

# Shuswap Theatre AGM Report / TotE 2026

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Theatre on the Edge came alive at Shuswap Theatre again this summer for its 12th season. What began as a curiosity at Shuswap Theatre for alternative ways to bring more theatre to our stage, has grown into a Salmon Arm Summer Staple and an ever-expanding conversation about what performance art is and can be.

Now co-produced with the Salmon Arm Arts Centre, this year's TotE Festival created an inclusive, welcoming space where artists and audiences connected through performance, storytelling, and shared experiences. The festival successfully showcased a broad spectrum of local and visiting artists, from emerging creators to established professionals, while celebrating diverse voices and artistic practices. Interactive programming—including artist talkbacks, workshops, open mic sessions, and development presentations—invited audiences to move beyond passive observation and become active participants in the creative process.

We began once again with a community meal and Stseptékwll (Storytelling) Festival Opening Welcome from local Secwepmec Storyteller, Kenthen Thomas who helped design the evening. This kick off event helped establish a sense of place and belonging and set a collaborative tone for the weekend, while comedy, experimental theatre, and contemporary performance attracted a wide range of audiences all weekend. The festival also supported Indigenous leadership by providing opportunities for a local Two-Spirit Indigenous artist to MC the event, inspiring additional community participation, artistic sharing and further developing our ongoing relationship with Rise Up Indigenous Wellness and the urban indigenous community.

We are tremendously proud of our programming this year. Vancouver based improv troupe, The Sunday Service had the audience in stitches. Newworld Theatre, also of Vancouver installed their visually stunning and deeply moving *Eyes of the Beast*; verbatim theatre created from first hand accounts of survivors of climate disaster.

National stage combat masters, Affair of Honour delighted us with their show *Multi-VS*, a fast paced feast of fighting choreography and comedy, as well as hosting popular combat and sword workshops post festival. Big shows by Local Artists included *Circus Gothic*, with Jan Kudelka, *The HDVA* (an interactive board game) by Cameron Shook, and Runaway Moon's work-in-development was in-development with *Where in the World Are We*. Also featured in our storytelling and works in development showcases were locals; Cara Nunn, Bev Peacock, Ben Dyck, Alex Sutton, Angie Muhawenimana and Manny Christjensen in sessions with Emelia Symington Fedy of The Chop Theatre and Vicki Stroich of Caravan Farm Theatre.

Risks were taken.

We want everyone to be able to see theatre and feel welcome. Our Pay What You Choose admission model continued to reduce financial barriers and welcomed audiences who may not otherwise have attended. Artists consistently praise the festival's thoughtful hospitality and supportive atmosphere, fostering relationships that will extend beyond the event itself.

Overall, Theatre on the Edge strengthened community connections, expanded access to the arts, encouraged creative risk-taking, and reinforced Salmon Arm's growing reputation as a vibrant centre for innovative theatre and performance.

Thank you so much to all who attended, we can't wait to see you next year!