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Shaw Festival faces possible strike

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The Shaw Festival could face a strike later this month after talks broke down between the festival and the union representing backstage, scenery construction and audience service workers.

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 461 revealed Friday that its members had voted 94.5 per cent Wednesday night to support a strike against the festival.

A work stoppage could come as early as Feb. 27.

The union and festival management had been negotiating for a year. Staff have been without a contract since November 2008 and in December the festival filed for conciliation.

The issues on the table range from job security to the festival's health plan.

No negotiators at Wednesday meeting

IATSE officials say it reached a breaking point on Wednesday morning at a conciliation meeting with festival representatives.

"We came fully prepared to negotiate," George Galanis of Local 461 told The Globe and Mail. "None of their negotiators showed up."

Galanis says instead, the festival sent a lawyer. Management representatives say they are still open to talks.

"The Shaw Festival is committed to continuing negotiations with IATSE Local 461. We sent an appropriate representative to file a no-board report and we are now waiting for negotiations to continue," said Odette Yazbeck, the festival's public relations director,

Yazbeck said the festival is seeking a mediator to help with the dispute.

The Shaw's preview season, which runs from April to end of October, is due to start April 1st.

The strike threat is a blot on an otherwise positive year ahead for the theatre in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. It recently announced that it had wiped out its deficit, accumulated over a five-year period.

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at 7:14 PM ETEmployers are all the same when they grind Lie ,Lie, Lie.

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- [1](#)

[0Agree 1DisagreePolicy Report abuse](#)[jcrackerjack](#) wrote:Posted 2010/02/06at 4:25 PM ETHey rickscranium I read your comment with interest LOL LOL Two of the major flaws
1 steal from the poor give to the rich LOL LOL Poor poor Torontonians and their cost of theater, hockey tickets while all those small city folk getting rich on that C.O.L.A

2 the basis for a C.O.L.A did not originate from Unions at all but was introduced in the early 70s to stem the inflationary pressures following the vietnam war. Many collective agreements were reopened before their end date to include a COLA.

So your humble intentions are really not that humble at all

Its your Torontonian attitude that your exposing for all to see LOL LOL LOL

- [3](#)
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[3Agree 2DisagreePolicy Report abuse](#)[Deacon43](#) wrote:Posted 2010/02/06

at 3:31 PM ETLOL LOL LOL

Loser of Losers.....over and over.....and over....

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[2Agree 5DisagreePolicy Report abuse](#)[Uncle Cool](#) wrote:Posted 2010/02/06

at 3:23 PM ETJust hire replacement workers and tell the unionists where they can go.

- [8](#)
- [15](#)

[8Agree 15DisagreePolicy Report abuse](#)[jprime03](#) wrote:Posted 2010/02/06

at 2:58 PM ETI am an Equity SM who has had the pleasure of working with the fantastic, hard-working, talented and dedicated crews at both Shaw and Stratford (including the late Ron Epp). I understand the frustrations of many of the readers and folks who have commented on this story. However, as a member of another major performing arts union, I too, have experienced working without a contract for a year plus (while our union was in negotiations). All of that aside, the most important piece of information I would like to pass on to the general public - while a good portion of the IATSE local members at Shaw may be on a full-time contract, there are quite a number of people who aren't. Contract work (defined by the number of weeks) is a reality in professional theatre, and one of the many reasons why we all joined to help provide some stability. IF I'm able to scratch out 40 weeks work out of every 52, that's great, but

I still have to budget for 52. So for people who think that all union members should be thankful for the job that we have and stop whining, little do you know how very thankful we are. For those remaining 12 weeks a year, there's no vacation pay - when we don't work on contract, we don't earn any money at all. There's a common phrase among all artists: We're not in this to earn a living, we're in this because we love what we do.

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