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**OBIE-WINNING AAPAC RELEASES EXPANDED 2017-18 DIVERSITY REPORT FOR NEW YORK CITY THEATERS; POINTS TO CONTINUED SYSTEMIC BIAS FOR WHITE ACTORS, WRITERS AND DIRECTORS.**

(NEW YORK, Sept 30, 2020) The Obie Award-winning Asian American Performers Action Coalition (AAPAC) released its newly titled annual report today, "THE VISIBILITY REPORT: RACIAL REPRESENTATION ON NEW YORK CITY STAGES," covering employment statistics by race for actors, playwrights, composers, librettists and directors for the 2017-18 season for all of Broadway and the 18 largest non-profit theatre companies in New York City. It is the only publicly available report of its kind.

Updates to the report this year include an Economic Impact assessment which takes into account the average weekly salaries earned by actors at venues of different sizes; expanded intersectional analysis on how writer, director and actor data may relate to each other; letter grades for each theatre company; and a revision of terminology used. The cover letter of the report states, "we are now being specific in tracking race vs. ethnicity; we are changing "non-traditional casting" to "Inclusive Casting;" and we are no longer using the term 'minority' which literally means 'less than' when in actuality, BIPOC are the global majority, and we must hold space for ourselves as such."

Key findings of the 2017-18 season include:

At 61.5 % of available roles across the industry, White actors continue to be the only race to overrepresent by almost double their respective population size in NYC. Black actors represented at 23.2%, Asian American actors 6.9%, Latinx actors 6.1%, MENA actors 2% and Indigenous Actors 0.2%.

White actors occupied almost 2/3rds or 66.4% of available roles on Broadway. At 60.1%, the non-profit stages were only marginally more diverse.

Only 20% of all available roles in the industry were inclusively cast (cast without regard to race or where race was not germane to the role). Asian American actors were the group least likely to be cast without regard to race.

There is no question that the New York theatre industry had a bias for White writers. Whether looking at Broadway (80% of shows written by White writers) or the non-profits (79.1% of shows), the results were remarkably consistent: White writers were produced almost four times as often as their BIPOC counterparts. Overall, Black writers represented at 9.6%, Asian American writers at 6.2%, MENA writers at 2.8%, and Latinx writers at 2.3%.

The study found no clear positive correlation between BIPOC writers hired leading to more BIPOC bodies on stage — particularly on Broadway. Out of the shows with at least one BIPOC writer on Broadway, a glaring 62.5% had casts that were more than half White compared to 25% in the non-profit sector, suggesting that there may be more pressure in the commercial sector to center White narratives. Asian American writers, for example, made significant gains in the 17-18 season penning 8% of all Broadway shows where the previous year had employed none—it also marked the first year an Asian American woman playwright was produced on Broadway (Young Jean Lee’s *Straight White Men* at Second Stage)—yet Asian American actors were the only group to drop from the previous year.

White directors clearly got to shape the story the majority of the time. 93.8% of shows were helmed by White directors on Broadway and 84.6% at the non-profits. In the 2017-18 season, 100% of Broadway musicals were directed by White directors. White directors were also given control of 100% of the Broadway shows written by BIPOC writers and/or about the BIPOC experience (i.e. *The Band’s Visit*, *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, *Once on This Island*, *Latin History for Morons*). This was a frequent occurrence within the non-profit sector as well, where it happened 57.1% of the time.

In its new Economic Impact section for the non-profit sector, the study found some theatre companies guilty of redlining the most diverse stories to the smallest stages which correlated with lower salaries, creating a system of economic inequality. For every \$1 spent on BIPOC actors, theatre companies spent \$1.70 on White actors. The theatre company with the highest wage gap among theaters with multiple stages was The Roundabout Theatre Company. For every \$1 going to a BIPOC actor, the Roundabout spent \$6.09 on White actors. Only 1 of their 8 shows during the 17-18 season was written by a BIPOC writer and it was produced on their smallest stage. This was compounded by the nearly exclusive hiring of White actors at their larger Off Broadway and Broadway stages.

Rankings for the 2017-18 Non-Profit season are as follows:

#### Most Diverse

1. Ars Nova Theatre
2. Signature Theatre
3. MCC Theater
4. New York Theatre Workshop
5. The Public Theater

#### Least Diverse

1. Irish Repertory Theatre
2. WP Theater
3. Roundabout Theatre Company
4. The New Group
5. Primary Stages

More details and charts can be found in the report, available free for download at [www.aapacnyc.org](http://www.aapacnyc.org)

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The mission of Asian American Performers Action Coalition (AAPAC) is to expand the perception of Asian American performers in order to increase their access to and representation on New York City's stages. AAPAC publishes the only publicly available annual statistics report on racial representation in the NYC area of its kind, and has been a leader in discussions and forums on diversity with artistic institutions and the Broadway community. In 2020, the company was given an Obie Award for advocacy in the field of diversity, equity and inclusion. The expanded 2017-18 report would not have been possible without the generous support and partnership of the American Theatre Wing. [www.aapacnyc.org](http://www.aapacnyc.org)