



Lydia Wagner
she/her/hers

Lydia-wagner.com

763-219-2478 • lydiacwag@gmail.com

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

I believe in inclusion and diversity in our theatres and in the creative workplace. I work for companies who share my values and whose teams on and offstage reflect the diversity present in our community. In an effort to foster inclusive creative work, I actively find ways that I can support and uplift voices that, because of systemic oppression, haven't been given the same platforms for creative expression.

I find it impossible to separate my feminist beliefs from the work that I do as a creative artist and as an educator. I firmly believe in rooting my work as a performer in honoring the history of persecution against women while continuing to push a dialogue for further works by and about women and their stories. One of my favorite ways I've gotten to live out this work was in my time performing with the Guthrie Theatre's 93rd annual production of *A Christmas Carol*. Of course the story has a treasured past in our cultural zeitgeist as well as the importance to the Minnesota community. This particular production was historic because it was the first time in Guthrie history that a woman was asked to play Scrooge. Many of our conversations throughout the rehearsal process and performance talk-backs centered on how we can honor the traditions of the story while still pushing for new innovation in theatrical storytelling. On opening night, not a single woman in the cast had a dry eye. The significance of her performance and the breaking of just one of many theoretical glass ceilings was not lost on any of us.

All of this being said, I recognize that my efforts towards equitable art making and art education must stem far beyond what affects my own community. I find that the most powerful way I can continue to better my efforts for DEI is in my own

further education. I actively seek opportunities to learn more about ways I can build a more inclusive classroom and a more inclusive theatrical community. Aside from in school training I've received, I have also attended seminars with the Broadway Advocacy Coalition.

One of the most rewarding teaching experiences of my career is in my work with Positive Tomorrows Elementary School in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Positive Tomorrows offers a sanctuary for lower income, displaced, homeless, and at risk children in the Oklahoma City area. The school removes barriers to a child's learning including hunger, lack of transportation, and basic necessities. They collaborate with music students of Oklahoma City University to bring equitable, accessible, and fun arts experiences to the children at Positive Tomorrows. In my time there, I taught third grade music. My students spoke over me and appeared to have little interest in the rhythms I was trying to teach them, but they loved to dance. Seeing this, we began spending at least 15 minutes every week having a dance party to the music we were learning about. Watching their joy meld into their understanding still affects the way I approach education today. It is the foundation of my intention to meet every student where they are in order to build them to where they want to be.

In my classrooms, private studio, and rehearsal rooms, it is important to me that I ensure a diverse group of authors for class materials, that I am consistent in providing materials accessible to students of all means and abilities, and that I remain flexible; understanding that every student's needs vary from person to person.