

PACTcon 2025: Halifax

Event: Opening Event, May 21
Time: 9:00 AM
Location: Fountain Hall Stage @ Neptune Theatre
Remarks: Kathryn Westoll, Board President

WELCOME

Welcome to PACTcon 2025 in beautiful Halifax or Kijipuktuk.

First, a heartfelt thank you to our incredible hosts - Eastern Front Theatre, Neptune Theatre, Two Planks and a Passion, and the Ross Creek Centre - as well as the dedicated PACT staff for curating such inspiring programming and for bringing us together in this breathtaking setting. I also want to acknowledge the many circles of support that lift each of us up - whether at home or in our organizations - to allow us this time to gather, share, and envision. That is no small gift, and what a privilege it is to be here.

One of the guiding principles of PACT that Sarah and I are committed to keeping at the heart of everything we do, is that we are a hub, not a club. This powerful vision, beautifully articulated by past President and VP Nina and Mike, has shaped how the PACT Board and staff foster an inclusive, dynamic space.

Yet, walking into a room full of unfamiliar faces can be daunting. If this is your first PACTcon or one of your firsts - WELCOME! You belong here. Please don't hesitate to tap any of us on the shoulder with questions, curiosities, or ideas. There is no need to worry about what you don't yet know - this space is built on shared learning and collective support.

For those who have returned time and again - WELCOME BACK! You are the backbone of this community, carrying incredible insight and experience. If someone taps you on the shoulder, recognize the invaluable wisdom you hold and the gift of passing it forward. Because here, we learn from each other.

Yes, we are all working tirelessly, and yes, the challenges of our sector persist, but for these precious days together, let's rise above the weight of daily operations and take a breath. Let's embrace this conference as a rare opportunity to dream boldly and envision fearlessly. The beauty of PACTcon is that we come from different roles, perspectives, and backgrounds—each of us seeing the world through a distinct lens. That diversity isn't just valuable - it's essential. So let's lean into it. Let's tap into the richness of our collective knowledge. Let's build, inspire, and uplift each other. Because this space, this time together, is ours to shape.

Wherever you or your organization find yourselves in this moment - know that it's okay. In that spirit, can we take a collective breath, set aside the daily demands, and fully embrace this time

together? The work of theatre is built on big visions - on dreaming beyond the present and imagining new ways of creating, collaborating, and uplifting each other.

So let's lean into that spirit. Let's listen deeply, participate fully, and spark conversations that inspire us. This gathering is a chance to absorb the tenacity, drive, passion, artistry, and pure magic that this membership embodies.

Thank you for being here. Thank you for bringing your energy, insights, and imagination. Have a wonderful week!