



March 28, 2019

Attn:

Arden Ryshpan
Boomer Stacey
Nina Lee Aquino
Scott Bellis
Ivan Habel
the AHA membership

Dear Colleagues:

We appreciate that the labour relations negotiation now underway between your associations are complex and challenging. Having participated in this process, we appreciate the time and effort expended by committed professionals on both negotiating teams, as well as the difficulty of synthesizing the needs of an evolving arts community.

Historically, ADHOC Assembly (AHA) has advocated for theatre being made in models that accommodate or incorporate families, spiritual practise, interdisciplinarity, intercultural hybridity, community engagement in creation, etc. In labour relations, this has given rise to advocacy around flexible rehearsal models, reduction of quotas, bond structuring and inconsistent interpretation, among other issues.

We have long been told that the barriers created by the relevant clauses affect all producing organizations. However we all know that these barriers disproportionately impact organizations mandated to create work by Indigenous, Black, POC, mad and disabled artists.

It would be disingenuous to overlook the direct causal link between this barrier-laden environment and constrained participation by our members in CTA-contracted activity. While many in our community engage under the ACP, ITA or DOT, these 'agreements' are not agreed, negotiated with or accountable to engagers. They are de facto shaped by the implications of decisions made at the CTA table, and therefore we must be invested in this process. We

understand that the current CTA extension ends in June, and that CAEA has chosen to undergo review and revision of ITA ahead of that date.

It is our concern that standardized agreements for theatre have not kept pace with the changing landscape of Canadian theatre, specifically with regard to equity, access and cultural diversity. Instead, they seem designed to uphold colonial structures that limit participation, reinforcing European standards of excellence to the exclusion of an overwhelming number of artists, stories, practices. This, ultimately, leads to an overall stunted development of the industry and disservice to the community it serves.

We urge the members of both negotiating teams to be mindful of those not at the table, and to work in good faith towards an agreement that will make all Canadian theatre artists and organisations feel welcome in PACT, as full members, if they so choose, and create an environment in which membership in CAEA is seen as an empowering tool to have and not as a barrier to one's artistic practice, cultural expression, livelihood and free will.

The failure to ratify the CTA in 2018 should be received as a wakeup call that the status quo is no longer tenable for even the most privileged and well-resourced theatre makers in this country. Both PACT and CAEA have long purported to represent Canadian theatre; this is your opportunity to make that rhetoric reality.

If the collective agreement resulting from this negotiation does not demonstrate a radical shift in inclusion, we will understand that a choice was made to prioritize so-called "traditional theatre" at the expense of the equally valid theatre traditions of our systematically marginalized colleagues. It will signal to our members and yours that we are all welcome in the Canadian theatre milieu, so long as we are all willing to work in a way narrowly defined by your organizations as 'Theatre'.

You are in a position to advance equity through your work on this agreement. As you know, AHA 's constituency includes members of both PACT and CAEA. All of our members deserve more than permission to assimilate.

Respectfully,

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