



## **Our Commitment to Anti-Racism at Western Canada Theatre**

**October 25, 2021**

### **WHERE WE ARE**

Western Canada Theatre (WCT) acknowledges that we create and learn as a theatre organization on the territory of Tk'emlups te Secwepemc, on the unceded land of Secwepemc'ulew, in the beautiful interior of British Columbia.

### **WHO WE ARE AS INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBERS**

We celebrate our team's diverse backgrounds and remain proud of the fact that diversity exists at all levels of Western Canada Theatre including our audiences, Board of Directors, executive team, staff, volunteers and talent (together "Our Team"). Western Canada Theatre recognized long ago that our organization, and therein our programming, is enriched by celebrating and nurturing a diverse collective.

### **WHO WE ARE AS AN ORGANIZATION**

Western Canada Theatre has made considerable effort to identify the bias from which Canadian theatre has evolved and which includes a patriarchal, Eurocentric tradition that has contributed to widespread discrimination and exclusion of a range of people and practices. We remain steadfastly committed to redressing systemic exclusion, and to expanding engagement opportunities for artists who identify with historically underrepresented groups, so that the practice of theatre honours and reflects the wide diversity of performance, processes, bodies and identities in our community.

We can do better, and need to do better.

Through our involvement with the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT), Western Canada Theatre actively strives to be an innovator in promoting diversity the national theatre ecology.

We are theatre creators.

We exist to tell stories to, about, and with our community.

Our commitment is to tell the stories that have resonance for our entire community, without barriers to access or inclusivity.

We purposely seek to work with creators, storytellers, and artists from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and abilities who represent our local community, British Columbia, all of Canada, and all Indigenous Nations.

The role of the artist has always been to reflect the world back at its society to begin conversations.

Through the use of theatre productions, we inspire empathy by sharing together in the lived experiences of others in order to broaden our perspectives. But this is not a passive act; it requires engagement in the story. We are living through a point of rupture for society and the story being told on the world stage is painfully revealing our hubris. In order to achieve transformation, we must show up.

We need to listen and trust what others tell us about their lived experiences. Our role as allies is to educate ourselves and elevate the voices of others.

At Western Canada Theatre we believe that the amplifying of marginalized or historically oppressed voices is some of the most important work that we do. While we are proud of the work we have produced in the past, we are alive to the fact that creating and producing stories aimed at engaging all of our audiences is ongoing. This is our job, and as current events have proven, our job remains as necessary and relevant as ever.

In some respects, we are the holders of stories. And in this regard, we recognize the role that theatre can, and must, play in healing the ruptures in our world. At times this means bringing light, joy, and inspiration to our audience, but it also means engaging in tough conversations and facing unpleasant realities.

Theatre is a place of assembly. We cause for our audiences to share in the emotional experience of empathy and understanding, and ask that they learn to appreciate new and different voices.

We positively impact the lives of our audience by providing theatrical and educational experiences that offer entertainment, inspiration, and social resonance.

In order to achieve these goals, we have partnered with numerous organizations, business leaders, social agencies, and other service providers to engage a cross-section of our community. We do so by collaborating on events, offering our venues for community gatherings, cross-promotion, participating in lobbying and advocacy, and providing educational support.

Our values as an organization include the promotion of access, and reduction of barriers, to theatre for Our Team. This commitment can be felt on stage because it begins with our leadership, our policies and eventually is seen in our rehearsals and performances.

Western Canada Theatre is particularly cognisant to manage an environment of positive collaboration and appreciation amongst our staff, volunteers, and artists.

## **MAY 30 2021**

The findings of the remains of 215 children near the Kamloops Indian Residential School was met with astonishment and grief throughout the world. The news was especially tragic to the Western Canada Theatre team because of its close proximity to our operations. The tragedy of the Indian Residential School system has caused for Indigenous people to experience, and re-experience trauma for generations. The findings also prompted wide spread compassion from the non-Indigenous community.

The findings were a clear call to action for all of us to work towards true reconciliation.

Western Canada Theatre is committed to realize reconciliation in our content and our conduct.

We stand with all of the Indigenous communities who have since undertaken their own investigations to equally tragic ends.

## **OUR COMMITMENT**

Western Canada Theatre will lead Canadian Theatre in eliminating discriminatory practices, making personal and corporate biases seen and resolved, and establishing safe spaces for diversity of every kind.

We denounce racism and discrimination and recognize our role as a creative and socially responsible organization to act against injustice. Throughout our programs, programming, and administration, we commit to engaging in the tough conversations necessary to ensure that we embody our core values of inclusivity, diversity, equity and community.

Collaborating with artists to give voice to marginalized, or historically oppressed voices, is some of the most important work that we do. We recognize that we can—and will—improve our commitment to IBPoC stories, artists, and audiences.

As a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, we uphold the provisions found in the 2020 Canadian Theatre Agreement, Article 10, particularly related to inclusive casting, cultural safety, and access.

We embrace the role that theatre can and must play in healing the ruptures in our world. In theatre, assembled together, we share the emotional experiences of empathy and understanding, as we learn to appreciate new and important voices and viewpoints. We all have a role to play in addressing injustice and racism in our world.

## **COMMITMENT TO REVIEW, ANNUAL GOALS & FEEDBACK**

WCT will review this statement annually. The statement is supported by a comprehensive statement of annual strategies, which will also be reviewed/updated annually. We invite feedback on this statement by emailing either the Artistic Director or Managing Director, below.

Western Canada Theatre Company Society

Tim Rodgers, President

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