

Transforming our future through equity



DENVER CENTER FOR
THE
PERFORMING ARTS

OUR COMMITMENTS TO YOU

*From the Denver Center for the Performing Arts
to our Staff, Artists, and Audiences*

*“We engage and inspire through the
transformative power of live theatre.”*

At the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, we believe that live theatre is an irresistible force. We believe that a play has the power to engage people across differences and unite them in shared storytelling. We believe that a story can inspire us to take action to create a more just and loving world. We believe that the humanity shared between artist and audience can help us reckon with our past, understand our present, and strive towards a better future. We believe that the theatre can transform us—and be transformed by us.

The unprecedented challenges of 2020—the closing of our stages due to a pandemic whose health and economic impacts have disproportionately harmed Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities; a renewed cry for racial justice around the globe; the collective soul-searching of a nation shaping its identity and future path—has given us a renewed energy to do the critical work of reimagining our organization while holding firm to our most cherished values: integrity, respect, excellence, innovation, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The reflection spurred in the local, regional, and national theatre field by the interconnected struggles of the Black Lives Matter movement and the collective voices of *We See You*, *White American Theatre* has provided us a new opportunity to restate our unequivocal commitment to building a more inclusive organization, where every team member, artist, student, audience member, and community member feels welcomed, respected, and affirmed. A place where we all belong.

In many ways, our work on these issues is not new. Generations of leaders, team members, artists, students, audiences, and community partners have acted to make real the values of equity, inclusion, and belonging at the DCPA. They have dedicated their time, energy, and creativity towards addressing persistent shortcomings and barriers to inclusion. We are indebted to the tireless efforts of the DCPA's Peer Advocacy Coalition for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (PACE) Workgroup and the countless, often-unrecognized coalitions of former team members whose advocacy for greater inclusion set the foundation for our present work. Despite the wholehearted dedication of these members of the DCPA community, we have not yet achieved all our goals for equity, inclusion, and belonging. We have more work to do. And we are ready for the challenge.

We recognize that the transformational work ahead of us will not happen overnight. Our long-term commitment falls into five broad focus areas that will serve as the starting point for in-depth assessments of existing systems and exploration of alternative paradigms:

1

ARTISTIC PRACTICE

The vibrant work on our stages is the most visible manifestation of our values at the DCPA.

We are committed to ensuring that our artistic practices nurture and affirm all artists, especially those who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, women, artists with disabilities, and LGBTQ+. We commit to critically assess the impact of our current artistic practices and to continue expanding opportunities for artists through:

- Season selection processes
- Casting practices
- Play commissions
- Creative team representation
- Rehearsal room culture

2

TALENT

The exceptional people whose multidisciplinary work makes the art possible are the beating heart of the DCPA.

We are committed to ensuring that our recruitment, hiring, and retention practices nurture and affirm all team members, especially those who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, women, staff members with disabilities, and LGBTQ+. We commit to assessing and expanding on our current practices to increase the diversity at all levels of our theatre community, including leadership and staff, through:

- Recruitment, hiring, and onboarding
- Apprenticeships and internships
- Professional development and advancement
- Team member retention

3

WORKING CONDITIONS

The health and wellbeing of the DCPA depends upon the existence of a culture of respect and connection.

We are committed to creating the conditions that allow all team members to thrive and grow, especially those who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, women, staff members with disabilities, and LGBTQ+. We commit to an honest assessment of the barriers that stand in the way of holistic wellness and belonging, including:

- Workplace culture
- Production calendar and tech rehearsal schedules
- Anti-racism policies and accountability processes
- Sustainable work/life balance practices

4

INCLUSIVE SPACES

A sense of real belonging at the DCPA is created through spaces that are shaped with the unique needs of diverse communities in mind.

We are committed to instituting the cultural and functional practices that allow all team members, students, audiences, and community members to feel valued and understood, especially those who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, women, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+. We commit to redefining the norms and practices that have historically defined theatre culture to eliminate experiences of exclusion, through:

- Land acknowledgments and culturally knowledgeable practices
- Community engagement
- Audience development
- Audience engagement
- Affinity spaces for marginalized identities

5

EQUITY AND INCLUSION STRUCTURES AND TRAINING

The work of implementing practices that support equity, diversity, inclusion, and access is fundamental to a thriving theatre community and to the DCPA's mission.

We are committed to sharing the skills and analysis that all team members will need to develop themselves and to contribute to an organizational culture that supports everyone, especially those who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, women, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+. We commit to providing a wide array of resources, including:

- Foundational frameworks of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
- Anti-racism training
- Bystander intervention
- Conflict resolution

We appreciate the consummate importance of approaching the pursuit of equity, inclusion, and belonging at the DCPA with intentionality and steadfastness to our guiding principles. If we are to honor our belief that all Black lives matter—that spaces where Black joy, creativity, and empowerment can thrive are also safer spaces for Indigenous Peoples and People of Color—then antiracism¹ principles and practices must be our North Star in dismantling systemic racism. If we are to ensure that no one is left behind or harmed by policies that do not take their needs into consideration, then we must adopt an intersectional² approach that respects the myriad identities each of us contains, including race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability, and much more. If we are to affirm that everyone is valued as fully human, then the solutions to remove barriers to our humanity must be as nuanced as our lived experiences.

As members of one of the largest nonprofit theatre organizations in the American theatre, we recognize we have a unique responsibility to use our collective resources and ingenuity to model inclusive practices and equitable structures.

We own that some of our past efforts may have fallen short of our intentions, and we commit to do better. We welcome the generous engagement of our communities in helping us imagine alternatives. We acknowledge with gratitude and humility that being held accountable by our communities to fully act on our values is an expression of those communities' investment in the health and wellbeing of the DCPA. We embrace the joy of fostering a more just world.

Knowing that this is a never-ending process and that we will learn as we go, here is where we stand. We have only just begun. Expect more.

1 *Antiracism*, as defined by Ibram X. Kendi, is “a powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas.” Antiracist organizations express the idea that racial groups are equal and proactively support policies that reduce racial inequity.

2 *Intersectionality*, as introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.