

**A statement from the Toronto Fringe regarding the denial of funding for the National Arts Centre's Indigenous Theatre Program.**

April 5, 2019 (Toronto, ON) – We at the Toronto Fringe stand in solidarity with our colleagues in the arts community in expressing our concern regarding the denial of \$3.5 million worth of funding for the National Arts Centre's Indigenous Theatre program in the 2019 Federal Budget. We have read, in dismay, the letter that Kevin Loring, Artistic Director of the NAC's Indigenous Theatre program, has written about the funding denial. [This is the letter we are referring to.](#)

Upon reading this letter, and others from artistic leaders in the country, we were shocked and disappointed by the lack of foresight and understanding that the federal government has displayed. To hear that "the scope of any subsequent seasons remains in question" (according to [this cbc.ca article published on April 2, 2019](#)) is unacceptable to us.

We know that essential funding requests come from all over the country, but:

**We feel that the time is now for investment in Indigenous Arts and Theatre. We simply cannot wait any longer.**

We believe in the power of theatre and storytelling to forge connections and build bridges. To quote Kevin Loring from the letter cited above, "Our stories are medicine."

As arts-makers and arts-goers, we testify that these are exactly the stories that we want. That we need.

We remember that, coast-to-coast-to-coast, the Canadian theatre community celebrated upon the creation of the Indigenous Theatre wing at the NAC. To see financial support of this program falter in just a couple years is shocking.

How, during what is supposed to be a time of reconciliation with Indigenous Nations, is the decision to deny funding to the NAC's Indigenous Theatre Section upholding the calls to action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada?

**We call upon Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, and the Department of Canadian Heritage to reverse or reconsider this decision in the 2019 Federal Budget so that the Indigenous Theatre program can move ahead as planned.**

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

The Toronto Fringe