

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1A 0A6

April 12, 2019

Dear Minister Rodriguez,

We learned last week, through various reports in the media and from the National Arts Centre's Artistic Director of Indigenous Theatre, Kevin Loring, that funding was not increased by Canadian Heritage towards National Arts Centre programming. It is our understanding that this funding increase was to be allocated for Indigenous Theatre. We appreciate the challenges that occur within the budgetary process, especially for those organizations who receive direct operational funding as a crown corporation. However, on behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) I request that you to continue to build support for the funding of Indigenous theatre programming in Canada.

We celebrated the creation of this necessary and important company at our National Arts Centre and have followed their journey in preparing for their first season. We listened, rapt, as Mr. Loring addressed our membership as keynote at PACT's annual gathering in 2018, as he told us that "the future of Canadian theatre is Indigenous." We are ready to live these stories and are waiting for the wave of artistry to ripple throughout Canada's theatre community. Our nation, our communities, and audiences need to hear and experience these stories. Supporting and sharing these stories is a step towards reconciliation; an acknowledgement of Indigenous reality; and an uncovering of our real history.

Indigenous artists are a vital part of Canada's artistic milieu and their voices need to be nurtured and supported in order to be heard. We need to create and hold space where Indigeneity can take centre stage and one of the ways of doing that is by ensuring the existence, capacity and growth of the NAC - Indigenous Theatre.

PACT, along with its member companies, stand in solidarity with our colleagues who are producing and participating in the Indigenous Theatre, both at the NAC and across the country. We want to work with you to find solutions that ensure Indigenous theatre programming is undertaken. Outstanding, powerful and innovative theatre is being and has been created by Indigenous artists across the

country – and by ensuring the NAC’s Indigenous company’s future, their voices and stories will be expanded and amplified.

We applaud you as a champion of culture and minority rights and appreciate the daily support and recognition that you give to the arts in Canada. We applaud the increase to the Canada Arts Presentation Fund as well as the investments your government has made to support Indigenous productions in several sectors. Now is the time to also extend financial support into Indigenous theatre and the artistic institutions that keep Indigenous theatrical work growing. We call upon you to champion this need, both in advance of the next election and a part of the next Parliament.

Respectfully yours,



Boomer Stacey
Interim Executive Director

cc. Bonnie Green, Stratford Festival, PACT Director with the Advocacy portfolio

