

Shuswap Theatre AGM Report - TotE 2025

This year's Theatre on the Edge (TotE) festival continued to challenge and expand definitions of what theatre is and can be. Audiences were invited to participate in new forms of storytelling and witness art that reflects their own lives and the places they call home.

In its second year of collaborating with the Salmon Arm Arts Council (SAAC), Shuswap Theatre strives to fulfill its mandate of *"enriching the lives of community and theatre members through diverse and inspiring live entertainment"*, by continuing to nurture this ever-evolving event as it increases its impact within the community and the national arts scene. The festival creates space for professional artists, from both local and afar, to share their live works with engaged audiences and builds more opportunities for emerging artists to learn, share and grow within a supportive and diverse arts environment.

This summer, audiences will have noticed a spreading of the festival's footprint through the downtown core, activating venues like the Art Gallery and the outdoor Ross Street Plaza to create a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere. Our 2025 festival opened at Song Sparrow Hall with an Indigenous Land Welcome and Storytelling with Kenthen Thomas and Friends and a free Community Meal. Runaway Moon Theatre curated our Saturday Morning line-up at the Ross St. Stage and the Vancouver/Sunshine Coast based theatre company, The Only Animal collaborated with the curated exhibit at the Salmon Arm Art Gallery to bring us a series of guided conversations led by Joyce Rosario in Critical Response Theory, paired with local artists exploring a sense of place through performance.

And of course, our home stage here at Shuswap Theatre, once again welcomed some challenging, moving, and awe inspiring works of art from an impressive selection of international performers. One of the most appreciated parts of this festival is the built-in opportunity for audiences to connect directly with the performers and inquire about their form and practice. Performers are also very curious about our audiences and love exploring the greater Shuswap area.

Another highlight from this year's programming was our youth participant entry from first time director Leah Parenteau. It is a value to both Shuswap Theatre and the TotE festival that youth in the arts and culture sector are cultivated with an eye toward long-term success and leadership within the arts community. We echo this sentiment by incorporating youth participation on our planning and production teams.

Onstage or off, the TotE-festival is a place where voices are shared, unexpected connections happen and relationships are built through this highly diverse art form of theatre. As ever, I would like to thank the board and members of Shuswap Theatre for continuing to back this venture as it continues to expand within the community and arts world, nurturing more art, more expression and more connection.