

SID SOLOMON

Ansonia Station, P.O. Box 230312, New York, NY 10023
email sid@sidsolomon.com website www.sidsolomon.com

April 22nd, 2015

Fellow Members,

Yesterday, our Council voted to enact changes to the way that intimate Equity theater will be produced in Los Angeles. The changes are complex and multipronged, and for the sake of expediency I will not detail them here. If you haven't yet read them in full, I urge you to do so at members.actorsequity.org/99SeatDecision.

THE VOTE

First and foremost, I am disappointed with the speed and opacity with which this decision was made. I had hoped that the Council would see fit to delay any vote on changes to the 99-Seat Plan until after the current Council Election. Such a delay would have provided the members of Los Angeles (and those nationwide) a chance to seat new Councilors who share their views on this important issue, while also allowing for continued lobbying of the current Council by those members. **We are less than a week removed from the Los Angeles Referendum,** and to have enacted *any* changes so quickly on the heels of **such a resounding rejection of the original promulgated proposal** only serves to deepen the perception of dismissal by the Council (earned or not) that many members feel.

Furthermore, while we know that the Council voted to enact these changes, **we have not been made aware of the results of that vote, whether it was unanimous or divided, or how each Councilor cast their vote.** While there may be legitimate reasons for this secrecy, those reasons have not been made clear to the membership. As such (and as promised), I have no choice but to see this failure of transparency as a collective failure of the entire Council, and **therefore I will be forced to withhold my vote in the Council Election from any incumbent Councilor or Officer.** I hold out hope that the Council will either release the results of the vote, or make it plainly clear to the

membership-at-large why secrecy was chosen over transparency. If so, I may be persuaded to change my stance before the close of the Council Election.

THE CHANGES

I truly believe that the changes adopted by Council are a good faith attempt at compromise. They include provisions that have been lobbied for by Los Angeles members (the availability of the SPT Agreement, most notably), and they make important changes to the rules regarding Membership Companies, as well as providing a Code that allows Equity members to participate in some intimate theater productions without a contract. However you may feel about the enacted changes, **I encourage you to see this as evidence of engagement by the Council, and their ability to be persuaded by lobbying.**

That said, **I find these compromises to be imperfect**, and I am further frustrated that the lack of transparency as to how these decisions were reached lends them a quality of arbitrariness, and leaves many obvious questions unanswered:

Why is the new Showcase Code capped at 50 seats?

Why is the budget capped at \$20,000?

Why are performances capped at 16?

Why may it be used only 3 times per season?

Why create a Code that potentially pays actors less, not more, for their work on productions?

Does this new Code not potentially run afoul of California labor law in the same way we were lead to believe the original 99-Seat Plan did? If so, is that no longer a concern of the Council? And if not, why?

Why may members not avail themselves of 501c3 status or fiscal sponsorship under the LASPPC?

Why not include standard workplace protections within the Membership Company rule?

These and many other questions must be answered. Despite what I think are their best intentions, since we are given no context for how or why these decisions were made,

Council should therefore not be surprised that the manner in which they were made (as well as their motives for making them) may be questioned.

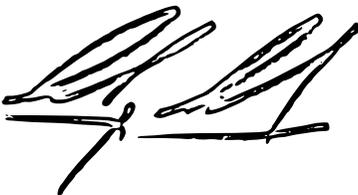
WHAT'S NEXT?

The most important change that was made by the Council yesterday can be found towards the top of the document, where it reads: "The Council voted to make substantial changes to the 99-Seat Theatre Plan that will eliminate the availability of the Plan." **In other words, the Plan as we know it is dead. And, more importantly, so are the Settlement Agreement and the Review Committee.**

In my private conversations with members of the Council, they have told me of their frustration with the strictures of the Settlement Agreement, specifically how it prevented them from engaging directly with members and producers about potential changes to the Plan. **Those limitations are now gone, and it is up to the Councilors to put their money where their mouths are.** I think they were wise to create a 13-month "implementation period" in which the former 99-Seat Plan will remain largely intact, and during which they have promised to "[reach] out to members to have small group discussions about these important changes." Already, they should be able to hear the voices of discontent in Los Angeles. **They now have 13 months to reach out to the intimate theater community in Los Angeles, collaboratively fine-tune these changes, and get them right. In so doing, they may begin to renew the faith of Equity members in their Council.**

Personally, I sincerely hope to be a member of this body soon, and hope to help lead the way to a better, more perfect plan for the continued survival (and prosperity) of Los Angeles' intimate theater scene.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name with a horizontal line underneath.

Sid Solomon

Candidate for Eastern Principal Councilor

tinyurl.com/SIDforAEA

facebook.com/SIDforAEA

#SIDforAEA