

For Immediate Release — October 14, 2026

ADC condemns TAPA's decision to eliminate discipline-specific design Dora awards and urges reversal.

The Associated Designers of Canada and IATSE Local ADC659 (ADC) condemns the Toronto Alliance of the Performing Arts (TAPA) decision to consolidate design awards in their General and Independent Theatre divisions into a single award per division and calls on TAPA to reverse this decision. In the absence of any reversal, ADC calls on designers and TAPA members to boycott the 2026/27 Dora Awards.

ADC was notified informally on August 21 of TAPA's decision to combine Scenic/Projection, Costume, Lighting, and Sound Design awards into a single award effective immediately, and TAPA members were informed on August 24. We received no advance consultation or outreach regarding this change and were given no opportunity to advocate on behalf of Designers.

On August 26, ADC released a statement on social media and in our newsletter condemning this decision and calling on TAPA to reverse course. Though we received immense community support, including from TAPA members themselves, we received no response at all from TAPA.

The artistic directors of several TAPA member companies met with TAPA to express dissatisfaction with the change but received no satisfactory resolution to their concern. In early October, ADC reached out to TAPA's leadership to request further information. We were told that discussions were being held internally but have no further update and have had no opportunity for consultation.

Through trusted colleagues, we have been informed that TAPA's decision to consolidate awards is not driven by financial pressures, but instead a genuine lack of understanding or appreciation for the different design disciplines and a desire simply to reduce the number of design awards. For an organization that celebrates the accomplishments of theatre artists on Toronto's stages to callously discard so many artists from the celebration is a travesty.

Every design discipline brings a unique voice to the experiences which grace Toronto stages. Treating each discipline as the same is both ignorant of the artistic métiers of designers and reductive to the value each discipline provides to a production. Demanding that two fundamentally different art forms (such as sound design and costume design) be compared and benchmarked as the same is an impossible task. Toronto is the world's 3rd largest English-speaking theatre market, and we should be celebrating that companies in this city can bring so many world-class artistic disciplines together for their audiences.

We are calling on TAPA to:

- Explain transparently the rationale and process which led to the decision to consolidate awards
- Engage in real meaningful outreach and consultation with its members, ADC, and the Toronto community before making any reductive changes to the Dora Award structure.
- Announce a plan to fully reinstate the individual design discipline awards as quickly as possible.

Without such an announcement, we are preparing to call for all TAPA members and designers to boycott the 2026/2027 Dora Awards. We will also remove any sponsorship that may be provided by ADC and call for community partners to cancel planned support.

Please direct any inquiries to Local ADC659 Business Agent, Simon Rossiter, at businessagent@adc659.ca or 416-907-5829