

To our Ambassadors, our patrons and supporters, the greater Saskatoon theatre community, and – more specifically – to the IBPOC women, femme, and non-binary folk of Saskatoon to whom we must hold ourselves accountable:

On June 6th of last year, Ferre Play posted a statement on our social media accounts in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of the turmoil and unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd. It read, in part, as follows:

All white theatre makers need to commit to educating ourselves further and work to confront our privilege. Ferre Play especially needs to commit to standing for intersectional feminism; white women have a responsibility to fight for change.

Ferre Play commits to working harder to lift and amplify the voices and stories of the Black and Indigenous women of our community. We commit to creating change in our community through educating ourselves and our audience, using our power and privilege to stand up for what is right and just, and creating an action plan for our company that better supports BIPOC, especially women.

We are excited to announce that we have made good headway down our improved path. We began this important work in the fall of 2020, and will be continuing in 2021 with organizational transformation and wonderful additions to our team.

As we take our time and due diligence with the work of racializing, decolonizing, and dismantling the white supremacy of Canadian theatre, it has become very apparent that a big part of achieving Truth & Reconciliation within our sector is by **acknowledging** our past wrongdoings, our contributions to white supremacy, and by **apologizing** for them. No relationship can be repaired without one party admitting to their mistakes and taking responsibility.

In 2018, when founding Ferre Play Theatre with an operating body comprised of the 5 of us – all white, college-educated, and middle-class – we sidelined the voices and experiences of the IBPOC women, femme, and non-binary artists of our community. We did not do this out of malice, nor did we even consciously make the choice to do so. But by doing so, we were racist, and we participated in perpetuating an historically white supremacist sector.

We are sorry. For being racist. For the feelings of hurt and frustration this must have caused, for perpetuating the culture of “we know best” in Saskatoon, and for not even being conscious of the fact that it *was* a choice. We should have done better.

We commit our organization to representing *true* intersectional feminism by amplifying the voices of the Indigenous and Black women, femme, and non-binary people, and Women, femme, and non-binary People of Colour of our community. We will do this by supporting the work of and producing stories written by, about, and starring IBPOC artists, as well as women, femme, and non-binary people of all marginalized groups. We also commit to aiding in the racialization of the design and tech sectors by hiring IBPOC women, femme, and non-binary artists and technicians in these positions whenever possible and practical.

We are so excited to be formally announcing the addition of two exceptional artists to the Ferre Play council:

Born with the gift of music, **Krystle Pederson** started performing at a very young age and continues to hone her multi-disciplinary performance skills while sharing the stage with numerous accomplished artists. She can sing, dance, act, and play many instruments. Her singing voice is unparalleled. Her most recent performances include national tours of both the National Arts Centre’s *Gabriel Dumont’s Wild West Show* and the one-woman play *Songs in the Key of Cree*. Besides being reliable and hardworking, her infectious laugh and her creative acumen make her a joy to work with. As a Cree/Métis performer, Krystle holds a deep connection to her community and is dedicated to being a great role model and mentor for the next generation. We are inspired by her talent, her drive, and her dedication to creating a better world. We are so thankful she has agreed to be a part of Ferre Play.

Yulissa Campos is a powerful theatre artist whose enthusiasm, honesty, and drive have manifested itself in a litany of impressive projects. A U of S double graduate, Yulissa has not only worked for numerous local theatre companies (SUM Theatre, Station Arts Centre, Ferre Play Theatre), but is the founder of *Ay Caramba!* Theatre, and is the co-creator of the podcast *Latinas in Stoon*. Yulissa’s impressive work as a playwright has been representative of her experience as an immigrant from Ecuador (*I, Frida* and *The Ungrateful Immigrant*), and she has contributed considerable energy off the stage to addressing the inequities and barriers that exist in current theatre structures. Yulissa’s willingness to forge a new path and elevate our community by challenging the status quo makes her a highly valuable addition to the Ferre Play Theatre Team of Warriors. We are so happy to have her join us.

Over the past number of months, the 7 of us have been participating in a professionally led strategic planning process. This has led to a revolution of our organizational model, based on the simple idea that “Everyone is equal and everyone who joins the collective is equal.”

We recognize the importance of ongoing education – for us as individuals, that has taken many forms; attendance and participation in Anti-Racism & Oppression seminars, panels, and lectures; receiving professional Diversity & Inclusion training at our workplaces; seeking paid mentorship and guidance from IBPOC within our community; and reading a great deal of anti-racist literature. We are all committed to always seeking to learn more, confronting our own biases and privileges, and dedicating ourselves to changing our perspectives and our environments. Our work will never be complete.

We are using our downtime during the pandemic to create the action plan we promised we would. We are very excited to continue to bring powerful productions to Saskatoon, and to begin to deliver developmental opportunities to local women, femme, and non-binary artists to practice and hone their talents.

We are very much looking forward to the future.

Above all else, we remain grateful. For our opportunities, for our privileges, and for a community in which we know we can hold each other accountable. It is important to foster a community in which we feel safe acknowledging our mistakes, in where we are proud to help each other right them.

With deepest regrets and highest regards,

The Ferre Play Founders:

Jacqueline Block
Angela Christie
Heather Morrison
Elizabeth Nepjuk
Anita Smith