



*How It Can Be Heavy*

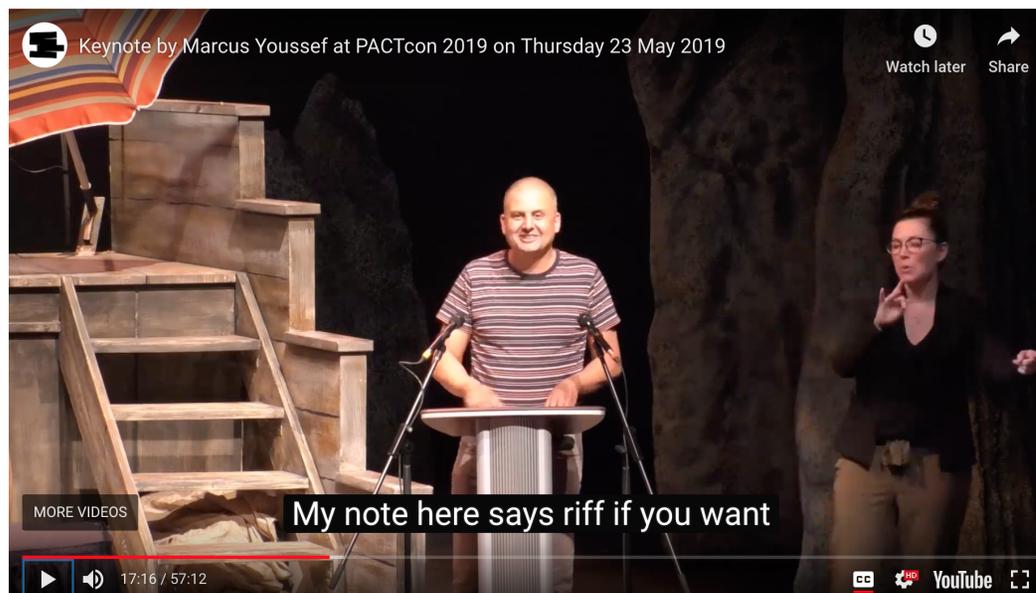
resources for  
**ADVANCING EQUITY**  
in Canadian Performing Arts

#TakeAction



Image posted by [fjaugen](#)

## Serve Communities



“I believe that theatre institutions that were set up 50 or so years ago were mandated to serve communities, which tended like most majority groups... to be largely unaware that the shows they were making... were not in fact universal, but specific. They were not inevitable, but constructed. A product of a particular time and place.”

[PACTcon 2019 Keynote](#) by Marcus Youssef, Newworld Theatre

## Resonances

Advancing equity is hard in so many ways.

There are any number of concerns that can cause hesitation or paralysis when contemplating a change-making action.

Consider the following sentiments. Do any of these resonate with you?

- I don't know where to begin. I don't know who/how to ask
- I want those I work with to be fired up; I don't want to have to push them.
- I'm hesitant to make a mistake that might hurt the company
- I'm hesitant to make a mistake that might hurt the community
- My audience isn't ready
- I have obligations to my current artistic community
- I'm afraid to look stupid or, worse, ignorant
- My resources are already stretched to the limit
- I don't feel equipped to make the necessary decisions
- I can't afford to invest in an action whose outcomes are uncertain
- I lack applicable examples of best practise
- I don't know if I'd survive a call out
- Someone else is already doing it better
- I just need a little support

*(These provocations were read aloud during the PACTcon 2019 ALL IN Plenary, each followed by a minute of reflection)*

Pull Quotes from PACTcon 2019

"WE HAVE TO BREAK THE SYSTEM AND I THINK WE ARE FOOLING OURSELVES  
IF WE THINK WE CAN DO THAT WITHOUT GIVING ANYTHING UP."

LOUISA FERGUSON, DANCING SKY

"WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHERE WE ARE UNSAFE VERSUS WHEN WE ARE UNCOMFORTABLE."

JOHN LOEPPKY, THE OTHER ORDINARY

"COLLECTIVELY, I HOPE WE CAN ALL CONTINUE TO BE THE SEEDS,  
AND CONTINUE TO BE THE THUNDERING HOOVES."

BOOMER STACEY, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PACT

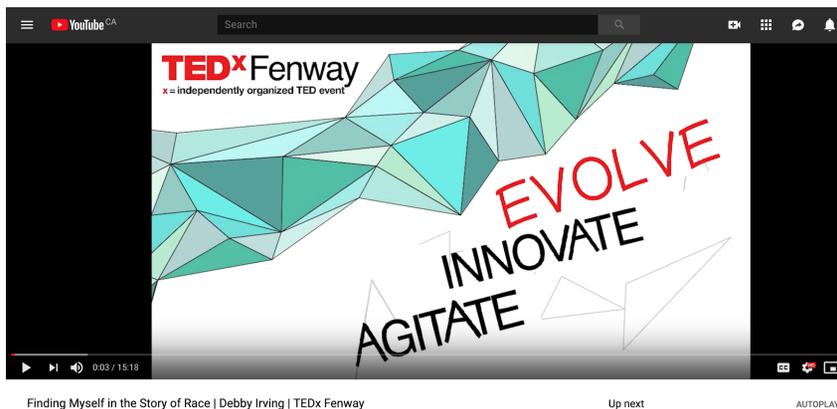
## Watch & Consider



Equity. Diversity. Inclusion. All defined in American Sign Language.

Diversity and Inclusion Charter of Peel (closed captioned)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-IO5DYczZY>



“I realized in that moment that racism was not just prejudice, racism was the power to put prejudice into life-defining laws and policies.”

Finding Myself in the Story of Race | Debby Irving | TEDx Fenway

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oD5Ox5XNEpg>

## Read & Reflect

“The first thing is **amplifying the voices** of people of color and women of color. Hit the retweet button.

Something I've talked about is like, are you comfortable with having Black women's faces or Black people's faces on your timeline?”

From [Why White Allyship Isn't Enough](#) by Danielle Kwateng-Clark (Vice ~ February 4, 2019)

“ “[I]f we're good people, then we recognize the humanity in everyone,” said Jones, “ **and we fight** to make sure that those whose humanity is compromised get recognized for who they are and **we support them** in those efforts to live free.”“

From [Feminista Jones doesn't think you're an ally](#) on CBC Radio (Out In The Open ~ October 26, 2018)

Ibram Kendi's book, “[*Stamped from the Beginning*] shows that the actual foundation of racism is **not ignorance and hate**, but self-interest, particularly economic and political and cultural. **Self-interest drives racist policies** that benefit that self-interest.”

From [Ibram Kendi, One Of The Nation's Leading Scholars Of Racism, Says Education And Love Are Not The Answer](#) by Lonnae O'Neal (The Undefeated ~ September 20, 2017)

“For decades, white non-Indigenous scholars attributed **contrasting treaty histories** to “cultural misunderstanding” on the part of Indigenous people, framed as unwitting signatories. This is, at worst, a blatantly racist thesis that **requires an explicit challenge.**”

From [New look at treaty archives reminds us Canada was not built on Indigenous surrender](#) by Sarah Boivon (Rabble.ca ~ June 6, 2019)

Look Closer



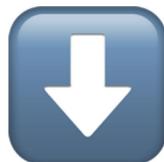
What does this exercise assume about your assumptions?



Photos by Chris Buck  
CNN [These Photos Are Meant To Turn Our Racial Assumptions On Their Head](#)

## Immediate Action

What is something you are successfully doing to advance equity?



How can you take that success a step further?



Who can you invite to challenge you to go further?

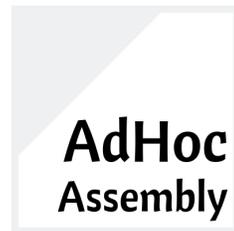


**Go for it.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We encourage you to share this material, and to support the creators of the work in meaningful and material ways, if you are inspired by their thinking.

This open-source resource was compiled by Cole Alvis & Donna-Michelle St. Bernard, ADHOC Assembly, as part of the ALL IN program, with thanks for support from the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT).



*July 2019*