

Anti-Racism Statement and Commitments

We made a statement back in June about the need for our company to grow and improve in a way that better includes, supports, elevates, and respects the voices of IBPOC artists. Since then a group of IBPOC artists in Calgary, under the title *The 35//50 Initiative*, have put out a formal call to performing arts organizations offering meaningful steps we can take to advance a "more equitable, diverse, inclusive and accessible future" in our industry. Most notably, they ask for a minimum of 35% IBPOC and 50% female or non-binary people in paid, professional positions by the 2024/2025 season. We stand in full support of this initiative and would like to thank these individuals as well as all of the other artists and community organizers who have been doing the work towards holding local organizations accountable for their actions and goals as theatre makers in Calgary.

The 35//50 Initiative has asked for a public receipt of their letter outlining our collective's next steps by August 31st. We wanted to take this as an opportunity to let you in on some of the conversations we've been having as well as some of the changes taking place.

As we have evolved from a group of friends putting scrappy shows up for free in parents' basements to a company able to take on multiple projects a year and partner with nationally recognized arts institutions, we have not consistently met our responsibility to the community to reflect the make-up of that community.

We are currently, and have been throughout our history, a collective with all white leadership. This was never consciously decided upon, but intentionally or not, we understand this is problematic to have left unaddressed. It has generated blindspots in projects we have taken on, artists we have hired, ways we have collaborated with those artists, and how we have engaged with our audiences.

We apologize for all of the ways we have failed to support our IBPOC community, artists, and friends.

We are currently in the process of restructuring the way our company is run, with the objective of finding a new collective model that includes, embraces, and incorporates IBPOC leadership. Our collective is funded on a project-to-project basis; we are not a registered not-for-profit and currently receive no operational funding or corporate sponsorship. Our leadership positions receive no salary or payment outside of work done directly on individual projects. However, our goal has always been to create new and accessible ways of involving artists on each project while committing to fair compensation for all. Our goal is to find a structure that allows new leaders to join the collective in a way that feels both rewarding and equitable.

Our Edmonton production of *Premium Content* has been postponed, and when it does move forward, we plan to prioritize the commitments of the artists currently involved. This project (in some form) will be included in a future season, and we want to acknowledge that it does not meet the minimum hiring guidelines put forth by the 35//50 initiative.

This being said, our objective is to implement the proposed minimum requirements for IBPOC and female/non-binary artists on every new show we work on moving forward, while committing to making changes within our organization to make it a safer environment for all IBPOC and LGBTQ+ artists working with us currently or in the future. Many of the changes we are implementing to the Major Matt Mason Collective will be unfolding over the future weeks, months, and years. Here are some commitments we are taking today:

-Hire and work with multiple consultants and organizations* over the next six months to help us create a plan for restructuring our company as well as to reevaluate and refine our harassment/feedback policies.

Our aim with this restructuring is to re-design our mandate and mission as company, re-evaluate our processes for decision-making and priority-setting, while committing to artistic leadership positions being occupied by 35% BIPOC and 50% female + non-binary artists by 2024-2025 at the latest.

*We will be updating this document with the names of the individuals and organizations we are in conversation with as we begin that work.

-Prioritize hiring IBPOC and female/non binary artists in leadership positions within individual projects (director/writer /producer/project lead) for all new projects moving forward

-Using the 35//50 initiative as a guideline for minimum hiring requirements (35% IBPOC and 50% female + non-binary artists) in all paid positions for every new project moving forward

-Committing to ongoing education: Every year, company leadership will attend at least one workshop or course focused on anti-racist and/or anti-oppressive practices

We understand that this work is ongoing. As such, this is a living document. It will continue to evolve as we put in place new commitments, new policies, and new information to help clarify the commitments already made. In addition, we will be updating this statement with a transparency report of the demographics for our 2019/2020 season by October 15th at the latest.

Our aim is for our company to represent the artists who are a part of it. We hope as these changes take place, our company and our work will continue to dramatically evolve. We are very excited by this prospect.

-Evan, Geoffrey, & Zoë

