

Guild rejects notion that gay actors are confined to gay roles

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By DAVE MCNARY, Variety

The Screen Actors Guild has blasted Newsweek's controversial "Straight Jacket" article in which contributor Ramin Setoodeh contends that auds do not accept openly gay actors playing straight roles.

"Screen Actors Guild rejects the notion that lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) actors are restricted in the roles they can play," SAG said in a statement Thursday.

In the article, Newsweek associate editor Setoodeh discussed Sean Hayes' performance on Broadway in a revival of "Promises, Promises" and Glee cast member Jonathan Groff. "Glee" creator Ryan Murphy has called for a boycott of the magazine; the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation has urged Newsweek to issue an apology, and Kristin Chenoweth, Hayes' co-star, has called the article "homophobic."

GLAAD president Jarrett Barrios said, "Whether he intended it to or not, Ramin Setoodeh's article in Newsweek sends a false and damaging message about gay actors by endorsing the idea that there are limits to the roles they are able to play."

Newsweek responded by saying that Setoodeh wrote "a thoughtful, honest essay on a controversial topic. It's unfortunate that his argument has been misunderstood and he has been unfairly accused of bigotry."

Jason Stuart, chair of the SAG National LGBT Actors Committee, said in a statement that Setoodeh's "wrongheaded argument sends a damaging and false message that we are limited in the roles we are able to play."

Stuart said the SAG committee was formed to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender actors so they no longer need to feel as if they must hide who they are in order to work.

"Unfortunately, harmful attitudes like those of Setoodeh are used to pressure actors to stay in the closet," Stuart added. "Our work is clearly not done, and we will continue to fight to end fear within the

acting community that being open about who you are means the end of your career. I'm an actor; it's not who I am but what I can play that counts."

Duncan Crabtree-Ireland, SAG deputy national exec director and general counsel, said the guild's committed to supporting all members in their pursuit of work in order to attain full inclusion within the industry. " SAG will continue to demand that all performers have equal employment opportunities and insist that qualified individuals are hired regardless of how they may identify," Crabtree-Ireland added.