

THEATRICAL STAGE EMPLOYEES



Organized 1886

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Affiliated 1893

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PLEASE POST

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Actor's Equity, Musicians Local 802, Operating Engineers Local 30, Teamsters Local 817, ATPAM, Local 306, Local 751, Local 764, Local 798, Local 829 and Local 32BJ:

This past Tuesday evening at curtain time, the producers put out a press release announcing that they intended to implement onerous work rules on Local One. An hour later, they backed off, sending a second release saying they would implement on Monday, October 22.

Local One found out about the producers' latest moves when Mayor Michael Bloomberg called James J. Claffey, Jr., President of Local One, to offer his help, which the union respectfully declined. Nobody at the League of American Theatres and Producers had the courtesy to call the Local One President.

From moment to moment, no one seems to know which work rules the League intends to implement from their expansive list of demands. That's what Local One has been dealing with during these negotiations. It started three years ago when the League verbally threatened Local One at the table, while also initiating an assessment on every ticket sold to the public to create a \$20 million war chest to break our Union.

Some additional background: on September 7, after only five introductory meetings and on the day hard bargaining was to begin, Bernard Plum, the League's lead negotiator, declared that September 30 would be a day of reckoning. On October 9, the League presented its final offer to Local One and the press at the same time. Their final offer was not written for Local One, but for the media.

Ignoring the League's deadline, Local One put its entire book on the table and, as Local One President James J. Claffey, Jr. has declared publicly and privately, the Union addressed nearly every item on the producers' list and offered imaginative solutions that met the producers' requests.

We are professionals and unashamed to state that we are defending good middle class jobs that pay our mortgages, feed our families and allow our children to attend good schools.

The producers' numbers, so widely distributed, are misleading at best and often bogus.

Their press release celebrated an offer of 16.5% increase in wages. But the producers failed to mention their offer was accompanied by a 38% cut in jobs and income.

We are the caretakers of the theatre, the protectors of the workplace. We keep it safe for all of us. Six days a week, sometimes seven, we are the first to arrive and last to leave.

The producers' attack on flymen is ignorant to the basic safety concerns in any theater. Without a flyman, who would be addressing safety problems over head? Who would be checking rigging eight times a week? Who is the first line of defense against any fire in the fly space?

Why do you think there are still fire hooks and extinguishers, *by law*, located on the fly floors? And, if there were not a flyman on the grid, how long do you think it would take for someone on the stage to reach that fire-fighting equipment?

Automation? We've long embraced it. Local One is more productive thanks to automation. We've modernized along with the newest technology. We build, install, manage, and repair all of it. We operate safely tons of scenery moving around in the dark and at breakneck speed without injury to you or us.

The producers will also fail to tell you and the press that Local One labor over the last few decades remains 8% of the overall cost of producing a Broadway show. We get raises only when negotiated, but the producers raise ticket prices with every new hit, not to mention \$450 premium pricing.

The attack on the working professionals of Local One by the League now and you later is all about profit (although they only put losses in their recent press releases).

Last year, the League announced Broadway box office grosses of \$939 million. Secret is the income from licensing, secondary rights, film rights and the hugely lucrative merchandise sales.

The biggest secret of all is the producers' real profits.

In these negotiations, we put everything on the table except the safety of the stage crew and everyone entering the theater. The producers' attack on minimums is an attack on the safety and efficiency of the load-in of shows. It is also an insulting failure to recognize the size, the scope and the technical difficulty of the work we perform and the industry that is our life.

We stand ready to resume negotiations at any time and we stand ready to defend ourselves from the implementation of unsafe, unsound and unacceptable work rules that the producers are threatening to enact.

We are Local One. We are all under attack.

Respectfully and Fraternaly,

The Membership of Local No. One