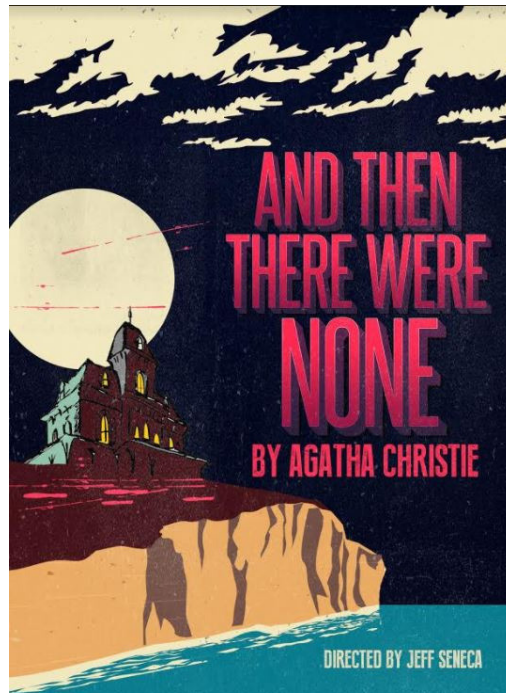


StageNOTES

WE INVITE YOU INTO THE WORLD OF AGATHA CHRISTIE TO DISCOVER THE DARK PATH TEN PEOPLE CHOSE THAT LED THEM TO MURDER

I first read *And Then There Were None* in my ninth grade English class (a few years ago). At that time, it was presented as a murder mystery; I assume to try and capture the attention of ninth graders. But in my imagination, it felt more akin to a classic horror story - ten strangers stranded on an island and murdered one by one based off a sadistic nursery rhyme? That could be the plot of any horror movie in the last 15 years (minus the blood and gore).

Don't misunderstand, I realize Christie's *And Then There Were None* follows the classic murder mystery formula - a cautionary tale where no good or bad deed goes unpunished. In this case, the punishment involves the systematic killing of the cast at the hands of a brilliant yet homicidal lunatic. However, the "murderer" is not a one-dimensional, senseless killer, but instead a vigilante with a warped sense of moral justice - sound familiar? The film and TV industries have made big money with these archetypes that are mostly rooted in comic books. From larger than life characters such as Batman or the Punisher, to seemingly normal



every day neighbors like Dexter, the idea of deplorable acts being done in the name of justice has been a common theme on stage and screen. Is the killer atoning for his or her past deeds? Are their acts truly justified? When the killer is revealed and their true motivation realized, will the audience be rooting for, or against them?

Those that are familiar with the story know that the stage adaptation of *And Then There Were None* has a very different ending than the book. The ending was changed because it was considered too grim. However, the story has continued to test the boundaries of time, being imitated and parodied throughout modern

culture. It was such a hit that Christie herself imitated the story with her most famous play *The Mousetrap* which has been running non-stop in London since its premiere in 1952. While preparing to bring our version of *And Then There Were None* to life, I have found myself pondering Christie's decision to adapt her novel into a happier and more palatable conclusion for a 1952 audience. Did she cave to pressures of the time and in doing so make a potentially poor choice? I suppose that remains to be seen. Clearly, these ten souls are brought to the island for a reason and it is left to us, the audience, to determine if any of them is truly innocent or morally righteous. I will reveal that not everyone who enters the mansion will die this evening, and perhaps someone will, in fact, get away with murder.

Jeff Seneca

SEASON 70 • ISSUE 3 • JANUARY 2018

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AUDITIONS

BOY GETS GIRL

DIRECTED BY SARA BERGANDI-HALL

MONDAY, JANUARY 22 @ 7PM

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23 @ 7PM

- Auditions will consist of readings from the script
- All characters are open
- Headshot and resume are not required, but please feel free to bring if you have them
- Please also be prepared to list all conflicts you may have

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EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE ARTS: IT IS POSSIBLE

By Keryl McCord, Operations Director, Alternate ROOTS

Why is equity, diversity, and inclusion in the arts important? And why is it so difficult to achieve? Can it even be achieved at all? Let me begin with the latter question because the answer to that question is, yes, indeed, equity, diversity, and inclusion can be achieved. I've seen evidence of this within Alternate ROOTS. That tells us that it is possible, but why is it important?

Equity, diversity, and inclusion in the arts is more than important, it is critical to our field, and our country particularly now, when we are so deeply divided by issues of race, homophobia, Islamophobia, immigration/migration, and class. The divisiveness we are experiencing presently is mainly driven by fear of the dreaded “other,” rooted in resentment and reactionary politics to the changing demographics of America. The arts are often viewed by the public as being enclaves of liberals, progressives, filled with risk takers, creatives, and forward thinkers. If there were a field, or an industry, which

our country would expect to be a place filled with a cast of characters that most closely looks like contemporary America, it would be the arts. And yet for the thirty plus years I have worked in the arts, the field still stubbornly looks much as it did when I first entered the theater field in 1983. With a few happy exceptions, the executive suites and boards of arts organizations, and their audiences, are still as predominantly white as they were back then. We've been talking about issues of diversity and inclusion equally as long. Over the decades funders have responded with initiatives aimed to motivate largely white arts organizations with bigger budgets to diversify - there were “outreach” initiatives, or “community development” initiatives, or “community engagement” initiatives. Throughout this period, however, cultural and ethnically specific arts organizations - organizations with missions to serve diverse artists and communities - have not been the recipients of



similar support to foster their work in communities. Even the infamous Kaiser report detailed the paucity of resources given to black and Latino arts organizations, not to mention Asian or Native American arts organizations. When we couple the findings of the Kaiser report with the report from the National Center for Responsible Philanthropy published in 2010, detailing that in 2009 more than \$2 billion dollars was given to the arts, 55% of which went to arts organizations with budgets of \$5 million dollars or more, representing just 2% of the arts field - clearly the central question has been one of equity.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE ARTS: IT IS POSSIBLE (CONTINUED)

A couple nagging questions for me throughout all these years have been, why does it take money for already well funded majority arts organizations to become more diverse? And why have we approached this issue with a focus on "majority organizations," rather than on organizations whose vision and mission exemplifies this work? This brings me to Alternate ROOTS. In 2003 ROOTS re-imagined itself around racial justice, leaning into its mission, vision, and values after realizing that it did not reflect its goals and aims to be a force for social change and social justice in the South. As a result when you look at ROOTS its members are black, white, Latino, Asian, African, Arab American, and Native American. We are Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, pagans, and non believers. We are gay, queer, straight, and transgender. We have a commitment to artists with disabilities as viewed through our policy of Collective Accessibility, ensuring that we work with these artists to dismantle barriers to full participation. This is what the arts can do, be the catalyst that brings together a group of people who, by every measure in our history, aren't supposed to be able to be in the same space yet alone find common ground. Was ROOTS' transformation easy? Not at all. It was difficult, the conversations were often hard, sometimes noisy, and even today we still struggle to be better because achieving true diversity and inclusion is a journey.

Sometimes we are more successful than others. But ROOTS is committed to learning so we mine those experiences that didn't go as well as planned in order to continue to do better. Let us learn from your joys, triumphs, and those times you'd like to hit the reset button. But know that yes, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the arts is possible. And it is a journey worth taking.

Read the full Article at:
<https://alternateroots.org/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-arts-it-is-possible/>

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