

- FOR RELEASE NO SOONER THAN WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD -

PACIFIC THEATRE ANNOUNCES KAITLIN WILLIAMS AS NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

VANCOUVER, BC - SEPT 23 - Today, Pacific Theatre's Board of Directors announced the appointment of Kaitlin Williams as the company's new Artistic Director.

I am humbled and grateful to be stepping into this leadership role with Pacific Theatre, a company which has been formative in my development as an artist and a home for many years. I am eager to serve the artists and audience who are as passionate about PT as I am, and who want to join me in continuing to expand our community.

- Kaitlin Williams

Williams began her career in 2009 as an apprentice with Pacific Theatre. She has since become a familiar face on both the Pacific stage and in the broader Vancouver theatre community as an actor and director. Her credits include work for Bard on the Beach, the Arts Club, the Belfry, ITSAZOO, Delinquent Theatre, the Electric Company, Chemainus Theatre, Western Canada Theatre, Touchstone Theatre, Rumble Theatre and many others. Shows she directed have received 8 Jessie nominations, including outstanding ensemble (*Almost, Maine*) and outstanding production and direction (*Kim's Convenience*).

Kaitlin is the perfect choice to carry on the beautiful work that Ron Reed began into the next chapters at Pacific Theatre. Working with her on Kim's Convenience has truly been one of my best theatre experiences ever. I know she will contribute so much to the evolving world of theatre.

- James Yi, 'Appa' in *Kim's Convenience*

Williams succeeds Pacific Theatre's founding Artistic Director Ron Reed. Reed co-founded the company in 1984, shaping it from a small collective of artists meeting in church basements and kitchens to the full-scale Pacific Theatre of 2020. Under his tenure, the company has produced over 150 professional productions, provided opportunities for hundreds of emerging artists, and developed and premiered dozens of new Canadian plays, including: *Espresso*, *A Bright Particular Star*, *Prodigal Son*, *Navy Wife*, *Tent Meeting*, *Cariboo Magi*, *Mercy Wild*, *Book of the Dragon*, *Suitcase Stories*, *Bar Mitzvah Boy*, *Jesus Freak*, *Gramma*, and *Tolkien*, many of which have gone on to subsequent runs at other professional theatres around the world. "I am thrilled with the decision," said Reed. "Kaitlin has a long history with our company and knows its ethos and mandate in her bones - as well as having her own ideas about how we need to move into the next chapter of the theatre's history." Reed, now Artistic Director Emeritus, will remain in an advisory capacity for the season as Pacific Theatre returns to COVID-safe operations model. Said Williams, "I take on this role with a profound respect and appreciation for the artistic legacy that Ron has established. I myself am joining an incredible staff ready to tackle the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead along with a committed and engaged Board of Directors."

After over a decade of preparation, the Board of Directors launched the official search for our new Artistic Director this past spring. An advisory group made up of artists, patrons and past Board members helped screen and interview an impressive pool of candidates from across Canada over the summer. The calibre of the talent we attracted is a testament to the legacy of Ron and the reputation Pacific Theatre has built nationally. We dearly wish we could have

hired many of them and thank them for engaging with us in a rigorous application process. The final decision was a difficult one, made solely by the Board of Directors after much prayerful deliberation. Ultimately Kaitlin emerged as the bold, courageous, experienced and innovative artist we'd like to see lead Pacific Theatre, alongside Jennifer Milley and our staff team, into the future.

- Steffen Janzen, Pacific Theatre Board President

In a time of enormous change and re-evaluation for the theatre community at large, Williams says she sees the enforced break in the wheel of production as an opportunity to chart paths to new theatrical models and practices. "One of my first jobs is to champion the company's continuing work in the areas of justice and inclusion," she said. "This summer, Pacific Theatre created an anti-racism working group composed of staff, board and community members. We've also engaged a consultant to work with us over the coming months. More details can be found on our [website](#) and as we have more to share about specific action steps we will do so with transparency. Anti-racism work is immense, ongoing and needs to be woven into the fabric of our company. I am committed whole-heartedly and I join an equally dedicated board and staff."

This is a difficult time for theatre that requires flexibility, creativity, and empathy from arts leaders. This is Kaitlin. I can't think of a better person to take on the artistic leadership of Pacific Theatre and I am incredibly excited to see what she has in store for Vancouver audiences.

- Chelsea Haberlin, ITSAZOO Productions

Williams' first project, and the return to performance for the company at large, is a remount of Maki Yi's one-woman show *Suitcase Stories*, which Yi developed during her own Pacific Theatre apprenticeship in 2016. *Suitcase Stories* traces Maki's journey from South Korea to Canada and her experiences forging an identity in a new culture and career. The show will open in October. "*Suitcase Stories* is a perfect way to welcome back our audience, and I'm so happy to begin my time at Pacific by featuring Maki's incredible talent and spirit. My vision for PT is that we are known for a culture of equity, inclusion and broad community engagement--all while continuing to tell stories that rigorously explore the mysteries of life with artistic excellence."

The PT board would particularly like to thank the members of the AD Succession Committee: Nelson Boschman, Tom Pickett, Morris Ertman, Suzanne Mogan, and Violet Goosen. Their efforts on behalf of PT were invaluable to the Board during this six-month undertaking.

About Pacific Theatre

Pacific Theatre aspires to delight, provoke and stimulate dialogue by producing theatre that rigorously explores the spiritual aspects of human experience. In over 35 seasons, Pacific Theatre has produced more than 150 professional mainstage productions ranging from established works to original world premieres featuring some of the top theatre artists from Vancouver and across the continent.

Practitioners at Pacific Theatre work on the traditional and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Alongside its professional productions, Pacific Theatre is committed to the development of emerging artists, fostering new work, creating an artistic home for established practitioners, and engaging the community at large.