Anti-Racism Outcomes: December 2020

In December 2020, we hosted two internal assessment / anti-racism working sessions. They centered Performers and Organizational Culture/Leadership. Participants included past and present staff and collaborators. More than 50% of the participants were people of color and represented the following disciplines: actors, dramaturgs, producers, designers, directors, writers and administrators.

These were our guiding questions, which were used as a lens through which to address various topics:
➔ How can we ensure the physical and mental well-being of the Black, Indigenous and people of color who are working with us?
➔ How can we ensure an equitable creative process?
➔ What can harm repair look like?
➔ How can we take steps at the organizational level to ensure an equitable, inclusive working environment?
➔ Where does white supremacy live in our organization? Resource doc.
➔ How do we include more voices in the decision-making process when we cannot compensate financially?
➔ How do we prevent harm in our decision-making?

Policies / Best Practices (in no specific order)**:**

❑ **Code of Conduct**
 ❑ We will be formalizing written anti-racism policies, including an updated code of conduct, with a focus on building harm prevention into our policies and practices.

❑ **Reporting Mechanisms**
 ❑ We will be creating opportunities to report directly, in the moment or anonymously or through other reporting mechanisms. The goals of all reporting mechanisms are to protect BIPOC artists, help move towards reconciliation and to use what we've learned to inform future policy & best practices.
 ❑ Since June 2020, we've had an anonymous google doc for reporting but are investigating other more secure channels and best practices around this method.

- ❏ We will be establishing a Non-Equity Deputy (NED; per Chicago Theatre Standards) for each rehearsal process. The NED will not be a member of leadership staff, separate from the Stage Manager.
- ❏ **Conflict Resolution**
  - ❏ Our overall philosophy is to be progress-based vs. punitive.
  - ❏ Conflict resolution will be closely tied to Reporting Mechanisms.
  - ❏ Tools: we'll be adopting Chicago Theatre Standards' Concern Resolution Path.

- ❏ **Accountability**
  - ❏ We discussed spheres of accountability: internal (company members) and public (audience and theatre community at large)
  - ❏ Accountability must be connected to reporting strategies
  - ❏ Goals: Creating a clear protocol for what happens if there is an instance of racial aggression.

- ❏ **Harm Repair**
  - ❏ Harm repair must center the person who has been harmed.
  - ❏ Harm repair is a highly individualized process and we will make space for individualized conversations around personal harm repair practices.
  - ❏ We will continue to use our Session Agreements before all rehearsals as a form of harm prevention.
  - ❏ Tools: we're implementing the Oops/Ouch method (see Chicago Theatre Standards)

- ❏ **Cultural Agency**
  - ❏ We also reinforced the need for encouraging and allowing all artists to self-identify.
  - ❏ As a company that devises plays as an ensemble over a longer developmental schedule, we discussed avenues for consent around content during the devising process.
  - ❏ Future: incorporating disability justice practices.

- ❏ **Performance / Production**
  - ❏ To ensure the safety of performers during a performance run, we discussed ways to remove urgency and build in time for check-ins, reporting and conflict resolution on a daily basis.
  - ❏ Working with venues to establish a shared anti-racism agreement

❏ Future: training & empowering white artists/company members to recognize and disrupt racism in the moment.

❏ **Compensation**
  ❏ To date: we have been prioritizing consistent payment of artists and moving towards an hourly rate when possible.
  ❏ We have discontinued the practice of hiring unpaid interns and have transitioned those positions to entry-level stipended roles.
  ❏ Alternatives to capitalism: compensation through shared company resources.
  ❏ Future: better defining scope of roles when setting rate and seeking out an environmental scan of industry from different tiers across budget sizes.

❏ **Budget Transparency & Values**
  ❏ Starting a practice of sharing full project and/or annual budgets with company members during the planning process and sharing completed or past budgets publicly (e.g. in an annual report). We are looking for models for this.
  ❏ Developing a feedback process when creating new budgets
  ❏ Decreasing disparities between stipends across positions.

❏ **Decision Making**
  ❏ In order to include more voices in the decision-making process, we will work towards building a timeline with opportunities for questions/feedback.
  ❏ Utilizing Race Forward's equity primes or their Choice Points worksheet to measure impacts of decision-making that may be unintentionally reinforcing bias or barriers, and to ensure a more equitable outcome.
  ❏ Tools for requesting/receiving feedback: open meetings, online surveys.