



**Council President Report  
National Annual Meeting for 2016-2017  
February 27, 2017 - Toronto, Ontario**

Thank you all for coming out to Young Artspace tonight to our National AGM for 2017.

My name is Allan Teichman, and I am the current Council President. You may have seen me featured in such productions as National AGM 2016, National AGM 2015, and National AGM 2014, among others. The more dedicated of you may even have caught my debut in National AGM 2007. In truth, most of you are probably thinking: him again?

Well, more about me later, but first I'd like to introduce our other Councillors, especially those in attendance tonight. They are easily recognisable by their general catatonia, brought about by two solid days of Council meetings. However I assure you that they can, with equal ease, be restored to coherence and the capacity for great conversation, through gently encouraging use of their names, perhaps accompanied by the offer of a tasty hors d'oeuvre.

They (the Councillors, not the hors d'oeuvres) are:

Stephen Erickson (1<sup>st</sup> VP), Peter McGillivray - Eastern Opera

Karen Bassett - Atlantic

Deena Aziz - Quebec

Catriona Leger - Eastern Ontario/Outaouais

Kirsten Alter, Sedina Fiati (2<sup>nd</sup> VP), Minh Ly, Allan Teichman, Paula Wolfson, *Herbie Barnes, Zeph Williams* - Ontario

Aaron Hutton - Manitoba

*Jaron Francis* - Saskatchewan

Scott Bellis (Secretary-Treasurer), Jane Heyman, Katey Wright - BC/Yukon

*Nicole Caron* - Dance

*Kate Sandeson* - Stage Management

*Diane Speirs* - Western Opera

*Ian Leung* - Northern Alberta / NWT

*Simon Mallett* - Southern Alberta

(*Italics* indicates those not able to be in attendance)

Now, even if the person at the helm of Council has not changed in quite some time, that is one of the very few things about Equity that hasn't, so I'd like to take a few minutes to let you know what we have been up to this past year, and what we plan to tackle in the coming ones.

But first, I'd like to look back, briefly, to 2014, because that is when all of this year's annual report really begins. It was then that Council came to the membership with a request to increase basic and working dues. Equity had gotten to the point where 20<sup>th</sup> Century rates were no longer able to pay 21<sup>st</sup> Century bills. So we proposed a change that was not merely geared toward making up the gap, but also intended to help launch us into the future, and we forecast that no more dues increases would be needed before 2020. Thankfully – and you'll see why in a minute – the membership approved the change.

I'm pleased to tell you that yesterday Council reviewed our financial forecast through 2020, and we are handily on track to meet our no-increase-needed promise to you. So, that's good news.

But there is even better news. Remember I said that the increase was not only to enable us to make up past deficits, but also to plan for the future? Well, the future launches today in the second half of this evening, with the *Not in Our Space!* campaign. This initiative has been in the works for quite a while now, but it really was the dues increase which provided the staff and financial resources to take that project from talk, to walk. So, when you listen later this evening to our presentation, I'd like you to also take a moment to pat yourselves on the back: your decision helped make this happen.

And, of course, this initiative is not the only thing on Council's agenda, nor the only progress that you have enabled.

One of the things that we have been hearing from our senior members for a while is that they would like to see an examination of how they are engaged, and a review of some of the services we provide with them in mind.

Last year, I talked about our improvement to the dues remission process for senior members, and that was the beginning. Going forward, our plan is to reach out to that community late this year, or early next year, to get targeted input on what we have provisionally been discussing as “active retirement”, specific engagement terms that accommodate the desire, and the ability, of senior members who wish to extend both their professional and post-professional careers.

On another front, we've also begun preliminary plans for work dealing with mental health issues in our industry. Current statistics estimate that one in five Canadians will have a personal experience with mental illness at some point in the course of their life, and live performance is, of course, no exception to that. It's not a surprise to anyone in this room to learn that this business can take a toll on you in all kinds of ways, and as your Association, we want to be able to help. We're just at the beginning stages of this work, and you'll hear more about it a bit later in the evening.

Those of you who follow our various social media channels, particularly our Equity Facebook group, will have noticed a recent increase in the number of items pertaining to independent dance. This is, of course, not a coincidence, and is the fruition of discussions Council initiated years ago, and a whole lot work from our staff since then.

But it's also important to note that it is no less the result of members of the independent dance community recognising Equity as a potential ally and support in their drive for fair and equitable working terms and conditions, *and coming to us*. Forethought on Equity's part meets need in the live performance community: perfect! I'll leave it to Arden to provide you with more information on this project, but I wanted to flag it as yet another longstanding Council discussion able to come off the backburner as the result of your referendum decision in 2014.

There is, of course, more. There is always more, and there always will be. Canadian live performance doesn't stand still, which means our members don't either, which, of course, means that your Association has to do the same. That's Council's job.

How do we know what you need? Simple. You have to tell us. That's *your* job. Write to Council (addresses are on the Equity website), call (the phone number is on your Equity card), or catch up with any Councillor here tonight. Let us know what you think, what you like, what you don't like, and what you need. And when we reach out to you as part of our research, please also share your thoughts then. I'm proud to say that our response rates, for referenda, survey, elections, you name it, are head and shoulders above those experienced by any other similar arts association we know of. Please keep it way, and push it even higher.

Finally, I'd like to wrap this part of the report up with a reminder that nominations for Equity's 2018 honours are now open. It is, in fact, Council's honour to recognise and celebrate the special individuals who have given so selflessly of their skill and enthusiasm to the benefit of our members, our industry and our community, but we rely on the membership to let us know who those extraordinary people are. If you are aware of a member or non-member who is deserving of recognition in one of our four honours categories, please connect with our Honours Committee Chair (Paula) this evening, or stop by the info table to pick up a nomination form to tell us about them. If you miss the opportunity tonight, there is also a fill-in-able form available online via a link on the home page of the Equity website.

I said I'd tie this all back to me at the end, and that time has come.

I've been honoured to serve as Council President for the past decade, but when I accepted Council's election this term, I made them all a promise, and I would like you to know of it as well. Although completely willing to serve out the term, I will also offer Council my resignation as president in October, so that the final year of the Council's work can begin in new hands if they wish, with me present to help in the transition.

So, National AGM 2017 may be my farewell from this podium, and I did not want to let the moment pass without letting you all know how amazing, maddening, exhilarating, enriching, exhausting, educating, encouraging, discouraging, inspiring, humbling, exciting, and just downright fantastic the work has been. I'd also like to publicly thank Councils past and present for their support, hard work, patience, and tolerance of my failings. Whoever is standing up here in a year's time, I know that this term will go down in my books as the best to date, and I'm confident that it will also be a precursor of an even better and stronger Equity to come.

And as a parting thought, I'll remind you as always: this is *your* Association. Help us help you make it the best it can possibly be.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan', written in a cursive style.