

## **MUSICAL THEATRE GUILD DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STATEMENT**

Musical Theatre Guild (MTG) began in 1996 in the living rooms of musical theatre artists wanting to explore and preserve the unique American art form of musical theatre by presenting either forgotten, neglected, or unfairly dismissed Broadway musicals. These casual, lightly rehearsed staged readings among friends became regularly scheduled events and eventually moved into theatre spaces, where they've been attended by the public ever since.

Through the years, MTG has grown, evolved, and learned along the way on our journey to becoming the vibrant non-profit theatre company it is today. We recognize the need to expand our ideas and efforts to create a more diverse organization that reflects both our values and those of the community at large and extends beyond the living rooms we first used as our stages.

Despite our efforts to produce more diverse shows in our seasons, MTG realizes we need a stronger structure to inspire more diverse individuals to join our organization and for our diverse guest artist talent to join our core membership. Without diversity, we lack the voices to help tell the stories that reach beyond the status quo and we hinder our goal to reflect the communities we want to serve and inspire when casting from within our membership.

MTG believes the arts directly impact the way the world sees people and how people see themselves. Cultural and racial equity are directly linked to the humanity and spirit of individuals and communities, and the arts reflect the aspects of life that make us all human. Stories of pain, joy, grief, struggle, and triumph are universal within all of us.

Representation allows stronger bonds within individual relationships and communities. It brings an understanding to the forefront that while we are each unique individuals, we are all human and share the same universal truths. The arts and artists build this bridge. And as artists ourselves, MTG is dedicated to the work of better mirroring diverse communities and stories on stage, in our membership, and within our organization.

To build an artistic home for everyone, we must work to open our doors to those who can take us beyond the stories we are used to hearing and/or how we tell them. This begins with working within our organization to build the internal structures needed to better hear diverse voices and stories and include marginalized community members and artists from the BIPOC, differently-abled, and LGBTQIA+ communities and beyond. These efforts not only include actions that benefit our members and organization as a whole, but also those that benefit our dedicated patrons, donors, general audience, and community outreach.

We are a group of volunteers and artists committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion within MTG. We understand the value of hearing and sharing diverse stories and bringing communities together. This is a journey in which we realize we may falter at times. Efforts must be made show by show, season by season. But, we are dedicated in our mission to continue to grow, learn and evolve into a company where all feel welcome, heard, and seen—on stage, behind the curtain, within our audience, and in our community at large.