

Dear Friends of Boxcar,

I regret to inform you that due to certain artistic choices implemented by myself - the director - Boxcar's production of *Little Shop of Horrors* has been closed by the organization that owns and licenses the rights. This was effective immediately. I do not hold the licensing organization accountable for doing their job.

The production I created violated the terms and conditions set forth by the contract my company signed to license the show. I made alterations and changes to Alan Menken and Howard Ashman's script. I took elements from the original 1960 film version of *Little Shop of Horrors* directed by Roger Corman and combined them with the original 1982 off-Broadway musical as well as the 1986 film version. I borrowed from *Rocky Horror Picture Show* and wrote bits of dialogue myself to help blend the material seamlessly. It was these changes that might have prompted you to be interested in this production in the first place. It was certainly these changes that caught the eye of Playbill.com who wrote a terrific article regarding my concepts. And it was that article that instantly drew attention to our production.

On Saturday June 18, 2011, representatives from the licensing agency came to watch our production. I met them before the show and explained the reasons behind my actions and that I understood the consequences. The cast was also prepared. We could have restored the production to the original script, we could have canceled the show and left them to wonder, we could have faked a medical or technical emergency - believe me, all of these thoughts crossed my mind. In the end, we chose to be honest and share the production we had created. Not because we felt guilty, but because we felt proud of our work. Work that *Robert Sokol of The Examiner* says is "good and gritty" and *Kevin Thomas of the SF GLBT Arts Examiner* calls "better and cheaper than Broadway" and when *Nathaniel Eaton of SF Weekly* saw it he said, "this brilliantly conceived and designed production is devilish fun." Jay Irwin, a reviewer from Seattle who writes from Broadway World attended Saturday June 18th. He wrote, "Boxcar Theatre has taken a pretty standard show and shown what ingenuity and innovation can do to make it that much better." Donna, an audience member who had never seen a Boxcar show emailed me three days before the 18th to say that her two daughters were "on the edge of their seats and the edge of the curb, eyes as big as saucers the whole time."

That was the work we presented.

As expected, we were sent notice to cancel all future performances, which we have. And although they may have the right to say whether or not we can perform one of the productions they represent, they do not have the right to say whether or not Boxcar can present work in the future. Let me be clear: I do not hold anyone

else responsible. My actions led to their response. I am simply stating that as an artist we still have the freedom to create. And that is a very special gift.

The cast of this great production will still come to the theatre each night – however we will not be performing the show you expected. We are also limiting our performances and closing a week before intended. Instead, we will remount elements of our benefit cabaret fundraiser from April. *The Darker Side of Broadway A Cabaret* will run until July 2nd and will feature an amazing group of singers performing songs from some of the finest, darkest and grittiest musicals out there.

We hope that you will come celebrate with us and we hope that you will return to another performance in the future. While I may not agree with the rules, I most certainly should have to follow them or fight them. For now, I chose to follow them...

Thank you for your support.

Regards,

Nick A. Olivero
Director
