

Birchmere

4-4-05

3701 Mt. Vernon Avenue • Alexandria, Virginia 22305
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www.birchmere.com

City Council
City of Alexandria, Virginia

April 4, 2005

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of the Birchmere, which is celebrating its 39th birthday today with 25 of those years spent on Mt. Vernon Avenue, we strongly oppose any type of entertainment tax on our venue and on our customers. We are in a unique geographical area in which our primary competition is tax-exempt, taxpayer-funded, or exempted from primary taxes (such as real estate taxes). In addition, and at least as importantly, no entertainment tax is imposed on any of our competition in Virginia, the District, or Maryland and no such entertainment tax will be imposed in the foreseeable future. The Birchmere, therefore, will be at an additional competitive advantage.

Given the Birchmere's longevity on the avenue, its national reputation, and its many contributions to Alexandria in general, it would seem to be unwise and unjust for this tax to be imposed on us. It will hurt our business and significantly hinder our ability to continue to book nationally-known acts and compete in this market. We are available to meet with any one of you individually or all of you collectively to further explain our opposition. Suffice it to say that this tax potentially sounds the death-knoll for our business. We strongly urge you to reject this tax or, at the very least, exempt live-performance venues through the use of an "arts and entertainment" district –such as those promoted in Montgomery County- to include our location. Our business is unique, our acts are scarce, please accept the seriousness of this tax proposal to our business.

For the Birchmere,


Gary Oelze


Ralph Capobianco


James J. Matthews, Jr.