



BULLETIN

Canadian Conference of the Arts ~ Conférence canadienne des arts

UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS WANT FAIR WORKING CONTRACT WITH BLUE MAN GROUP PRODUCTIONS

Ottawa, April 28, 2005 - Blue Man Group Productions is preparing to open a show in June in Toronto at the newly-renovated Panasonic Theatre (formerly the New Yorker Theatre), but the producers have repeatedly ignored the attempts of four Toronto theatrical unions and associations (Canadian Actors' Equity Association - CAEA, the Toronto Musicians' Association - TMA, and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees - IATSE, Locals 58 and 822) to negotiate contracts specifying base pay, benefits, and defined working conditions for performers and crew.

What these unions and associations want is to be able to guarantee that professional artists and technicians working in this stage production have a fair working contract. Additionally, they would like to ensure that Blue Man Group works on a level playing field with other professional producers, such as CanStage (The Overcoat, Urinetown) and Mirvish Productions (Lion King, Mamma Mia!, Hairspray). The following organizations are involved in the drive to get Blue Man to bargain:

- o CAEA, the professional association of performers, directors, choreographers, fight directors and stage managers in English Canada who are engaged in live performance in theatre, opera and dance.
- o IATSE has provided professional staging services to the Toronto entertainment, convention, and trade show industries for more than 100 years.
- o The TMA is a professional association of musicians in the Greater Toronto Area. It is part of a larger organization, the American Federation of Musicians of the U.S. and Canada (AFM), which encompasses both countries. The AFM's Canadian membership includes 16,000 musicians, 3,200 of whom belong to the TMA.

They appeal to members of the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) to boycott the purchase of Blue Man Group tickets until agreements are negotiated with CAEA, IATSE, and the TMA. You can also write the producer to request that negotiations commence immediately and visit the website www.blueboycott.com to sign their on-line protest petition and register any comments.

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To date, other organizations that have voiced their support include, in Ontario: the Ontario Federation of Labour, Ontario Teachers' Federation, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, OSSTF - District 12 (Toronto), Elementary Teachers of Toronto, Canadian Union of Public Employees (Local 4400), United Food and Commercial Workers, United Steel Workers, Union des artistes, ACTRA Toronto Performers, and ACTRA National. And internationally, there is support from: Actors' Equity Association (USA), IATSE International, AFM International, International Federation of Musicians, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Media and Entertainment Arts Alliance/Australian Equity, Syndicat Français des Artistes-interprètes, British Equity, Norwegian Actors' Equity Association, UNI-MEI (international), and the International Federation of Actors.

Timeline of events:

December 2004 - Canadian Actors' Equity Association, The American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada, and the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) instructed its members not to audition or accept an offer to perform in the



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Canadian Blue Man Group (BMG) production unless and until CAEA was successful in organizing the production under contract.

January 19, 2005 – An information picket is organized by CAEA, TMA – Local 149 of the AFM, and IATSE - Locals 58 and 822, at The Phoenix Concert Theatre (the location of the BMG media event to announce their arrival in Toronto).

April 5, 2005 – CAEA, TMA– Local 149 of the AFM, and IATSE - Locals 58 and 822 jointly launched a consumer boycott of Blue Man Group tickets.

April 13th, 2005 – NDP culture critic from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina), voices support for the boycott.

Artists are at the heart of the Canadian Conference of the Arts. We understand and respect their fundamental role in building and maintaining a creative, dynamic, and civil society. Since 1945, the CCA has have been working to ensure that artists can contribute freely and fully to Canadian society. The CCA advocates on behalf of artists in Canada to defend their rights, articulate their needs, and celebrate their accomplishments. “The full respect of professional artists’ rights is the foundation of any creative city,” says Jean Malavoy, National Director of the CCA.