

Creating a Space for Gender Diverse Theatre

Theatre in New England is an overwhelmingly cisgender experience, and the world is rapidly moving forward. Transgender and non-binary artists exist and are ready to work! It is necessary that we all do our part to include them, when television and film are already making strides that leave theatre in the dust.

There are lots of ways you can foster gender diversity in your theatre. It may feel like a big task and you may have some rewiring of your own thinking to do, but there are simple changes you can make right now to support transgender and non-binary artists.

Starting Today:

-give yourself the kindness of making mistakes as you work towards gender diversity

-normalize identifying pronouns by adding them to your email signature

William Shakespeare

he/him/his

Playwright-In-Residence, Globe Theatre

Up Next: A Midsummer Night's Dream

-introduce yourself including your pronouns

-add a space for pronouns and gender on all audition forms

-add a space for pronouns and gender on all applications

This Month:

-invite people to join you in fostering gender diversity

-discuss gender diversity with your staff, be open to questions, and defer answers towards transgender or non-binary people and/or resources

-begin meetings with introductions that include pronouns along with names and other pertinent information.

“Hi, I'm Juliet Capulet. My pronouns are she/her/hers, and I'm playing Mercutio.”

-read plays by transgender writers

-see a play by a transgender or non binary playwright, starring transgender or non-binary actors

-read a play you're familiar with, ask yourself which of these characters have to be cisgender, ask yourself what happens if any of the characters are transgender

“Hmm... Rosalind seems very comfortable dressed as Ganymede. Could *As You Like It* be about a genderfluid person?”

Next Month:

-convert your theatre bathrooms into gender neutral spaces using appropriate signage

-prepare to talk to patrons who may be unfamiliar with why gender neutral spaces are necessary

-find and read more plays by transgender writers. Google search is your friend!

-notice how many trans or non-binary people are in the plays you are producing, whether onstage, backstage, or in the audience

-notice the ways transgender or non-binary people intersect with other oppressed identities and any initiatives you have made to serve other underrepresented communities

-talk to your transgender and non-binary friends about the shows that have spoken to them, the shows they have loved, and the shows that have made them feel lousy
"I really loved that play, until I realized the man in a dress was supposed to be a joke."

This Year:

- program plays by transgender writers in your season and hire trans people to work on them.
- hire transgender and non-binary directors, stage managers, designers, actors, and other personnel on your main stage productions
- pay transgender artists and theatre professionals equal wages to all other artists being paid to produce work for your theatre
- become a resource for your patrons who have questions about gender diversity
- become an outspoken ally for transgender and non-binary people in spaces where they may not feel welcome

More Resources:

Equality for Her: Gender Diversity

An introduction to gender diversity with a glossary of common terms, authored by a trans woman.
<http://equalityforher.org/resources/gender-diversity>

GLAAD Tips for Allies

A guide to allies of trans and non-binary people on how to best support them.
<https://www.glaad.org/transgender/allies>

The New Play Exchange

A network of playwrights, many of whom identify as transgender or non-binary. You can filter plays by subject matter, character identities, and author identities. Part of The National New Play Network.
<https://newplayexchange.org/>

The Non-Binary Monologues Project

A collection of monologues for non-binary actors to find material for auditions. Lists authors and plays that identify with non-binary identity or contain non-binary gender subject matter. Run by a non-binary person.
<https://nonbinarymonologues.wordpress.com/>

The Killjoy List

A 2014 response to The Kilroys List, consisting entirely of trans and non-binary playwrights. Authored by a trans man. More recent Kilroy's Lists have been inclusive of trans and non-binary writers, but not exclusively.
<http://joshuabastiancole.weebly.com/blog/the-killjoys>