Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Theatre Does Not Apologize

Adam Leipzig · Wednesday, November 23rd, 2016

Dear Mr. President-elect,
I'd like to explain something about the theatre, because you seem to misunderstand what theatre is all about.
You recently asked the cast of Hamilton to apologize to the Vice President-elect, Mike Pence. You tweeted:

> The Theater must always be a safe and special place. The cast of Hamilton was very rude last night to a very good man, Mike Pence. Apologize!

You tweeted that because, at the end of Friday night's performance, with Mike Pence in attendance, cast member Brandon Victor Dixon read this message from the stage:

> You know, we have a guest in the audience this evening. And Vice President-elect Pence, I see you walking out, but I hope you will hear us just a few more moments. There's nothing to boo here, ladies and gentlemen. There's nothing to boo here. We're all here sharing a story of love. We have a message for you, sir. We hope that you will hear us out.
> Vice President-elect Pence, we welcome you, and we truly thank you for joining us here at 'Hamilton: An American Musical.' We really do. We, sir, we are the diverse America who are alarmed and anxious that your new administration will not protect us, our planet, our children, our parents, or defend us and uphold our inalienable rights, sir. But we truly hope this show has inspired you to uphold our American values and work on behalf of all of us. All of us. Again, we truly thank you truly for seeing this show, this wonderful American story told by a diverse group of men and women of different colors, creeds and orientations.

Here's the thing about theatre. It is not a safe place. Theatre is dangerous. It challenges the status quo. All good theatre confronts its audience. That has been true since Aeschylus and Shakespeare, Molière and Beckett, and for Hansberry and Albee, Wilson and Pinter, Parks and LeCompte.
Theatre, good theatre, makes its audience uncomfortable. And theatre does not apologize for that. Theatre never apologizes.
As Mayakovsky said, and Brecht said after him, "Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a

hammer with which to shape it."

This, Mr. President-elect, is the hammer of theatre. We, all artists, all culture-creators, will not apologize for what we do.

Sincerely,

Cultural Weekly

[alert type=alert-white]Please consider making a tax-deductible donation now so we can keep publishing strong creative voices.[/alert]

P.S. We at Cultural Weekly will not apologize for what we do either. To those of you reading this, my open-letter to the President-elect, may I ask on behalf of all of us for your financial support so we can publish strong creative voices? (Because I don't think Mr. Trump will contribute to our cause.)

Our dances are the dances of protest; our poems are the poems of insurrection; our buildings edify dissent. We celebrate filmmakers who challenge society, musicians who sing for freedom, artists who revolt against the forces that validate oppression.

With the consolidation of media – that is to say, the consolidation of thought – creative people need more avenues in which to express themselves, and more places where their work can be part of conversation. Cultural Weekly is an open, handcrafted forum. We don't let just anybody write on our pages. We don't and we won't. We curate and select. We select based on the writer's capacity to express ideas and to have an aesthetic.

We believe that the more we talk about the creative culture that surrounds us, the greater our capacity to make creative works that sing and dance, speak and move. Creative works that push, bend, impel our future toward the world we want to live in.

We stand up for the vulnerable, the marginalized, the outsiders, the rebels, the dreamers, the poets, the imaginative; we prize and validate the artists; we share and encourage creativity. We are a platform for those who love and question and include. We do not view those who see the world differently as "other," even if some people see us as "other."

If you feel the same way, you can't be passive or silent, and neither can we. We need to step it up, and so do you. Be bigger, bolder, louder, stronger, more open, more productive, more engaged, more organized, more public, more creative.

We have decided to take Cultural Weekly non-profit so we can keep publishing in 2017 and beyond. We need your money to make that happen. Your donation is tax-deductible. While every dollar counts (and please give what you can), will you, yes YOU, consider giving $100 or more? Donate here: https://www.fracturedatlas.org/site/fiscal/profile?id=14725

[alert type=alert-white]Please consider making a tax-deductible donation now so we can keep publishing strong creative voices.[/alert]

Image from the official Instagram feed of Hamilton: Actor Brandon Victor Dixon reads a message to Vice President-elect Mike Pence.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, November 23rd, 2016 at 3:00 pm and is filed under Theatre, Lifestyle, Visual Art

You can follow any responses to this entry through the Comments (RSS) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.