

# Allyship Statement

## (Quarter 3: August-October, '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).

This past June, [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' 2018-2019 seasons. Less than 20% of writers represented were people of color. We see a similar lack of representation on ContemporaryMusicalTheatre.com and continue to wrestle with our failure to engage writers of all experiences.

We firmly believe the lack of diversity on our site 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.

We acknowledge our prior attempts to create a more equitable space for our writers and subscribers as 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. We apologize for any harm we may have caused as a result of our ignorance.

Now that we have a clearer understanding of where we are as an organization and our role in the theatrical community, we have begun to transform ContemporaryMusicalTheatre.com into a space of belonging for all. We make a commitment to continue enacting meaningful change in

both the Culture and Policies of our company, which we hope will improve both our writers and subscribers' experiences.

Last quarter we agreed to reimagine our submission process, create visual cues of equity in the design of our site, and survey our writers and subscribers to better ascertain how we can celebrate our many intersections of diversity. Here is a brief overview of our work in these key areas:

1. **We Reimagined Our Submission Process:**

- a. We created 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). The new document, which is available [here](#), explains each step of the submission process for total transparency.
- b. We simplified the submission process by creating an online portal where writers can easily tell us about their work as theatre artists and upload their songs.
- c. We have just announced a new, diverse submission committee, who will regularly review artists and their submitted materials. You can read about them [here](#).

2. **We Created Visual Cues of Equity:**

- a. We updated our website banner to make it more inclusive and welcoming for all.
- b. We created a new Equity and Inclusion page on [our site](#), where Statements of Allyship like this one will live. In order to remain totally transparent, the page will be regularly updated to outline our goals and progress.

3. **We Surveyed Our Writers & Subscribers:**

- a. In an effort to ascertain and celebrate our writers and subscribers' many different intersections of diversity, we created a voluntary survey, which will then be used to create searchable tags on our site (e.g. BIPOC writer, etc...) in the coming quarter.

While there is much work yet to be done, we are optimistic these changes will serve as a firm foundation upon which we can build.

In this next 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 3's Key Result Areas:

1. **Reimagining "In Between the Lines" Radio Show:** Last January, we launched a new radio show entitled "In Between the Lines" on MusicalTheatreRadio.com. All the writers and songs featured on our first 21-week season were an active part of ContemporaryMusicalTheatre. Because of the current lack of diversity on our site, we lifted up mainly white voices, only underscoring our company's inequity. We commit to

reimagining our radio show for the forthcoming season in order to celebrate a more diverse array of voices in our industry. This will include:

- a. Lifting up the work of accomplished contemporary musical theatre writers regardless of their affiliation to ContemporaryMusicalTheatre.com.
  - b. Interviewing theatre artists and members of organizations who are working to create a more equitable industry.
  - c. Offering new perspectives on our industry by inviting BIPOC, trans, non-binary, gender-fluid, disabled, and neuro-diverse theatre makers to co-host a show.
2. **Adding Searchable Tags to Our Website:** As mentioned above, we have collected voluntary identifying survey data from writers and subscribers alike. We are now ready to take the following steps:
- a. Analyzing the survey data, which will be used to make internal decisions on how best to move our equity and inclusion work forward.
  - b. Adding searchable tags (e.g. Latinx writer), which will live on each writer's profile and be linked to their songs when approved by the writer.
  - c. Adding pronouns to each writer's bio when approved by the writer.
3. **Updating Text on Our Website:** We plan to build on the work we did last quarter by continuing to make inclusive visual cues and language a hallmark of our company's site. We will be taking the following actions:
- a. Rewriting our mission statement to more specifically outline how we, as a company, intend to create educational opportunities, build community, and increase engagement.
  - b. Adding a land acknowledgement to our site after educating ourselves about the importance of such acknowledgments and the rich history of the lands on which we operate our business.
4. **Engaging New Writers:** Now that we have reimagined our submission and review process, we are eager to welcome new writers to join our site. We will be taking the following actions:
- a. Following up with writers we have attempted to engage before, sharing our commitment to celebrating all voices.
  - b. Researching and engaging BIPOC, disabled, neuro-diverse, transgender, non-binary, and gender-fluid theatre creators.
  - c. Creating a one-page sheet to share with theatre-based organizations about our interest in engaging a diverse array of writers.

As we shared last quarter, each of these steps requires many different phases of change. We 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:

### 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

### 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

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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](#)