



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Delores Rubin
Chair

Jesse R. Bodine
District Manager

August 8th, 2017

Julie Menin
Commissioner
Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment
1697 Broadway, 6th floor
New York, New York 10019

Dear Commissioner Menin,

The Arts, Culture, Education & Street Life Committee ("ACES") of Manhattan Community Board 4 ("MCB4") urges that the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment undertake or commission a study of the economic impact of independent theaters on New York City. MCB4's Theater Task Force has worked on the subject for several years, and their efforts could both help and be helped by such a study. More importantly, the essential role of independent theaters could be better understood by policy makers, legislators, and stakeholders alike.

Small and mid-sized theaters provide district and city residents the opportunity to engage with live performance in an intimate setting at affordable prices, adding to their quality of life. Understanding the economic impact of these performing arts venues would help our advocacy efforts and policy objectives to support these vital community groups.

One of these groups, The League of Independent Theaters ("LIT"), met with you on April 14, 2017, where you all discussed the possibility of your office conducting an economic impact study that would include small to medium independent theater.

Just two months later, on June 7, 2017, the Pearl Theatre Company (555 West 42nd Street) announced its filing for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, ending 33 years of artistic production and the loss of dozens of jobs. The closing of the Pearl continues the ongoing closing of small and medium independent theaters in MCB4 over the last twenty years.

As presented by the League of Independent Theaters, other venues that have closed within MCB4 are the following:

- Zipper Factory originally at 336 West 36th Street.
- The Douglas Fairbanks Theatre at 432 West 42nd Street.
- The Sanford Meisner Theatre at 164 11th Avenue.
- Interart Theater at 500 West 52nd Street.

We have also lost theaters outside of the MCB4 boundaries:

- Dance New Amsterdam at 280 Broadway.
- Amato Opera Theatre at 319 Bowery.
- Todo Con Nada at 167 Ludlow Street.
- Theatorium at 198 Stanton Street.

- Galapagos Arts Space at 16 Main Street.
- The Chain Theater at 21-28 45th Road
- The Living Theater at 21 Clinton Street.

On June 12, 2017 the ACES committee held its regularly scheduled meeting, where a wide-ranging discussion on how MCB4 could contribute to the continued viability of our independent theater community ensued. LIT and IndieSpace, another theater advocacy organization, also attended.

The recent closure of landmark and long-established theaters like The Pearl highlights the urgency of our request. At this critical time, a concerted effort to preserve our small and medium independent theaters could make an immediate and permanent difference. Inaction would do the same.

The committee applauds your extensive and very successful efforts in your role at MOME and in your long tenure as Chair of Manhattan Community Board 1, where you championed the needs of similarly affected artists and organizations. We look forward to hearing from you on the status of any potential study on economic impact of independent theaters, and we deeply appreciate your continued service to the arts community and to the City of New York.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Chair
Community Board 4



Allen Oster
Co-Chair
ACES Committee

[signed 8/8/17]
Inge Ivchenko
Co-Chair
ACES Committee

cc: Mr. Guy Yedweb, League of Independent Theater
Ms. Randi Berry, IndieSpace
Ms. Virginia P. Louloudes, Executive Director
ART/NY
All Local Elected Representatives