

ATTN:

Hennepin Theatre Trust Board of Directors
Mark Nerenhausen, President & CEO
Jim Langemo, Chief Administrative Officer
Lisa Krohn, Director of Booking
Emmalynn Bauer, Director of External Relations

September 19, 2022

Greetings,

We, the undersigned, submit this letter to the Board of Directors of Hennepin Theatre Trust, to communicate our concerns regarding the February 7th, 2023 booking for Jordan B Peterson's tour "Beyond Order" at the State Theatre, to demand your public comments regarding this booking, and to strongly urge the cancellation of the planned February 7th, 2023 show.

While we understand that, generally speaking, Hennepin Theatre Trust does not hold curatorial discretion over bookings in what are essentially publicly-owned venues, we do hope that you will consider and act upon the following concerns regarding Jordan B Peterson. Below, we have provided a digest of facts, interviews, quotes, and other materials that we hope will support you in acting quickly and decisively.

Peterson's views are in direct opposition to the mission/vision/values and DEI commitments of Hennepin Theatre Trust:

- HTT's commitment that, "The stories we tell on and off the stage will better reflect the diverse experiences of our audiences and the people of Minnesota", and mission statement to "create positive change through the arts by bringing together people," will not be effectively implemented by allowing an extremist ideologue, who is advocating for the exclusionary hierarchical ordering of society, to have space on your stages.
- For example, Peterson's "[Lobster Theory](#)" argues that society should be ordered based on the "natural" strength and greater aggression that people with higher average serotonin levels supposedly possess. **An argument to base societal hierarchies upon physiological characteristics is an argument for [eugenics](#).**
- Peterson also spreads paranoia about "Cultural Marxism" taking over western civilization, which is **a dog whistle against people of color and a classic anti-semitic conspiracy theory.**
 - See: [Jonathan Pageau/Jordan Peterson: How Inclusivity Might Destroy the World - YouTube](#)
- An event advocating for these societal hierarchies and ideologies is incredibly inappropriate for a public venue, or any venue public or private, that seeks to maintain a welcoming and safe environment for all Hennepin County residents.

Jordan Peterson's supporters are violent

- People, especially trans people and young people, who dare to publicly criticize Peterson's views are **mercilessly harassed and threatened by his supporters**. He and his supporters' favored tactic is to ["doxx" their critics](#), by finding their personal information and releasing it to the public along with calls for violence against the targeted individuals. This puts students, activists, journalists, and especially those who are queer and/or transgender, at grave personal risk.
- Peterson has [proposed McCarthy-style blacklisting](#) of academics and professionals he disagrees with, utilizing historically anti-semitic talking points, in an effort to foment hysteria among his fans.
- Such violent response to criticism inhibits "the free sharing of ideas" that HTT espouses, and further promotes unsafe spaces and clear disregard for your patrons and stakeholders in Hennepin County.

Peterson, like most white supremacists, is advocating for patriarchal authoritarianism.

- Peterson is striving to empower white middle class people to fight for the maintenance of the patriarchy, specifically billed as a common-sense conformity to "order", in which hierarchies based on gender, race and ability are "natural".
- He frames these hierarchies as immutable cultural archetypes that should not be tampered with. One of his catchy assertions is that **"men are order and women are chaos"**.
- He is encouraging people of the dominant culture (white, middle class, able-bodied, cisgender) to see themselves as victims of diversity, equity and inclusion. In Peterson's view, DEI work is the manifestation of a vast "cultural Marxism" and "racial pathology" conspiracy network.
 - See: [Jonathan Pageau/Jordan Peterson: How Inclusivity Might Destroy the World - YouTube](#)
- Peterson has billed himself as "alt-light", a conservative who is not as extreme as violent right wing street activists and pundits. However, it is clearly evident that [his ties to white identity extremism](#) are intentional and friendly.
- Peterson has called for **state-enforced monogamy** as [a solution to violent young men committing mass murder](#).

Peterson and his supporters hurt trans people and people with disabilities, and hurt efforts to make significant transformation to the way that whiteness is placed as default of the dominant culture

- Peterson and his network of "alt-light" intellectuals position themselves as powerful intellectual elites. They utilize their skills as rhetoricians to put an authoritative veneer on their misrepresentation of scientific facts. They use pseudo-scientific analysis to **push white supremacist and eugenicist ideologies, such as:**
 - Gender is fixed, and gender-based hierarchies are natural orders.
 - People with disabilities should accept exclusion as their personal responsibility to overcome.
 - Able-bodied, thin and "healthy" people are inherently better.

- The role of men in society and intimate relationships is to use aggression to secure resources and sexual relationships violently.
- Trans people are simply mentally ill, and gender expression outside of cisgenders does not fit in the natural order that civilization should take.
- There is no social position available for trans people in an ordered civilization.
- Having more wealth makes you inherently more successful and a better person.
- Since race is a social construct, the impacts of racial hierarchies are immaterial.
- Focusing on transforming systems of racial inequality is a pathological ailment.
- People who “naturally” have higher serotonin levels, and are able to obtain resources & opportunities via aggression, should be the “natural” leaders of civilization.
- Upon being suspended from Twitter and asked to retract a tweet for gross transphobia, Jordan Peterson posted an anti-trans rant to his YouTube channel, painting himself as the victim, drumming up anti-trans hysteria amongst his supporters, and [comparing gender affirming care to Nazi medical experimentation](#).
- At a moment in which states across the country are passing waves of [bills restricting women's bodily autonomy](#), [criminalizing trans healthcare](#), and the number of Black people [being murdered by police](#) has yet to abate, **can cultural institutions in Minnesota really justify hosting a person like Jordan B Peterson? Can we justify providing a platform for such ideologies, providing a gathering place in Hennepin County for emboldened local white supremacist groups to organize from?**

While we understand that your existing policies and fiscal responsibilities make it difficult for Hennepin Theatre Trust and/or Historic Theatre Group to cancel current bookings, we are asking you to consider your mission statement, DEI statement, and the general well being of the public of Hennepin County.

We have some ideas for how Hennepin Theatre Trust can transform this situation:

- Most importantly, for the safety of Hennepin County residents, we urge you to cancel Jordan Peterson's February 7th, 2023 booking at the State Theatre.
- Make a public statement about the booking policy of Hennepin Theatre Trust, so that Hennepin County residents, local artists, and stakeholders like ourselves can be better informed of how public dollars are spent.
- Make a public statement regarding Hennepin Theatre Trust's rejection of Jordan Peterson's views on gender, sex, race, ability, and his practice of harassing and doxxing people who are critical of his views.

Please confirm receipt of this letter by September 26, 2022.

We hope to engage in dialogue with the leadership of Hennepin Theatre Trust as concerned professionals, members of the Hennepin County artistic community, and as your constituents. We hope to receive a full response from you by October 7, 2022, notifying us either that you are willing to implement all of our suggestions listed above and how you will achieve that, or otherwise how you intend to engage in meeting the commitments outlined in your mission and DEI statements.