

As we move toward a new season, we at MTR have reflected on our constitutional changes and previous DEI commitments and have decided to make positive changes to our approach towards fostering an inclusive musical theater community. At our core, we believe in sharing inclusive stories through innovative theater and we aim to use the upcoming season to implement initiatives that continue our pursuit to encourage a safe space for people from all backgrounds, ethnicities, and experiences.

In recent years, we have revised many aspects of our constitution, including but not limited to, changing our board application and pitch processes, revising our Constitution, and adding a DEI Chair to our Executive Board. We have seen success in many of the initiatives we have taken, and want to continue making changes for the better.

In order to ensure equity in the casting room, we have first acknowledged that representation begins with the choice of story. We are actively looking for directors who want to engage in musical theater that reflects the diversity of the world we live in and amplifies voices that have been historically suppressed.

We, at MTR, want to advocate for at least fifty percent of the people involved in the show to be people of colour. In this new 50% initiative, we want to ensure representation in the processes of selecting creative team members, casting and hiring designers. Understanding the demands of White American Theater (W.A.T.) and BIPOC populations of USC, we want to ensure that the space we are creating as an independent student production company is a place where everyone is welcomed and wanted. By encouraging at least half of the production to be people of color, we want to reclaim spaces that were previously scarcely accessible.

As a student run company, our goal is to provide opportunities and champion diverse storytelling. Therefore, as we move forward, we will not be making resumes or professional headshots mandatory. We will be posting character breakdowns, and breakdowns for positions on the design and production teams. We will be actively questioning all pitches for our shows under the context of these new DEI initiatives. We will be hosting extensive DEI workshops for the creative teams of all MTR productions to ensure that important conversations regarding diversity and inclusivity within the show are constantly had. We have and will continue to educate ourselves in matters of diversity and equity. Below we have accumulated several articles that we want to share with you all. We implore you to read them and gain a new perspective on the musical theatre industry.

We acknowledge that there is still a lot to be done. We will constantly be revising and reworking our initiatives based on what is and what is not working. We are here to listen and we are here to make musical theater a safer and more inclusive environment for all artists.

Thank you for your support,

- MTR Board'22

Unpacking “Diversity” In Musical Theatre / Micheal R Jackson

<https://howround.com/unpacking-diversity-musical-theatre>

White Actors and Directors Still Dominate Broadway Stages, Report Finds/ Sarah Bahr

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/01/theater/new-york-theater-diversity-report.html?auth=login-google>

Asian American Performers Actors Coalition: Visibility Report 2019

<http://www.aapacnyc.org/>

Standing Up for Playwrights and Against ‘Colorblind’ Casting/ Teresa Eyring

<https://www.americantheatre.org/2016/01/07/standing-up-for-playwrights-and-against-colorblind-casting/>