



**Vancouver Fringe Festival Society
Board President's Report
July 28, 2023**

Hi, I'm Leslie Carty and I'm the 'new' Chair of the Board of the Vancouver Fringe Festival Society. I grew up in Vancouver on unceded Coast Salish land, the daughter of a nurse and midwife and political scientist. I am a mother, wife, dog mom, and sewist and I have been a donor to the Fringe since my 20's. I have a BFA in theatre and now live off the Seymour River near Tsleil-Waututh, also known as North Vancouver. I have been on the Board of the Fringe since July 2016 and a theatre-lover since childhood. I took up the post of President from Claudia Sjoberg after our last AGM in November.

While only 8 months since our last AGM, there has been transition. We spent the Fall reconciling the festival – both financially and assessing successes and opportunities.

We now find ourselves in an extremely precarious financial position. This is due to many reasons - energy, focus, financial realities of partners and community. The forever challenge in our planning is that many decisions are made into the lead up of the festival and during the festival and once made, there is little turning back in terms of our budget. The bulk of our monies spent and outcomes are based on this. We have been fortunate to have COVID supports as well as post COVID grants and funds over the last several years. With a focus on making ourselves a living wage employer in BC and an attractive organization to work for, to grow arts administrators for our community, we need to look at other avenues of raising money. We also need to be dialed in to exactly how, why, and what we are spending our money on and I'm confident that in the last four months we have gotten ourselves to a place where we truly understand the financial position we are in. That being said, the current fiscal climate is something that Fringes across the country (and North America more generally) are facing. We have seen articles in several newspapers about it, and we are taking a hard look at what we are going to be able to produce in September 2024.

We are looking at how we can be more transparent, and I'm extremely appreciative of our Executive Director, Duncan Watts-Grant in pushing and prioritizing a Transparency Report for this year. You will see the report in this package, and we welcome feedback about what other information may be of interest.

Since the Spring, we have been making the rounds, reintroducing ourselves, engaging with our partners and listening to learn and understand. I am excited about the new staff that are coming on the team, the partnership and intention our seasonal contractors show up with, and the culture we are looking to meaningfully create.

At our last AGM, we said goodbye to Claudia Sjoberg, Jim Sibley, Jai Djwa, and Nancy More. We welcomed and voted-in Meg Comiskey and Joey Levesque and since our last AGM we did a rolling recruitment and have welcomed Hassan Pardawalla, Rob Beggs, and Ally Schuurman to the team. We are currently undergoing a Board matrix to ensure that we can do specific and thoughtful recruitment to be able to best support the society to succeed.

For our committees, we have decided that we are going to be open spots on each committee to non-board members. This is a great way for folks to get to know us, dip their toe in the fringe water (so to speak) and see what the fit may be for further involvement. An opportunity to connect with the Board will be during the Festival on Saturday, September 9th at 3pm at the bar. We would love to chat.

A very deep appreciation and THANKS – for your time, interest, passion, and opinions. Now more than ever, we need you and I am asking for your support – financial and / or time. We are rebuilding and we are in need! It's time to Fringe!

Executive Director:
Duncan Watts-Grant

Chair of the Board:
Leslie Carty

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