

Allyship Statement

(Quarter 1: January 15 - April 15, '22)

Reflections on 2021

As we enter into this New Year, we are reflecting on how best to continue reimagining our company's culture and procedures to create equity in our community. We acknowledge we are still very early in our DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) work. We continue to be humbled by the significance of this work and what is possible when a community comes together to create necessary change.

It is our intention to be fully transparent about our process. As such, we want to share with you some actions we have taken that have created positive outcomes in our company and others that have not been as successful.

In early Summer 2021, we dismantled our old submission process, which we now recognize was a means of gate-keeping. We created new submission guidelines and a more direct submission process, which allows writers to have a better sense of how their work is being evaluated and by whom. You can find our updated submission guidelines and process by [clicking here](#). You can read about our current quarterly submission panel by [clicking here](#).

Since we amended our submission process, we have seen an increase in new submissions. Moreover, the submission pool has been more diverse. Approximately a third of the writers who have submitted in recent months identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and a third of the writers were outside the United States. While there is more work to do to engender the trust of writers of all backgrounds and experiences, the data suggests we are moving in the right direction.

This past Fall, we essayed to reexamine our radio show, In Between the Lines, on [MusicalTheatreRadio.com](#). Prior to our engaging in DEI work, our show solely featured the work of writers on [ContemporaryMusicalTheatre.com](#) who were, by in large, white cisgender theatre artists. Starting in October 2021, our second season has been much more varied in its

format and guests, featuring frank conversations about where our industry currently is and the work still to be done.

While the online radio station's available reporting is limited, from the data provided to us, we see an overall upward trend in listenership for Season 2 of In Between the Lines. We also see greater increased interest in a handful of episodes from Season 2 on our [soundcloud.com](https://www.soundcloud.com) page in comparison to Season 1. We will continue to experiment with new show formats and will work with [MusicalTheatreRadio.com](https://www.MusicalTheatreRadio.com) to increase our listenership in an effort to amplify the diverse voices on our show.

This summer, we sent out two separate but identical voluntary self-identifying surveys to our writers and subscribers in an effort to better assess the diversity of people already utilizing our website. We explained the purpose of our inquiry and allowed writers and subscribers to share their pronouns and any meaningful intersections of identity (e.g. biracial, queer, South Asian) with the option to remain anonymous. Approximately 24% of the writers responded to the survey. By comparison, only 31 of 1,250 subscribers (2.5%) responded to the survey.

The low response rate was paired with some critical response. Despite our attempts to thoughtfully explain the importance of creating a baseline of information from which we could make informed decisions about our DEI work, a handful of people from both groups emailed us explaining they felt our voluntary survey was invasive. We also discovered that we had been making incorrect assumptions about the identity of some of our writers. It has become clear that we must continue to work at earning our writer and subscribers' trust and better explain how similar surveys might support the work we are doing. We also will be more careful to not misrepresent a person's background or experience, knowing it can be a source of great pain.

Finally, over the last several months, we have created and populated a new "Writer's Identity" search filter on our site. This allows subscribers to search for songs by writers with intersections of identity meaningful to them. During this process, we invited our current roster of writers to voluntarily share their pronouns and any identity markers they wished to make public. Approximately 30% of writers shared their pronouns, which are now reflected in their bio on their profile page, and 23% shared identity markers.

We are grateful to all our writers who participated and will continue to encourage those who have not yet added this information to their profile to do so. We will strive for at least 45% participation in the coming quarters and have incorporated the voluntary self-identifying survey into the submission process for new writers.

If you would like to know more about our previous goals, please read our 2021 Allyship Statements: [Q. 2](#), [Q. 3](#), and [Q4](#).

2022 Quarter 1 Goals

We have designed our 2022 Q. 1 Allyship Goals to continue moving our company toward a more equitable future:

1. **Reimagining Our Site for Transgender, Non-Binary, & Gender-Expansive Subscribers:** It is important to us that those who identify as transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive know that we have thought of them in how we have designed our company's website. For instance, some may find traditional vocal categories (e.g. soprano, mezzo-soprano, etc.) to either not be representative of their lived experience or potentially triggering dysphoria. We wish to educate ourselves and, to this end, will commit to the following steps:
 - a. Offering a group of transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive performing artists and teachers free access to our website and then meeting with the group to consider:
 - i. What does the transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive community need from the theatre industry as a whole, and from companies like ours?
 - ii. How can we speak to those needs through our company's culture and procedures?
 - b. Implementing changes discussed and reviewing these changes with the group for further comment
2. **Uplift National and International Writers:** While many still think of New York City as one of the epicenters for musical theatre, it is clear that the industry is now international. We recognize, however, that geo-location is an important part of diversification. Unfortunately, our current roster of writers does not reflect that. Currently, only 2% of the writers on our roster are international and more than 64% of our writers are based in New York City. We wish to expand our network by:
 - a. Researching the writers of musicals produced by US, Canadian, and international regional theatres and utilizing resources like the Institute for Composer Diversity, newukmusicals.co.uk, and members of our community to connect with a diverse array of international writers
 - b. Asking international writers what kind of support they need from a company like ours and making adjustments to our submission process based on the feedback
 - c. Adding a Language Search Option, allowing subscribers to search for songs in a language other than English (e.g. Spanish, Korean, etc...)
3. **Developing Relationships with Organizations Invested in DEI Work:** As we continue to expand scope of our DEI work, we desire to create long-lasting partnerships with other organizations engaged in this work. This will help us continue to grow and build valuable synergies that further support equity in our industry. To this end, we will:
 - a. Research local and national theater companies and organizations with strong DEI missions

- b. Reach out to three to five companies and organizations and begin a dialogue about the work each of us is doing
 - c. Develop a Partnership Considerations Handout, which will be used to ascertain which companies and organizations would continue to challenge us to grow and partner with us in our DEI work
4. **Increasing Messaging of DEI Work to (Potential) Subscribers:**
- a. As noted above, we are invested in continuing to more clearly communicate the work we are doing and seeking to do while also acknowledging the work of others. We commit to:
 - i. Clarifying the message of the work we are engaged in, both in email correspondences and social media platforms
 - ii. Utilizing our social media platforms to uplift the work of a diverse array of writers, whether or not they are part of our site
 - iii. Regularly dedicating our email communications and social media platforms to companies and organizations engaged in DEI work or resources that could be helpful to our community

When we began this work last April, we were aware systemic changes needed to be made to our company. Now, after several months working toward our goals, we can more clearly acknowledge how multi-layered this work is. There is always more each of us can do to create space for others who, for far too long, have felt they were outside the circle looking in.

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

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

Articles

1. [How Do We Hold Arts Leaders Accountable Towards Equitable Change?](#) - Nikko Kimzin
2. [Your Voice is Your Power: Exploring Racism and Racial Equity in Entertainment](#) - Christa Skiles
3. [Actors Equity Opens Access to All Actors and Stage Managers Who Have Worked Professionally in the United States](#) - Stephi Wild
4. [The Why Behind DEI: How Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives Benefit Business](#) - Niamh Graham

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5. [No. Every Person of Color Does Not Need To Be A DEI Professional](#) - Janice Gassam Asare
6. [Is your Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy Diverse Enough?](#) - Allan Fair

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
6. [Beyond Diversity: 12 Non-Obvious Ways to Build a More Inclusive World](#) - Rohit Bhargava & Jennifer Brown
7. [The Wake Up: Closing the Gap Between Good Intentions and Real Change](#) - Michelle MiJung Kim

Videos

1. [Draw the Circle Wide](#) (Series 2) - Tom Gualtieri & David Sisco
2. [How to Get Serious About Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace](#) - Janet Stovall
3. [Celebrating Disability as Part of Human Diversity](#) - Catalina Devandas Aguilar
4. [Indigenous in Plain Sight](#) - Gregg Deal

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](#)
6. [Native Land Map](#)

Organizations & Movements

1. [Broadway Advocacy Coalition](#)
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](#)