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## WNYC News Blog

## Actors of Color Less than A Quarter of Roles on NYC Stages

Monday, February 11, 2013 - 04:00 AM

By [Alec Hamilton](#) : Assistant Producer, WNYC News

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The Mystery of Edwin Drood.

Roundabout Theater Company at Studio 54. L-R: Kiira Schmidt, Will Chase, Stephanie J. Block, Betsey Wolfe, Jessie Mueller, Gregg Edelman, Andy Karl, Shannon Lewis (© Joan Marcus, 2012)

A new report finds that actors of color were cast in less than a quarter of roles on New York City stages last year.

The report, released Monday by the [Asian American Performers Action Coalition](#), found that from 2011 to 2012, African American actors were cast in 16 percent of all roles, Latino actors in 3 percent and Asian American actors in 3 percent. Other minorities and actors with disabilities together comprised 1 percent. The 77 percent of remaining roles all went to white actors.

Pun Bandhu is an actor and a member of the AAPAC steering committee. He says there is an assumption by many theater companies that predominantly white audiences only want performances that reflect their experiences, but he doesn't think that's the case.

"I give white audiences much more credit than that," he said. "I think that they want to see things that reflect the world that we live in as it truly is with all of its complexities."

Peter Kim, also with AAPAC, says the rate has remained in the low 20th percentile for the last six theater seasons. An actor himself, Kim says he's had experience with this firsthand.

"It does feel like when I walk into the room or even before I walk into the room that my race is considered," he said.

The Signature Theater Company had the highest rate of actors of color, while the Public Theater company had the highest number of minority actors cast in roles traditionally cast with white actors.

Minority actors were more likely to be hired by commercial productions than not-for-profit theater companies.

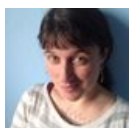
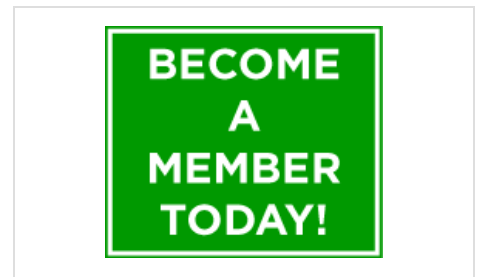
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