



Dear members of the Montgomery County Council,

Today, March 12, is the one-year anniversary of the shutdown of most every live entertainment venue in the County. The State Arts Council estimates 21,000 direct arts jobs were lost throughout Maryland last year. Those are our friends, our co-workers, our fellow County citizens.

But the County stepped up: thanks to its Tourism and AHCMC grants, alongside MSAC and PPP relief, the 25 staff members I furloughed last fall all returned to work this week.

So we are devastated to read that there is **continuing inequity in the proposed reopening plan** as we understand it. It continues, without scientific basis, to stigmatize ONLY LIVE PERFORMANCE VENUES, holding their capacities below the limits provided to other businesses.

I love a good escape room, but I fail to understand the science behind the proposal to allow unvaccinated people to trap themselves in a room like this in Bethesda for an hour at 50% capacity



while our 150,000 cubic foot Main Stage will only be allowed to operate at 25% capacity (or, depending on how the order reads, for a maximum gathering of 25 people?):



We are planning a return to live performance outside, without capacity restrictions, on the July 4th weekend with free performances for the community of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, performed by our first all-African-American company of the National Players. We need to know we'll be treated the same way as other businesses to move forward.

Please help us celebrate our reopening with our friends throughout the County. We beg you for an equitable reopening plan.

Jason Loewith, Artistic Director
Olney Theatre Center