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[Asian](#), [Culture](#), [Manhattan](#)

‘Inclusive Casting’ Hasn’t Helped Asians on NY Stage, Report Finds

By [Justin Chan](#) | [FilAm](#)

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The FilAm

Lea Salonga was the first Asian to play the roles of Éponine and Fantine in the musical *Les Misérables* on Broadway.

While African-American actors have made some inroads in New York City’s theater world, Asian American actors are not part of “the trend toward more inclusive casting,” according to a recent report.

The report, released by the [Asian American Performers Action Coalition](#), asserts that Asian American actors are vastly underrepresented on the New York stage, [The FilAm](#) reported. While the percentage of minority actors in non-traditional roles has increased, Asian American actors are the least likely to secure roles that are not racially specific.

The coalition released the report to raise awareness of the problem, [The FilAm](#) reported:

This is not the first time that Asian American actors have spoken out en masse and using numbers to back up their claims. This time though, they come equipped with graphs and pie charts.

Since September 2011, Asian American actors have been banding together to address the problem of a lack of representation of Asian American actors on New York City’s leading stages during the past five years.

[Crain’s New York Business](#) broke down the numbers further:

Though Asian-Americans comprise 12.9% of New York City, Asian-American actors accounted for only 1.6% of available roles in new productions on Broadway, 3.2% of roles at nonprofit companies and 2.3% of the roles industry-wide. Already minuscule, the number of Asian-Americans on stage is below what it was five years ago—making them the only minority group not experiencing an increase.

The AAPAC also organized a discussion moderated by Tony-Award winning playwright David Henry Hwang yesterday, titled “RepresentAsian: The Changing Face of New York Theater,” at Fordham University.

Though the Asian American population has rapidly grown, Asian American actors made up only 1.6 percent of all available roles in recent Broadway productions, the report found. Among all minority groups, African Americans were the most likely to find a role that is not racially specific, the [FilAm](#) reported.

Compared to Asian American actors, African-American performers were more fortunate. They’ve been employed more often than Asian or Latino actors are. In the 2008-09 and 2009-10 seasons, the percentage of black actors to total number of roles doubled (to 16 percent) compared to the situation five years ago (8

percent). Last year, that percentage was 14 percent.

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