

SureFire

January 2025



*A community-generated resource to promote plays by
women, two-spirit, transgenres and non-binary artists.*

SureFire 2025

This is the fourth edition of SureFire, an equity initiative carried out biennially since 2018 by the Women's Caucus of the Playwright's Guild of Canada (PGC). This year, PGC is excited to partner with the Centre des auteurs dramatiques (CEAD).

Introduction

SureFire is inspired by the American Kilroys, a group that generates an annual list of under- or un-produced plays by women, trans, and non-binary creators, so that producers have a tool to help them end the under-representation of these groups. Likewise, SureFire and similarly-spirited Canadian projects such as PLEDGE and The 49 List are designed to redress the under-representation of women, two-spirit, transgender, and non-binary (W2STNB) creators on Canada's stages. Multiple studies show that women playwrights face systemic discrimination and underrepresentation in the theatre industry (Burton, MacArthur, Espace Go); inequities that are magnified further for Indigenous women, women of colour, two-spirit, transgender, and gender nonconforming folks. Often, such works are not produced because artistic directors and producers are not familiar with plays by W2STNB

creators. Thus, the purpose of SureFire is to increase the profile of under-served playwrights by providing artistic directors, producers, educators, and others with a “surefire” means of finding new and exciting plays for production by W2STNB authors, which, in turn, will help to improve parity in the theatre sector.

This version of SureFire is unique. PGC and CEAD joined forces to create a special-themed, community-generated resource featuring Francophone work. Previous SureFire editions include only two titles by French-speaking playwrights (Émilie Monnet’s *Okinum* in 2020, and Rébecca Déraspe’s *Ceux qui se sont évaporés* in the “Other Recommendations” section for 2022). This time around, we requested names of plays written in French, in both French and English, or in English translation from the French, and plays included in previous SureFire editions were not eligible for this rendition.

It is our hope that SureFire 2025 will not only help to rectify gender imbalances in the theatre industry, but that it will also lead to greater cooperation, interaction, and cross-pollination between Canada’s “two solitudes.”

Methodology

For the 2025 edition of SureFire, we reached out across the country to hundreds of theatre experts,

or as we call them, “Recommenders.” The list of Recommenders’ names has grown over the last eight years, ever-changing and expanding, and it was initially compiled through an open call to PGC’s Women’s Caucus Committee, its Women’s Caucus members, PGC’s National Forum, staff, and board members. This year, CEAD added new names to the Recommenders’ list, and we also sent open calls to the members of CEAD and PGC.

Following the usual pattern, we invited the Recommenders to send us their top three “passion picks” for un-produced or under-produced (meaning one or no professional productions) Canadian plays by W2STNB creators written in French, in French and English, or in English translation from the French. Compared to the past, and despite our best efforts, we received relatively few Recommender responses, and there are some regions for which no responses were received, making this the lowest return rate in SureFire’s history. When we queried people about the lack of replies, we learned that very few English speakers (the majority of the Recommenders) know of Canadian plays written in French, in English translation, or in both languages. While this is a disturbing though perhaps not entirely shocking finding, to our minds, it only underscores further just how imperative and greatly-needed this Francophone-themed initiative is.

The Recommenders

The Recommenders' names are anonymous and confidential, as are their individual play choices, which helps to ensure honest, unbiased, and uninhibited responses free of external pressures. At the same time, we recognize that anonymity can be problematic in terms of equity and accountability (people want to know who the individuals are making the play choices). To help offset some of the mystery, we asked the Recommenders to answer demographic questions about themselves to be shared with their permission as aggregate data for additional insight. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of the people behind the choices, while simultaneously demonstrating that conscious efforts were made to ensure a variety of responses.

To learn more about the demographics of the Recommenders, go [HERE](#).

SureFire 2025 Results

Overall, we received 217 play suggestions from 107 Recommenders (47 in English and 60 in French). The Recommenders' submissions were tabulated to see which works received multiple nominations, resulting in 26 plays written by 29 (co-)creators. At first glance, the 2025 list may not seem as diverse as previous SureFires, given the predominance of

white authorship, yet there is work by playwrights of colour, Indigenous, and Black creators. There are also plays by trans and non-binary creators, and the playwrights' ages range from 24 to 75. Most impressive is that 38% of the titles come from OLMCs (Official Language Minority Communities), meaning French-speaking playwrights living outside of Quebec. OMLCs account for 15% of French-speaking Canadians, so 38% is an incredible rate of representation for playwrights outside of Quebec, demonstrating that Francophone theatre communities are thriving, and deserving of more recognition and attention.

At the time of submission, all of the chosen plays met the eligibility criteria: one or no professional productions (excluding Fringe shows, university productions, and community theatre); written in French, French and English, or translated into English; and created by W2STNB artists in Canada.

SureFire 2025 is arranged in alphabetical order by play title, and each work links out to a webpage containing a play synopsis, additional information about the piece (such as whether it has been translated into English), and where the play can be obtained for production, reading, teaching, or learning. And so, without any further ado, The Centre des auteurs dramatiques and the Women's Caucus of the Playwrights Guild of Canada are delighted to bring you SureFire 2025!

Afrodisiaque

by Maryline Chery

Akuteu

by Soleil Launière

Baby-sitter

by Catherine Léger

Chokola

by Phara Thibault

Clandestines

by Marie-Ève Milot and Marie-Claude St-Laurent

Copeaux

by Mishka Lavigne

Daddy's Issues

by Merlin Simard

Disgrâce

by Nadia Girard Eddahia

Flush

by Marie-Claire Marcotte

Havre

by Mishka Lavigne

Je suis perdue, toi aussi

by Elie Marchand

La maculée

by Madeleine Blais-Dahlem

Les Glaces

by Rébecca Déraspe

*Les remugles ou
La danse nuptiale est une langue morte*

by Caroline Bélisle

Mama

by Nathalie Doummar

Maurice

by Anne-Marie Olivier

Nzinga

by Alexis Diamond, Marie Louise Bibish Mumbu,
and Tatiana Zinga Botao

Ornithorynques

by Johanne Parent

Overlap

by Céleste Godin

Seeker

by Marie-Claude Verdier

Small Talk

by Carole Fréchette

Soeurs Sirènes

by Elie Marchand

The Scream

by Carolyn Fe

Tsunami

by Mélanie Léger

Un oiseau m'attend

by Marie-Hélène Larose-Truchon

Wollstonecraft

by Sarah Berthiaume

Call to Action

Please share SureFire 2025 far and wide on your social media and with your other networks! As we work toward ever-greater pluralistic practices in the arts sector, SureFire provides an efficacious tool for finding new and exciting under-produced works, this time around, in French, French and English, or translated from French into English by women, two-spirit, trans, and non-binary creators.

SureFire 2025 *en français*

For the French Language version of SureFire 2025, go [HERE](#).

Call for Recommenders

Are you a theatre enthusiast who would like to contribute to future editions of SureFire as a Recommender? If so, contact us and let us know! Our email addresses are found on the next page.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the Recommenders who took the time to take part in this initiative, sharing their knowledge and expertise with the world.

Also, gigantic thanks and huge congratulations to all the SureFire playwrights. Your plays keep our fires and passion burning strong!



Centre des auteurs dramatiques (CEAD)

5445 avenue de Gaspé, office 406

Montreal, QC H2T 3B2

Phone: 514-288-3384

Email: centre.de.doc@cead.qc.ca

Playwrights Guild of Canada

P.O. Box 60022

Queen Beverley P.O.

Toronto, ON M5V 0C5

Phone: 416-703-0201

Email: membership@playwrightsguild.ca

