

## STRONGER TOGETHER



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### **Blue Man boycott hurting ticket sales as Toronto theatrical coalition begins phone campaign**

TORONTO - The boycott of the Toronto production of Blue Man Group is gaining momentum and stalling ticket sales says the coalition of professional actors, musicians and stage technicians formed earlier this year to protest the production owners' refusal to recognize the city's established theatrical associations and unions.

"We're having an impact in both expected and unexpected ways," says Susan Wallace, Executive Director of Canadian Actors' Equity Association, one of the Blue Man Boycott Coalition's partners.

The Toronto Musicians' Association and Locals 58 and 822 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees round out the coalition, which has received widespread support from numerous Canadian labour and arts organizations.

Wallace points to several signs that the ticket boycott is having a measurable effect:

- Insiders from local ticket agencies say sales are lower than expected.
- At least one prominent downtown hotel is considering dropping its Blue Man ticket package promotion because of recent room cancellations by performing artists angered at the hotel's association with the rogue production. Other local hotels offering similar packages are being approached by the coalition and by labour groups that do significant business with those hotels.
- Teachers are rebuffing Blue Man's efforts to sell discounted tickets for student outings. Ontario's major teachers' organizations were among the first to support the boycott.
- Public response to the [bluemanboycott.com](http://bluemanboycott.com) website has been brisk, with thousands of visits and expressions of support.

"Every day that passes, more people learn about Blue Man's refusal to respect Toronto's theatrical community," says Wallace. "Soon, everyone in the city will know."

This week, the Coalition launches a telephone outreach campaign that will target different areas of the city in stages. Between five and ten thousand households will be called every day with a short message urging Toronto theatre goers to refuse to buy

tickets to Blue Man Group until it recognizes the theatrical representative organizations that work with every other major production in Toronto.

“Blue Man does not have enough advertising money to overcome our word of mouth campaign that they do not respect Toronto’s theatre professionals,” says Wallace.

For more information or to arrange interviews with spokespersons for the Coalition, contact: Victoria Lord – 416.484.9047 & 647.519.8577 Additional contact: Bill Reno - 416.223.7366.