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Text of the initial offer email:

**subject:** an offer toward making decisions

**send date:** 2020-11-09

It seems to me part of what makes it hard for us to make decisions together is that we don't exactly know who should get a vote. Or rather, whose assent we need to seek in order to have a consensus.

We could look to one of the existing lists of who's in the Shakespeare Ensemble (there's a list of bios on the website, for example), but instead I suggest we take this moment in time (say, the moment between now & our next meeting on Friday), and each of us decide whether we want to be formally involved in the decision making processes of the Shakespeare Ensemble going forward.

I know there may be some of us who won't want to be involved in this kind of decision-making but would still like to be involved in projects in other ways. And that's great! But we do need a decision-making mechanism – the question of whether or not (and how) to bring in new members is a relatively simple one, but for now it seems to stump us!

So here's a (possibly naive) offer of a way to get us on to the next step:

1) Those who so choose may add their name to The Compact (see below). If it were in the real world we'd pass it 'round on a piece of paper, but we'll make do digitally.

2) First item of business on Friday is to read the Compact & the list of names, and from then on, that's the official, decision-making core of the Shakespeare Ensemble. (You don't have to be present at the meeting to be a member, just need to add your name to the list.)

3) We devote some of the rest of the meeting time to making an official, consensus-based decision on a process for inviting new folk to join.

And we go forward from there!

Here's the proposed Compact:

#### The Shakespeare Ensemble Compact

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By typing my name below before 4pm GMT on Friday, 13th of November, 2020, I indicate my desire to be considered a member of The Shakespeare Ensemble.

I will participate in the Ensemble's decision making processes.

I agree that decisions will be made by consensus of the members until the Ensemble puts a different method in place (if we choose to do so).

My membership will be valid until I communicate to the Ensemble that I no longer desire to be considered a member.

Here are the names of the members of the Shakespeare Ensemble, in free association according to the terms above:

I tried to make it simple. It gives a default method of decision making (consensus), a way to be in (add your name before Friday's meeting), a way to leave (tell everybody you're leaving), and from these a membership list. Once we have that, we can get fancy: create bylaws, devise baroque voting schemes, order t-shirts and fun hats. But this will get us down the road.

What do you think? I realize I may be swimming against the easy-flowing organic energy of Friday meetings, but ... well, it had to happen eventually. 😊

And of course this is just one offer. Others may have other offers. But my view now is that the way to move forward is for each of us individually (however we got here) to declare (if we like) that we will take a part in the Ensemble's decisions going forward.

Then at least we'll know who (by their own assertion) comprises the Ensemble, and we can go on from there.

I look forward to reading your thoughts!

– ASC

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Last update: **2021/02/12 09:43**

