

June 30, 2020

APOLOGY FROM PERSEPHONE THEATRE

On June 3, 2020 Persephone Theatre deleted a Facebook post that was meant to support the Black Lives Matter movement. By deleting this post we took away the platform for our community, specifically artists that are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color to have their voices heard, to engage with us, and to question our anti-racism policies. We muted commenters; Logan Martin-Arcand and Yvonne Addai, thus silencing voices. This action is unacceptable. As a Regional Theatre it is our responsibility to our community to use our platform to amplify voices that have not been heard. By deleting the post and muting commenters, we did the opposite of that. We sincerely apologize for the racist action of removing the post and silencing the comments.

We at Persephone Theatre need to apologize to the BIPOC community for the racist environment that we have perpetuated over the years. We need to apologize to all members of our community for an oppressive and toxic environment where voices were not encouraged to speak, where creativity was stifled out of fear, and where the safety of our community was not a priority. This is unacceptable.

On Tuesday night, members of the board including Board President Nikki Hipkin, General Manager Kristen Dion and Artistic Associate Jennica Grienke, and a few members of the local theatre community (Yvette Nolan, Joel Bernbaum, Heather Morrison, Krystle Pederson, Yulissa Campos, Jennifer Bishop, Skye Brandon, Will Brooks, Kent Allen, Cynthia Dick, Anita Smith, Logan Martin-Arcand, *Anna Mazurik (in support/safety of Logan) gathered in the rehearsal hall to begin taking the next steps in shaping Persephone's future. This was not a perfect gathering. Some members of the community felt unsafe in that room, others felt fear just merely walking into the building, there were voices missing from the dialogue.

That night we listened. And will continue to do so. And we will gather again with our community to continue listening and learning. And we will do better next time.

We have begun the work we committed to doing a few weeks ago. We have drafted:

- Code of Conduct by which all Persephone Board, Staff, Artists, Volunteers will need to adhere to, which pays specific attention to anti-racism and anti-oppression
- Whistleblower Policy
- Discrimination Reporting Process
- Cultural Equity and Respectful Workspace Policy
- Anti-Discrimination Policy

These documents will be shared and discussed with the staff and Board of Persephone. And then they will be posted on the website with the link to the final documents being shared through our social media channels. We commit to regular, transparent updates to share with you the progress of our work.