

215 W. 98<sup>th</sup> St., apt. 10E  
New York NY 10025  
November 10, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this in support of GableStage in Coral Gables, Florida, and in support of the plan of its Producing Artistic Director, Joseph Adler, for a 300-seat theatre.

My understanding is that there is now a competing plan that would involve not a 300-, but a 700-seat theatre. When Joe Adler told me this, I blanched.

I have been writing for the theatre professionally for 45 years. I've been on Broadway over half a dozen times now (with *Venus In Fur* most recently, which has been produced in this country and all over the world and turned into a movie), I've been off- and off-off-Broadway dozens of times (*All In The Timing* ran there for 606 performances, most notably), and I've been all over the regionals with plays. To cut to the chase, I also had a play called *New Jerusalem: The Interrogation of Baruch de Spinoza* at GableStage: gorgeously produced, by the way. It was a great experience.

I wish there were hundreds of GableStages around this country: solid, professional, adventurous theatres that know how to produce a show and how to please their local audiences as well. I can't tell you how much respect I have for GableStage and for Joe Adler, who is consummate man of the theatre, with taste and drive and every necessary ability to run a successful theatre. Among those abilities are a natural instinct for what's right and what's not, what will work and what won't.

A 700-seat theatre, it seems to me, won't work. It would in fact be absurd. With 300 seats you have the necessary intimacy, the proportion that makes for good close-up *humane* theatre. And you can fill 300 seats if you're resourceful and tasteful. A 700-seat theatre is begging for trouble. I don't frankly know what kind of show you could put into a house of that size. It wouldn't be a house, it would be more of a warehouse, and probably largely empty at that. Here in New York, theatres tend to run at 99 seats (off-off), or 299 seats (off-) or a thousand seats or more (Broadway). There used to be some 500-seat houses but they've pretty much gone. The reason is Darwinian: time and experience have shown theatre owners and artistic directors that those are the comfortable sizes for theatres. And Joe Adler is wise enough to know this.

Please, please support this man who is so valuable a part of the theatre in your community. For a project like this *listen to the experts*. And Joe Adler is an expert.

Sincerely,



David Ives

**Letter of Support from  
MARCO RAMIREZ  
Playwright, Screenwriter, Producer**

Send inquiries to:  
United Talent Agency  
888 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, 7 floor  
New York, NY 10106

To Whom It May Concern,

I currently work and live in Los Angeles, but I was born and raised in Miami, Florida. (To be more specific, in Hialeah.) For the last ten years, I've been supporting myself not only as a television writer and producer, but also as a playwright.

And my love for the theatre was born at GableStage.

I was in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. A shy, bookish kid in the Miami Dade public school system.

Yes, I had seen a what one could call “theatrical” performances before. I recall seeing a Christmas play at the Catholic church my parents attended. I recall seeing a Disney musical at a large performing arts venue of some kind. But it was the **intimate, emotionally stirring performance** I saw at GableStage (their 1999 adaptation of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*) that spawned my love for theatre.

Not for big, traveling Broadway shows. Not for massive sets and parades of costumes.

But for a **smaller, smarter kind of theatre**. The kind where a cast of six actors (or less) delves into ethical issues, historical events (GableStage's 2002 production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*), race relations (their 2004 *Master Harold and the Boys*), or the nature of human sexuality (their 2003 production of Edward Albee's *The Goat*).

It may seem like a larger space (700 vs. 300 seats) simply means more room for patrons, but from a practical perspective, what ends up happening in these larger spaces is an entirely different kind of theatre. In the world of film, it's the difference between an arthouse cinema and a megaplex movie theatre at the mall. The level of sophistication in the work, the level of risk one is allowed to take when programming, is minimized once one has to worry about filling a space over twice the size.

And so I write this letter to support Joe Adler and GableStage's vision for a smaller venue. One where smaller stories can continue to thrive.

The movies are getting bigger. Television is getting bigger. Even sports are getting bigger, every year. But to me – there's nothing quite like settling into an evening of intense theatre. The kind that demands your attention. The kind that doesn't just have the power to dazzle you, but that – ultimately – has the power to **move** you.

Sincerely,

  
Marco Ramirez

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November 13, 2017

To Whom it May Concern:

This past August, I had the enormous pleasure of directing my play, *Informed Consent*, at GableStage. During my time there, I learned that the South Florida community adores, and feels great ownership of Joe Adler and GableStage. Everyone I spoke to talked rapturously about the plays they'd seen there and the plays coming up that they couldn't wait to see. It's a really vibrant theater community and GableStage is right at the heart of it. I've had over 100 productions of my plays around the country (and overseas), but I was blown away by the quality of the work done there – the level of design realized in that somewhat difficult space, and the challenging work Joe chooses to produce.

I also learned that the community is thrilled about Joe's plans for renovating the Coconut Grove space and continuing his work in a larger, more production-friendly, but still intimate space. It's clearly the next obvious move for this long-lived, extraordinarily successful theater.

So... I'm really disheartened to learn that the Lt. Governor has stepped in to disrupt his plans at this late date, when Joe has secured the space and the finances, and had an architect work up the plans. This is the worst kind of government interference. The idea that a 700 seat space would be preferable to a 300 seat space is the kind of thinking that someone who isn't involved with theater would have. A 700 seat space would require the mounting of big musicals or plays that have a "name" and don't require any real intimacy. A 300 seat space will allow GableStage to grow, while still doing the cutting edge work it's known for.

I hope you'll honor Joe's extraordinary work and reputation, and GableStage's place as one of South Florida's real cultural treasures, and allow the plans to go forward as envisioned. Please contact me if you'd like more of my thoughts on the matter.

Sincerely,



Deborah Zoe Laufer