

FORMAL STATEMENT BY INNOVATION ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

REGARDING THE PERFORMANCES BY BILL COSBY

IN KITCHENER, LONDON, AND HAMILTON, ONTARIO

(Chicago, IL) First and foremost: In no uncertain terms, the men and women of IAE condemn physical violence in any form. We recommend that anyone who has experienced the pain of sexual violence, reach out to helpful organizations in Western Ontario who may provide access to resources, social services, and advocacy.

Kitchener

Sexual Assault Centre of Waterloo Region
Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region

151 Frederick Street, Kitchener, ON N2H 2M2 (519) 571-0121
562 Concession Road, Cambridge, ON N3H 4L2 (519) 653-2289

London

London Abused Women's Centre
Women's Community House

797 York Street - Unit 5 London, ON N5W 6A8 (519) 432-2204
101 Wellington Road London, Ontario N6C 4M7 (519) 642-3003

Hamilton

SACHA
Good Shepherd Women's Services

75 MacNab Street South Hamilton, ON L8P 3C1 (905) 525-4573
30 Pearl Street North Hamilton, ON L8R 2Y8 (905) 523-8766

We also speak on behalf of our host venues in Southwestern Ontario by stating that they as well condemn physical violence of all kinds. The fact that an artist is performing on stages at each of these venues is no endorsement, in any way, of behavior of that artist. These three performance centers have been maligned in the press and public forums for a situation they did not invite, and with which they are limited to the extent they can address because of a commitment to the rule of law and written agreements in place.

In March of 2014, IAE entered into an agreement with representatives for Bill Cosby to perform January 7-9, 2015 in Kitchener, London, and Hamilton, Ontario. Subsequent rental agreements were signed for Centre in the Square in Kitchener, Budweiser Gardens in London, and Hamilton Place in Hamilton to host the IAE managed events. Contracts were executed with both venues and artists, locking all parties into legally binding obligations for services for the artist.

As is standard in the entertainment industry, artist performance contracts are legally enforceable with severe penalties for breach. If an artist is prepared and able to perform, the promoter of the event is legally obligated to pay said artist in full for their services whether or not any tickets are sold or the event goes on as planned. All parties would then be in breach of contract if they, in any way, fail to produce the show, including promoter or venue mandated cancellation of the engagements. Legally, a cancellation "option" does not exist. If the contracted artist plans to appear, IAE and the venue, are contractually, and legally bound to enable it. Failure to fulfill this obligations will expose each party to compensatory legal action, and the prospect of significant financial damage that, as a small business, would be insurmountable.

As recently as this morning, IAE has been informed by Mr. Cosby's representatives that he has every intent to perform these events. As such we are honoring the terms of the contracts signed by all parties so as to not be in breach, which we fully understand is an unpopular, but undeniable fact. While we understand and empathize this is a difficult time, we hope it is understood that both the venues and IAE are legally obligated to proceed as it applies to our commitments, and that we would face crippling legal obstacles for violation.

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In acknowledgement of the concerns expressed by ticket holders about protests, we are working with each venue's security directors, along with local police, and private security companies to ensure the safety of our valued audience. While it is disappointing for the need to worry about the theater being a place for planned protests, we are fully prepared to protect our audience, and provide for their safety. We commit to cooperation with all parties to execute these events as smoothly as we have for the last twenty years.

As advocates of the liberties we enjoy as Canadians and Americans working together, we encourage people to speak their minds, and to engage in a meaningful conversation about the issues of violence against women. We are concerned about the vitriol being directed towards our friends and colleagues at three great performing arts and entertainment institutions in Ontario that have flawlessly performed their obligations in spite of a very difficult situation. Each of these venues deserve not to be solely measured by the performance of Mr Cosby, but by the full contribution they make to their communities. IAE requests that concern about the artist not be directed at the venues, as they have not played a role in this, or any artists's actions, nor were they responsible for booking the events

We call on those organizing events, to publicly condemn violence as a means of protest, and to speak loudly in support of peaceful protest, and to respect the safety of all attendees.

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