

Study: Diversity in New York Theater Roles Rose in 2014-15 Season

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Photo



Ken Watanabe and Kelli O'Hara in "The King and I," which, a study said, accounted for over half of all jobs for Asian-American actors in the 2014-2015 season in New York. Credit Sara Krulwich/The New York Times

Minority actors, long underrepresented on New York's stages, are winning an increasing percentage of roles, according to a new study by the [Asian American Performers Action Coalition](#).

During the theater season of 2014 to 2015, about 30 percent of roles at the city's most prominent theaters went to minority actors, up from 24 percent the previous season, the organization said. That is the highest percentage in the nine years that the group has been studying the issue.

But much of the diversity was at nonprofit theaters, which hired a significantly higher percentage of minority performers than did commercial Broadway shows. And, for Asian-American actors, a single Broadway show, the Lincoln Center Theater revival of "[The King and I](#)," was responsible for half of all jobs that season.

The study found that white actors filled 70 percent of roles at the theaters studied, while black actors filled 17 percent, Asian-American actors 9 percent, and Latino actors 3 percent.

The study said that for Off Broadway, the Public Theater had the most diverse season, while MCC theater had the least diverse one.

The study did not include data from the current season, which appears to be the most diverse ever on Broadway.

As part of an effort to call attention to the concern about challenges facing Asian-American performers, several organizations planned a forum Monday night at Fordham University, and also employed a hashtag, #MyYellowFaceStory, that is being used on Twitter by theater artists sharing their experiences: