

WORLD
THEATRE
DAY



JOURNÉE
MONDIALE
DU THÉÂTRE



Professional
Association of
Canadian Theatres

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AN URGENT CALL TO SUPPORT CANADIAN THEATRES

The Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and Association des théâtres francophones du Canada (AFTC) Announce Plans for World Theatre Day

Toronto, Ontario. (March 5, 2024) - The Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) in partnership with Association des théâtres francophones du Canada (AFTC) call on Canadians to Rally for Theatre this month ahead of World Theatre Day on March 27, 2024, with three simple calls to action.

Live performing arts was among the first industries to close during the COVID-19 pandemic and the last to re-open. This combined with changing audience behaviours, dwindling support from sponsors, donors, and governments, and significant increases in expenses leads to an urgent call to action for communities.

“World Theatre Day is a time to celebrate the joy, value, and contribution of theatre in our society. But before we do that, we need to acknowledge the challenging context many theatre artists are facing,” says PACT Executive Director Brad Lepp. “It is clear that the impacts of the current economic and social climate are being disproportionately felt, and Canada’s theatres are on a different recovery trajectory. Without immediate support from all partners, we face losing many of our theatres, stories, and voices”.

The Current State of Canadian Theatre:

- PACT members report an average increase of 35-41% in operating expenses from 2019;
- National audience participation remains 46% below 2019;
- Philanthropic donations are down 45%;
- Government funding has not grown with the sector, leading to significant decrease in purchasing power.

While these statistics demonstrate the unfortunate realities facing Canadian theatres, there are ways forward to safeguard and support Canada’s incredibly important centres of arts and culture.

The Opportunity

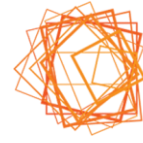
World-class theatre is being created every day across this country, by companies large and small, rural and urban. With studies reporting a national rise in feelings of loneliness and isolation, Canada’s theatres offer a vital opportunity. Theatre is about connection – the spark between audience and performers as the curtain rises, the shared experience as a community, and the conversations that linger after the final bow.

“We got a taste of life without these moments over the last few years. We stayed home, we isolated as we were told to do,” says Jani Lauzon, award-winning theatre artist and 2024 Canadian Ambassador for World Theatre Day. “And now we are faced with a choice; be complacent or rally together to ensure that our ability to be together, learning about each other, remains an important part of our lives.”

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An Urgent Call to Action:

PACT is encouraging all Canadians to get involved and support their local theatre companies this March through three simple actions:

1. Book a ticket to go see a show and post about it using #GoSeeAShow . Not sure where to start? You can find a map of national theatres and event listings by visiting: [PACT.ca/Map](https://pact.ca/Map)
2. Contact their elected officials at all levels to increase public support, by visiting: [Show your Support for Canadian Theatres! | New Mode](#)
3. Encourage others by sharing a favourite theatre experience on social media using the hashtags #RallyForTheatre and #WorldTheatreDay

We encourage media to connect with their local theatre companies to help amplify a local lens to this story.

ANNOUNCING WORLD THEATRE DAY 2024 AMBASSADORS

Launched in 1962, World Theatre Day is recognized annually on March 27, as an opportunity for theatre professionals, organizations, governments, and audiences to celebrate and promote the art form around the world.

March 20 - World Theatre Day for Youth and Children - Canada

The International Association of Theatres for Children and Young People Canada (ASSITEJ Canada) is proud to announce that **Bianca Richard** has been named Canada's Ambassador for World Theatre Day for Youth and Children. Richard is an award-winning actor, creator, puppeteer, and theatre and film writer. Her work spans television, theatre creation, and short film production. For more information, visit: [2024 World Day Ambassador: Bianca Richard \(assitej.ca\)](https://assitej.ca/2024-World-Day-Ambassador-Bianca-Richard).

March 27 – World Theatre Day – Canada

PACT and ATFC are proud to announce that celebrated actor, director playwright, and musician, **Jani Lauzon**, will serve as Canada's Ambassador for 2024. Lauzon is a multidisciplinary artist of Métis/French/Finnish ancestry. She is a 9-time Dora Mavor Moore nominated actress, a three-time Juno nominated singer/songwriter, a Gemini Award winning puppeteer, an award-winning director, and an artist educator. For more information, visit: [PACT.ca/WorldTheatreDay](https://pact.ca/WorldTheatreDay)

March 27 – World Theatre Day – International

The International Theatre Institute (ITI) has announced that **Jon Fosse**, eminent Norwegian writer and playwright, and 2023 Nobel Laureate in Literature, as the author of the World Theatre Day Message for 2024. His extensive body of work includes plays, novels, poetry collections, essays, children's books, and translations. Fosse's writing style is characterized by minimalism and emotional depth, making him one of the most performed playwrights in the world. For more information, visit: World-theatre-day.org

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For more information about World Theatre Day 2024 in Canada visit: PACT.ca/WorldTheatreDay

Background on the Impact of Canada's Cultural Sector:

- Canada's theatres created over 26,700 jobs last year;
- Canada's cultural sector accounts for 2.3% of the country's GDP;
- Canada's cultural sector employs 4.4% of Canadian workforce, more than the forestry and mining sectors combined;
- Cultural tourists stay longer and spend nearly *three-times* more while they're here, supporting other local businesses.

About PACT

PACT is the collective voice of professional Canadian theatres, a leader in the performing arts community, and a devoted advocate of the value of live performance. PACT represents over 160 professional English-speaking theatre companies operating in communities across the country, ranging from the largest performing arts organizations in Canada, to smaller theatre companies that serve their audiences in a wide variety of communities; from rural to urban, commercial to independent, theatre for young audiences to culturally specific, and everything else in between.

About the ATFC

The ATFC is a national arts service organization. It represents and serves 17 members – professional theatre companies operating in the Canadian Francophonie, along with some 400 independent artists working in their orbit.

About ASSITEJ Canada

ASSITEJ Canada is a membership-driven, non-profit, inclusive service organization. It supports and promotes the cross-cultural exchange of knowledge, development and practice in the professional performing arts for young audiences in order to increase creative co-operation and to deepen mutual understanding.

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Media Contact:

Ainslee Jessiman (English)
Membership & Communications Manager, PACT
ainsleej@pact.ca
416-595-6455 ext. 1519

Kevin Monchaux (French)
Communications Manager, ATFC
communications@atfc.ca
438-530-5445