



For Immediate Release

March 31, 2005

BLUE MAN GROUP CONSUMER BOYCOTT ANNOUNCED

NATIONAL – Canadian Actors' Equity Association, the Toronto Musicians' Association – Local 149 of the American Federation of Musicians, and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees - Locals 58 and 822 announce the launch of a consumer boycott of BLUE MAN GROUP tickets and our protest website www.bluelmanboycott.com.

Blue Man Group Productions is preparing to open a production in Toronto at the newly-renovated Panasonic Theatre (formerly the New Yorker Theatre). Blue Man Group producers have repeatedly ignored our attempts to negotiate contracts specifying base pay, benefits and defined working conditions with Canadian Actors' Equity Association (Equity), the Toronto Musicians' Association (TMA) and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Locals 58 and 822. We have undertaken a joint consumer boycott in order to pressure the producers to negotiate fair and equitable contracts with artists and technicians.

We call on the public to boycott the purchase of Blue Man Group tickets until agreements are negotiated with Equity, IATSE and the TMA. We ask that the public support our boycott and write the producer to demand that negotiations commence immediately. We invite concerned citizens to visit our website at www.bluelmanboycott.com, sign the on-line protest petition, and register any comments.

Blue Man Group's incursion into Toronto is evidence of the increasing corporatization of Canadian arts and culture. Martin Long, President of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto urges his members to resist "this Wal-Mart style intrusion into the Toronto theatre scene" in support of the boycott initiative.

Every major theatrical producer in Toronto adheres to agreements with Equity, the TMA and IATSE. By refusing to negotiate a contract with the relevant associations and unions, Blue Man Group is undercutting legitimate producers like Canadian Stage (*The Overcoat*, *Ain't Misbehavin*) and Mirvish Productions (*Mamma Mia!*, *Hairspray*, *Lord of the Rings*). These producers provide Toronto with top-quality shows that draw audiences from near and far. We demand that this producer work on a level playing field with other professional producers.

Media and special guests are invited to attend a media conference on Tuesday, April 5th, announcing the official launch of the Blue Man Group consumer boycott campaign. Presentations by Equity, IATSE and TMA officials will be followed by a question and answer period.

MEDIA CONFERENCE

April 5th 1-2:30 p.m. (RSVP by April 4th at 416-867-9165 – ask for Alex)

Bluma Appel Theatre Lobby at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, 27 Front Street East

Light refreshments will be served

Representatives of all associations and unions, including artists, technicians and musicians, will be available for interview.

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), Union des artistes, ACTRA Toronto Performers and ACTRA National have all endorsed our boycott initiative. In addition to active Equity, TMA and IATSE members, these organizations collectively represent over 150,000 potential ticket-buyers throughout Ontario. Our shared goal is to ensure that professional artists and technicians working in live theatre have a fair working contract when the Blue Man Group production opens in June 2005.

Actors' Equity Association (USA), IATSE International, Media and Entertainment Arts Alliance/Australian Equity, British Equity, Norwegian Actors' Equity Association, UNI-MEI (international), and the International Federation of Actors have also registered their support for this initiative.

- **Canadian Actors' Equity Association** is 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.
- IATSE is the **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees**. Local 58 has provided professional staging services to the Toronto entertainment, convention, and trade show industries for more than 100 years. Local 822 is the Theatrical Wardrobe, Makeup Artists & Hairstylists Union representing 135 hair, makeup, and wardrobe employees throughout Toronto.
- The **Toronto Musicians' Association** (TMA), Local 149 of the American Federation of Musicians of the U.S. and Canada is the professional association of musicians. The North American AFM membership is 100,000 strong, including 15,000 Canadian musicians with 3,200 members in the Greater Toronto Area.

Together, our members are a vital part of a professional network of theatre professionals, including performers, musicians, technicians and craftspeople in the entertainment industry.

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As further information becomes available, it will be posted on our protest web site at www.blueymanboycott.com. Photos are available at www.blueymanboycott.com/media.html.

Media Contacts: Cheryl Batulis, Business Agent, IATSE 822
905-726-8668

Kevin Mahoney, Executive Board Member, IATSE 58
416-364-5565
www.iatse58.org

Lynn McQueen, Communications Director, Canadian Actors' Equity Association
416-867-9165
Interviews available in French or English
www.caea.com

Bill Skolnik, Executive Director, TMA
416-421-1020 ext. 235
www.torontomusicians.org