production of the work, and concluded that permission had been sought at that time.

She looked for the previous license in her file and wondered why she couldn't find it. Neither the playwright nor the theatre had ever sought permission to use the work.

Also, you should not take for granted that certain authors are in public domain. Sometimes, family members inherit certain rights they are able to renew. In Europe public domain is now seventy-five years after death, a change from fifty years, when the European Union came into existence.

You don't need permission for writing the script, but if you intend to send the play to the potential producers, whether to professional or to community theatres and especially if it's going to be published, someone, either you, the theatre or the publisher must obtain permission to use the work.

There is usually a fee for these rights, and very specific language for crediting the original copyright owner. For example, Playwrights Canada Press paid \$110 US to use six lines of poetry and \$350 US to use 20 lines of poetry from two American poets. Sometimes these permission are also time sensitive. In one case the permission was granted for a period of five years. We have had a number of instances where we have had to get permission to quote song lyrics, and again these rights should also have been cleared for production.

You should be aware that these permissions can take anywhere from three to four weeks or longer to obtain, once you find out who has the rights. In the case of one of the poems mentioned above it took three weeks of research in the library and lord knows where else just to find out who MIGHT have the rights, and that person passed me on to someone else who DID have the rights. Moral rights are supposed to allow certain things, and one would not have thought that six lines of poetry would have warranted this search, but when I called the lawyer for advice she urged me to wait for permission. She wasn't comfortable with my putting into the book "every best effort was made to locate the publisher..." something which is supposed to be legal, but as she pointed out there are some nasty estates out there, so wait for approval.

[“CanCopy for the Lay \(or Lazy\): An Application Explained”](#)

by Drew Carnwath

I'll begin with a confession. I admit it; I **fess** up: until a few years ago I was under the assumption that I was ineligible for royalties, derived by Access Copyright, based on the photocopying of my work. Why? Well, for starters, I had trouble believing that anyone would actually go to the trouble of photocopying my plays – page by page – rather than simply buy a copyscript or a trade publication (naïve? You betcha).

Besides, just WHERE was this mysterious photocopying taking place? Immediately I envisioned some dark, dank basement in the bowels of a University building. Hundreds and hundreds of evil Copy-Gnomes, gleefully pressing the green COPY button, shouting `We need more toner! We need more toner!'

I have nothing against Gnomes personally. But, clearly, it was time to educate myself. I always find definitions helpful. So: as most of you already know, Access Copyright is

A reprography collective that grants licenses to photocopy works and collects fees on behalf of its members.'

This sounds like a good deal. Sensible. Pro-active....royalties. To paraphrase, membership not only has privileges, it carries rights.

Copy-rights. It's beginning to make sense.

WHY it's becoming more important to keep up with the copyright learning curve? Advanced technology, internet publishing, digital access, new trade agreements, government policy... these are all extremely compelling and valid reasons.

There is another good reason to become affiliated with Access Copyright. As pointed out to me recently by Mark Lerien-Young, IT'S ABOUT GETTING PAID FOR THE WORK THAT WE DO. What a concept. How so very Canadian, to apologize for remuneration; to feel guilty about a cheque in the mail.

Here's another good reason why PGC members should join Access Copyright: whether or not your plays are published in trade paperback, YOU ARE STILL ELIGIBLE FOR ROYALTIES FROM COPYSCRIPTS AND CHAPBOOKS. I know that, for myself, I've come across this information before; however, it's only recently begun to sink in.

The folks at Access Copyright have developed a comprehensive method for calculating royalty distribution, based on the guiding principles of ACTUAL USAGE balanced against THE COST OF COLLECTING DATA.

The result is four models, or paradigms, which, when tabled, reflect an accurate figure. I could go into further detail here, but A) they explain it better than I could ever hope to, and B) let's face it: I just wanted to use the word 'paradigm' (I mean, use it correctly).

I am writing this article to shed light on the application process, which is simply a matter of acquiring the application, filling out a few schedules (don't worry, it ain't tax time yet), and providing the folks at Access Copyright with a list of your plays and their respective ISBN numbers.

That's pretty much it, although I will take this opportunity to point out the difference between the CREATOR and the PUBLISHER, as articulated on schedule 'A.' You, the playwright, are the Creator. And when was the last time anyone called YOU a god? You don't have to answer that.

Not only are you NOT the publisher, but you must LEAVE THAT AREA BLANK. In other words, even if you are published in a trade book there is no need to have your publisher (Talon, Scirocco, Playwrights Canada Press, etc., etc.) complete that section. There has been some confusion surrounding this dual schedule, but hopefully this will clear it up. And, as my Grandpappy was wont to say, if all else fails, read the instructions' (I never actually called him Grandpappy. Nostalgia is a funny thing).

For an application, or any further questions, you can call the kind folks at Access Copyright. Their toll-free phone number is 1-800-893-5777, and their website is www.accesscopyright.ca. Benedictions and good luck. Now I'm off to see a Gnome about a job.

“Helpful Answers to Frequently Asked Contract Questions”

by Elyne Quan

The PGC Contracts Committee strives to offer sound and consistent advice to our members on what to do when negotiating contracts, including things that fall outside of the norm. Our contract covers a lot of ground but it **doesn't** cover everything and this article aims to address some of the common questions we receive.

“I've been asked to adapt/translate a play that is in the public domain. What royalty rate do I ask for?”

We recommend that our members enter into negotiations with theatres for adaptations at the same rate they would for an original work (10% of box office plus RRSP clause). This is the standard in the US, New Zealand and Great Britain for writers translating or adapting work in their country and should be the standard here. A possible exception to this is the translation is being done as a flat rate. Translation fees vary depending on the end use (i.e. performance vs. academic study or publication) so if you are asked to translate at a flat rate, it is to your advantage to investigate what the various “standard” translation rates are before agreeing to any amount.

“What's the recommended minimum for commissions?”

Currently, commissioning rates are not embedded into contracts with PACT companies. We have been encouraged by our members and by PACT to keep the commissioning contracts flexible to allow for the innumerable types of commissions our members receive. We can, however, recommend certain guidelines when negotiating a commissioning contract. Commissions can range anywhere from a low of \$2000 (for a short work) to \$20,000 or higher. We would like our members to begin negotiations at no less than \$5000 for a draft of a standard play.

Further, it is helpful to think of commissions in terms of what you are providing the theatre. Establish what you would like to charge the theatre for the work **you've** put in. For example, \$7000 might cover a first draft of a full-length play while \$8000 might cover a first draft and rewrite. The amount settled on should be reflective of the work involved.

It is also helpful to realize that the commission is more than the money exchanged. Discussion about the work itself and the working relationship between playwright and theatre is vital to a successful commission. Please see the Commissioning Guidelines document for more tips on how to negotiate a commission.

“What are Participation Rights and why am I being asked to agree to them?”

Theatres asking for a share of future profits of a new work (i.e. Participation Rights) have been increasing over the last few years. The **Guild's stance** on this is to not agree to Participation Rights unless it truly is an exceptional circumstance. Exceptional circumstances may include extensive developmental and financial support and publicity to promote your play in the hopes of securing future production. Exceptional circumstances do not include a workshop reading, a commission or even a premiere production of your play.

...and Remember...

PGC is only as strong as its membership so it is up to us to make sure that we are educated and informed on the issues that matter to us. We have negotiated the best possible agreement with PACT companies as we are able to AT THIS TIME. While we are actively pursuing better working relations and compensation for all of our members, it is up to you as a member of PGC to make sure that the theatres you deal with are aware that you are a member and that you insist on sticking with the contract as negotiated.

So before you step into that theatre to negotiate your next contract, remember:

- Do not undervalue yourself or your work;
- Feel free to ask for more than the minimum recommended for things like commissions, development fees and royalty payment. Every play is different and every production has its own challenges, for both you and the producing company. You should be adequately compensated for your work. It does not hurt to ask for more and never agree to less;
- Read your contracts carefully before you sign! Don't sign if there's anything you disagree with. Feel free to take the contract away with you to get another opinion if you are uncertain about any points;
- File your copy of your contract with the Guild. It is the only way we can track RRSP information. We also should have a copy in case of any future disputes;
- Call the PGC office if you have concerns regarding your contract and/or feel your agreement is not being honoured. A staff member will be happy to answer any of your questions and inform you of how to proceed.

Please contact the office or the Contracts Chair for more information and/or advice.

["Where PUC Came From: A Set of Recollections"](#)

by Tom Hendry (2007)

Over thirty years ago, among those of us interested in promoting opportunities for Canadian playwrights, action-oriented alliances began to be formed, plans made on the basis of mutually shared dreams, organizations to be envisioned. By the autumn of 1971 the PUC forerunner, Playwrights Co-op, was waiting for funding so it could begin publishing and distributing new Canadian plays.

The funding came through in late 1971 and by January of 1972 the first scripts were printed and in the mail to prospective producers in Canada and elsewhere. Before this could happen, a lot of other challenges had to be comprehended, analyzed, understood and met. Above all, those who wanted something to happen had to put aside personal differences and work together. I was lucky enough to be involved at various times, in various places with the work of getting everyone involved, securing agreement as to where we wanted to go and on the best way to get there. This is how I remember things happening: incrementally.

During the mid-sixties, when I was Secretary General of the Canadian Theatre Centre, I noticed that very few Canadian plays in the English language had ever been published. To make a start on repairing this omission, I proposed to my Board that CTC should begin a modest publication and distribution program involving interesting new Canadian plays in English and French, plays which had not yet found a publisher. The Board agreed, CTC advertised its intentions and in due course

numbers of scripts began to arrive at the CTC office. To weed out the unpublishables, on the advice of Jean Roberts, I hired Timothy Findley and William Whitehead as play readers cum editors.

We never did get going on the French-language side of things because the Canada Council, our funder, insisted on okaying the French-language scripts prior to publication. The Council, it appeared to us, was unreasonably nervous about becoming identified with the publication of separatist material, of which there was undeniably a good deal in those days in the plays coming out of Québec. Our Board viewed their requested publication veto as censorship and understandably cancelled the French-language publication program. Too bad.

The Council put no such restrictions on the English-language program and eventually, on the basis of Tiff and Bill's strong recommendation and a Board committee's approval, we brought out, in 8 x 11 mimeograph format, a number of Canadian plays. Among them were George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, James Reaney's *Colours in the Dark*, and Ann Henry's *Lulu Street*. We sent the scripts to all CTC member-theatres, to the Dominion Drama Festival and to all national Centres of the International Theatre Institute, of which CTC was the Canadian Centre. It was the first step, on the part of the artists themselves, in letting Canadians and others outside our borders in on the secret that Canadians were writing and producing their own plays. The scripts had some kind of impact: when Clifford Williams left the Royal Shakespeare Company to come here to head up Theatre Toronto, back in the Sixties, he told me his only contact with this country was reading those scripts at Canada House.

By the end of the Sixties, a lot of things had happened. At Expo in 1967, CTC had held an enormous international colloquium called *The Design of Theatres*. At that meeting, people like Kenneth Tynan, Jerzy Grotowski, Arnold Wesker and Joe Buenaventura from all over the world had predicted the Seventies would belong to small developmental theatres nurturing new plays and new writers, new directors and new actors dedicated to the work of creating new national repertoires. A lot of young Canadian theatre artists came, listened, discussed and were impressed with what everyone was saying. By 1970, Factory Lab Theatre, with an all-Canadian repertoire policy had begun and was soon to be followed by Tarragon Theatre with a similar outlook. Theatre Passe Muraille had abandoned its initial preoccupation with off-Broadway hip and the international avant-garde and was also becoming all-Canadian. (VERY TORONTOCENTRIC)

The crux of the dilemma facing writers then was this: the big English Canadian theatres, the regionals and the festivals, had virtually no interest in producing Canadian work, except here and there plays for young audiences. The small theatres had almost nothing in the way of financial resources. For most, doing Canadian work was a genuine labor of love involving near-clerical vows of poverty that promised never to change.

At the end of 1968, I left CTC to take up an invitation to become Literary Manager (dramaturge) of the Stratford Festival. There, I learned early in February, my first task was to write a musical based on *The Satyricon*. The writer who was supposed to do book and lyrics had backed out at the last minute; tickets had already been sold. There had to be a production. Rehearsals were set to begin in May for a June opening.

Somehow Stanley Silverman, the composer, and I got a script and songs ready on time. The show opened on schedule and was the *success de scandale* and *success fou* of the season, playing nightly to standing room only audiences. Even I had to stand whenever I wanted to see it.

Kitty corner from the Avon, where *Satyricon* was playing, in a converted store was the Canadian Place Theatre, a new group doing new Canadian work by its mostly written founders, Martin Kinch, John Palmer and Larry Kardish. They knew I had sent a donation to the Futz defense fund (the Toronto producers of this innocuous and whimsical off-Broadway success were on trial in T.O. for

presenting an obscene play) and on the strength of this John Palmer asked me to become their star defense witness. It seemed that the Stratford Morality Squad had threatened to close them down because of the nature, language, nudity and other content of their plays. After that, I went to their openings where I always sat, amid a scattering of cast relatives and friends, with the head of the Morality Squad, Mark Anthony. True, that was his name. At the intermission I'd assure Mark he couldn't get a conviction since I would be testifying in their defense and he would go happily home.

After the 1969 summer in Stratford we all - except for Mark Anthony - kept in touch and I began going back to Toronto a lot to see shows like *Vampyr*, Charles Manson aka Jesus Christ, *Creeps*, *Sacktown Rag*, etc. I could feel the energy that was powering all this new work, shoestring budgeted though it might be. At Stratford. I was not a happy camper. There were bright spots: I read *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* in typescript and bought the stage rights from Michael Ondaatje in order to make a school tour of the show in Ottawa. Alas, the teachers in our nation's capital turned it down as dirty, filthy and debauched, the same year it won the Governor-General's Award. My only really lasting achievement at the Festival was in persuading Jean Gascon to acquire the old rink as a Third Stage venue for unconventional material. There, a couple of years later, I saw Neil Munro become a mainstream star as *Billy the Kid*. In the winter of 1970-71, I moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake where Judith Hendry was working as Director of Shaw Festival Marketing and Communications.

In the late spring of 1971, David Gardner, then Theatre Officer of the Canada Council, called a meeting to be held in early August at Stanley House, the Council's Gaspé think-tank, involving a lot of the usual suspects then active in trying to get more Canadian plays on our stages. David chaired the meeting and among the rabble-rousers present were writers Carol Bolt, Jean Morin, George Ryga, Jack Gray and myself. Others in the cast included producers James Domville and Marc Gélinas plus Suzanne Finlay of CBC-TV, Peter Hay of Talon Books, Arthur Ballet of the U.S. play-developing O'Neill Foundation, Renée Paris, an agent based in Vancouver.

David began the meeting by suggesting things were better than ever for Canadian playwrights and getting even better by the day. Asked to respond, I said that things were terrible for every aspect of creation for the stage in English Canada, that the whole area of creation and its practitioners was viewed at best by the mainstream theatrical leadership as a poor and undeserving relative, not as the single most important person in the entire Canadian theatrical family. Carol Bolt was even more vitriolic but George Ryga somehow managed to top Carol in scorn and dismay, no mean feat on his part.

The Québécois present agreed that there were differences in degree of alienation between creation and mainstream but that the outlook for theatrical innovation, while better than in the ROC, was pretty bleak.

What to do about it? We proposed quotas - 50% Canadian work on all federally-supported stages was a popular suggestion - since we'd all seen what the Canadian music quota on radio had done for composers and performers of Canadian work. Nothing came of that but Canada Council did begin, on its grant application forms, to ask theatres which of the plays they'd be doing were Canadian plays. More productively we prepared a wish list of needed but not yet existing institutions: a publishing, distributing and royalty-collecting organization à la Samuel French or Dramatists Play Service; more small theatres all across the country dedicated to Canadian work and enthusiastically encouraged and supported by the Canada Council; developmental centres, outside of the metropolitan theatrical communities, where playwrights could work with experienced directors, dramaturges and actors to develop their works.

We prepared a report - a how-to-do-it kit called, I believe, *A Curious Enterprise* and when we left Stanley House we all had homework to do to further The Cause. Mine was to research and write a study of how Canadian plays presented in "mainstream" theatres. What I found was that Canadian

plays were hits more often than not with Canadian audiences. In Halifax, Arthur Murphy was more popular than the likes of Neil Simon; in Vancouver George Ryga far outdid Terence Rattigan; in Winnipeg, Len Peterson and Morris Surdin's musical *Look Ahead!* was a holdover success and so it went wherever I looked. These findings, which I published in *Saturday Night* magazine, contrasted oddly with the views of most English Canadian artistic directors who, in general, saw Canadian work for the stage as "rubbish". Far from rubbish, Canadian stuff was close to being guaranteed hits, wherever produced in Canada. Even at Stratford!

En route home from the Stanley House meeting, I stopped off at the O'Neill Foundation in Connecticut where Arthur Ballet introduced me to John Guare whose latest play was being workshopped there, to Martin Esslin, head of BBC Drama and Edith Oliver, off-Broadway critic for *The New Yorker*, both of whom were serving as volunteer dramaturges. By the time I left I had ideas about a Canadian facility a lot like this one.

Back at Niagara-on-the-Lake, I approached Brian Doherty, founder of the Shaw Festival and a Canadian playwright with Broadway credits from the Thirties and Forties about the Festival co-hosting a second meeting of playwrights to discuss the ideas that came out of Stanley House, to recruit believers to The Cause and to keep the ball rolling. In late August, the second conference was held with a very large attendance compared with Stanley House. At this conference a playwright named Laura Ferrier asked me if I'd heard about L.I.P. a new Federally-sponsored Local Initiatives Program. Apparently LIP gave out money to people with good ideas for putting people to work. As soon as the conference was over, I drove to Toronto, found the LIP office and sat down with two bureaucrats named Beaumont and Torlone. What was on my mind?

I told them a bunch of us - unemployed but gifted directors, actors, writers, designers - wanted to found a theatre to produce only new Canadian plays. What do you call this new theatre, they asked, sharpening their pencils. I hadn't thought that far. I liked Toronto New Theatre but Jonathan Stanley already owned that name. I told them we called it Toronto Free Theatre. Why free? It was to be a community resource, like a public library. By not charging we would avoid all the marketing agony. We would live on whatever LIP could give us. How much would we need? \$ 120,000 to employ a company of twenty for a year at \$ 100 per week each plus an expense allowance of \$ 16,000. Sounds good, they said, writing it down. Do you have any other good ideas.

Thanks to Stanley House, I certainly did. A lot of unemployed playwrights were ready to get together to publish and distribute all the scripts they were getting produced these days. How much? I divided \$ 120,000 by two and added \$ 5,000 for luck. \$ 65,000, I said, staff of ten plus expenses. Sounds good, they said, What's it called? I tried to think of something classy and progressive and idealistic. We call it Playwrights Co-op, I told him. It's sponsored by the Toronto Playwrights Circle. You've heard of them? They both nodded and wrote down what I'd said. They gave me some papers to fill out and said everything should be ready to go by December. About this free theatre business, said Mr Beaumont. Yes? What about it? You call it that, nobody will come. Why? This is a mercantile society, Beaumont told me, something that has no cost has no value. People don't go to things that have no value. I said, if you're in the States and you have the choice of a toll road or a free road that's just as good and just as quick, do you go on the toll road because the other has no cost and therefore no value? He's got a point, Mike, said Mr. Torlone. PS: in early June the bureaucratic twosome showed up at the Free to make sure we were in business. We were full that night but I found them a couple of seats. At intermission I said, You see, they came, it's like this every night. Jammed.

Beaumont had an answer: What do you expect? It's free, for Christ's sake! Torlone winked at me. Cutting back to the chase:

I walked out of the LIP office with \$ 185,000 in the bag, \$ 185,000 I hadn't dreamed of having for The Cause an hour before. Carol Bolt couldn't believe our good luck. Neither could Martin Kinch and John

Palmer. Only a few days previously, after a lot of coaxing the Canada Council had offered us \$ 3,000 to \$5,000 to help get us started. Not only the Co-op and TFT came out of LIP: the remarkable Vera Cudjoe's ground-breaking Black Theatre Canada started there, so did a lot of first class children's theatre groups, and Open Circle Theatre, and Global Village Theatre and many another. Amazing how much you get for a couple of million, which is about what LIP pumped into the theatrical blood circulatory system here in Toronto over two or three years. That money is still paying dividends. Why are a lot of our actors here such naturals for movie work? Jeff Bowes says to a great extent it's because as a group they honed their craft in the relatively small rooms that became our theatres, rooms where a natural intimate style of acting is an absolute necessity. But I digress.

The final negotiations were in early December at a time when I had to be out of the country on urgent business. As a result, Carol Bolt looked after the finalizing of the Co-op contract, Judith Hendry took care of the Toronto Free Theatre contract. In January, we at TFT began work on our first Toronto season. Three plays by John Palmer, Larry Fineberg and me. We were to open the first of June, just two years after the opening of The Satyricon. In January, Carol wangled free office space for us out of the Toronto Library Board. As soon as the phone was installed we called Vancouver to invite Herschel Hardin, whom we all admired, to accept Membership Card Number 1 in the Playwrights Co-op. A big silence after the invitation was broken by Herschel: I'll join if you move the whole operation to Vancouver. So much for solidarity!

Just prior to receiving the first big cheque, we had another incredible burst of good fortune. Darryl Sharp, a writer and editor a lot of us knew came back from England where he'd been working in publishing. We managed to convince him to go to work for the Co-op as publisher for the \$100 weekly we were allowed by the LIP people to pay each of our staff members. In Darryl's first year, the Co-op published 100 new plays. In those days our only criteria for publication suitability was this: the play had to have been produced somewhere by somebody in front of some sort of public audience. At the beginning we wanted a historical record of what was being seen, a record that was as complete as possible.

We had disbanded the Toronto Playwrights Circle and most of us Carol, John Herbert, myself, Len Peterson etc - went on the Board of the Co-op. The Co-op in turn led to Playwrights Canada and Playwrights Press. How were we able to start in high gear and keep going despite funding and other snafus? Dumb luck.

Once when we were horribly broke, a water pipe burst on the floor above us and reduced to pulp our entire inventory. Our manager made a claim, with the lost scripts listed at sale price, not cost price and for some reason, the insurance company paid the entire claim. This gave us the working capital to really get into business and stay in business. I was on the Board for all but one of the first ten years serving as president, frequently treasurer, sometimes secretary. Cut back to the Stanley House wish list:

A couple of years after the Co-op got going, the Banff Centre called and invited me to come out and head up their then-dormant playwrights' program. I mailed them a copy of the Plan for a Playwrights Colony I had written out as soon as I got home from my visit to the O'Neill Foundation. The plan was expensive but to my surprise Banff agreed and in 1974 Doug Riske and I co-founded the Banff Playwrights Colony. That enabled me to tick off the third of the pressing items on our Stanley House wish list. It really helps if you want to get to a particular destination to have a reliable road map. But this piece isn't about Banff, it's about all the incremental permutations and mutations between the Playwrights Circle of 1971, the Playwrights Co-op of 1972, the later Playwrights Canada etc., etc., etc.

At Stanley House we had estimated it would take ten years of hard work, constant lobbying and determination to replace the somewhat colonial "mainstream" in, for example, the arts and entertainment sections of the Toronto papers. Because of a few lucky breaks, and thanks to the

energy and ability of our playwrights and directors and actors and designers, it only took five years. By the mid-seventies, it was obvious we needed some sort of union-patterned watchdog organization to police relationships between our playwrights and the many theatres now wanting to produce their works.

Because it seemed to most of us inappropriate to place this important and specialized responsibility in the hands of ACTRA or the Writers Union, both of whom were interested in having us come in with them, we decided to continue on our own and so the Guild was born.

Because of its position and relative strength, the publishing/distribution entity looked like a comfortable place in which to lodge a lot of the nutsy-boltsy stuff you must deal with rapidly and competently if you want to run a decent Union. It was natural for a lot of the Guild folks to feel this way; after all, the membership of the two organizations was practically identical. Both belonged to the same members. Lines of demarcation between the spheres of activity of the two organizations began to blur. Be that as it may, the publishing and distributing people had a huge amount of work on their hands and rarely, if ever, enough in the way of resources to get the job done satisfactorily, which may have made them needlessly unsympathetic to Guild needs.

Eventually the time came when too much energy was being wasted on turf wars and hassles between the Guild and the Co-op and to avoid ongoing civil strife, we merged the two organizations, and never looked back.