

Allyship Statement

(Quarter 2: May-July, '21)

The events of the last year have brought our company to an important inflection point. The violence against people of color and the long-overdue conversations about the lack of equity in the theatre industry have fully revealed the many systems of oppression that have sought to silence BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), transgender, non-binary, gender-fluid, disabled, and neuro-divergent creative and performing artists (among many others).

In January 2020, [The Visibility Report](#), produced by the [Asian American Performers Action Committee](#) (AAPAC), highlighted a stunning lack of diversity in Broadway and New York non-profit theaters' 2017-2018 seasons. Less than 27% of writers represented were people of color. Our personal review of the 2018-2019 season for the same group of theaters showed that only 30% of writers were BIPOC.

We then looked at the writers we represent on our website and discovered that 96% of our writers identify as white - only 4% are writers of color. We continue to wrestle with this unsettling statistic.

We firmly believe this lack of diversity not only denies writers' powerful voices, it denies audiences the richness of unique and universal stories. If we don't represent different voices through the work that gets produced and the actors who embody those roles, those who attend the theatre won't be able to embrace the humanity of characters who may have different life experiences than their own. It also hinders those who are at various intersections of diversity from seeing themselves represented and inviting them to come into their own personal power.

When we create an industry that truly celebrates differences on every level, we can teach our society to stop relying on the false narratives that further separate us. This is the true power of the arts, and we must all step into our roles to create the necessary change we wish to see.

While we have attempted to create a more equitable space for our writers and subscribers, we now see our work to this point has been performative because it lacked the necessary multi-pronged systemic changes. We recognize that our privilege has kept us from seeing the work that must be done. At our best, we limited the possibility of growing with diverse and vibrant theatre artists. At our worst, we harmed the community we love and want to uplift.

Now that we have a clearer understanding of where we are as an organization and our role in the theatrical community, we are eager to transform ContemporaryMusicalTheatre.com into a space of belonging for all.

We make a commitment to enact meaningful change in both the Culture and Policies of our company, which we hope will improve both our writers and subscribers' experiences. These changes include reimagining our submission process, creating visual cues of equity in the design of our site, and surveying our writers and subscribers to better ascertain how we can celebrate our many intersections of diversity.

In this section, we consider expanding our circle wider to include writers, students, educators, and performers who have, to this point, not felt seen. Specifically, here are our Quarter 2's Key Result Areas:

1. **Reimagining Our Submission Process:** It is important for us to maintain a submission process to uphold a high level of quality in the work we share with subscribers. We acknowledge, however, that our current process has created barriers for writers interested in joining our community. We will discard our old submission process in favor of more inclusive procedures. This will include:
 - a. Creating new guidelines that better outline the basis on which we review submitted material (e.g. defining "craft" and "structure" in ways that do not exclude non-Western influences). In addition, we will be transparent about each step of the submission process so writers feel confident our process is fair.
 - b. Simplifying the submission process by creating an online portal where writers can easily tell us about their work as theatre artists and upload their songs. Previously, writers' work was submitted to be judged solely based on its own merits. We will now present the full artist and their work to the submission committee.
 - c. Announcing a new, diverse submission committee, who will regularly review artists and their submitted materials. With the equitable committee we will agree to the terms of reviewing new material and come to consensus on submissions.
2. **Creating Visual Cues of Equity:** It is important to us that everyone who visits our website is assured they belong. We will do this in the following ways:
 - a. Updating our website banner to make it more inclusive and welcoming for all. Because our current graphic promotes the mostly white writers we represent, we will create a new image that is more representative of the equity we wish to grow into.
 - b. Creating a Statement of Allyship like this one, which will live on our website and be regularly updated to transparently outline our goals and progress. We will do this so we can be publicly held accountable while encouraging others to learn and engage in conversation around topics of race, equity, and inclusion.

3. **Surveying Our Writers & Subscribers:** In an effort to ascertain and celebrate our writers and subscribers' many different intersections of diversity, we will create a voluntary survey, which will then be used to create searchable tags on our site (e.g. BIPOC writer, etc...). It is our goal that these tags will help our subscribers find work that is meaningful to them and acknowledges their own intersections.

As you can see, each of these steps requires many different phases of change. We are undeterred by this, but ask for your patience as we swiftly move through these action items. We hope these positive changes will radiate out into our community and better serve all those who wish to engage with us.

It takes all of us moving toward greater equity to create change. We invite you to join us on this journey, hold us accountable, and consider what change you can enact to draw the circle wider in your own community.

We encourage you to utilize the below resources so you can participate in learning alongside us:

Books

1. [How to be an Anti-Racist](#) - Ibram X. Kendi
2. [Reframing the Musical: Race, Culture and Identity](#) - Sarah Whitfield, ed.
3. [White Fragility: Why it's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#) - Robin DiAngelo
4. [Caste: The Origins of our Discontents](#) - Isabel Wilkerson
5. [Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor](#) - Layla F. Saad

Web Resources

1. [Question Everything: More Deeply Acknowledging our White Privilege and Where We Go from Here](#) - David Sisco & Laura Josepher
2. [Compassionate Dialogue: Using the RIR Protocol](#) - Epoch Education
3. [Woke Supremacy](#)
4. [Casting a Wider Net](#)
5. [6 Ways to be a Better Ally to People Living with Disabilities](#)

Organizations & Movements

1. [Broadway Advocacy Coalition](#)

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2. [Broadway for Racial Justice](#)
3. [We See You White American Theatre](#)
4. [Black Lives Matter Resources](#)
5. [Trans Justice Funding Project](#)
6. [LGBTQ Freedom Fund](#)
7. [Diversability](#)