

# New York Sees Spike in Diversity on Theater Stages

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Ruthie Ann Miles and the cast of 'The King and I' perform onstage at the 2015 Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall on June 7, 2015.  
(Theo Wargo / Getty)

Thirty percent of all roles on New York City stages went to actors of color during the 2014-2015 season, the highest figure on record. That's according to a new report from the Asian American Performers Action Coalition.

Pun Bandhu, a spokesman for the Coalition, said Asian American actors saw the biggest increase. They went from 4 percent to 9 percent of all roles, largely because of one monster musical.

"The King and I" employed almost half of the Asian actors in the New York City industry last year," said Bandhu, who cautioned that the numbers could easily fluctuate as shows came and went.

Non-profit theaters were the driving force in hiring minority actors. But on Broadway it was a dramatically different picture — where Latino representation was just 2 percent, and African American representation was 9 percent, down from 21 percent the year before. Those numbers don't include current Broadway productions that opened this season, like "Hamilton," "On Your Feet," "Shuffle Along" and "Eclipsed."

The most diverse theater company last season was The Public, where 62 percent of all roles went to actors of color, largely on the strength of Hamilton when it was Off Broadway. On the other end of the spectrum was MCC Theater, which had no actors of color last season.