

# PRESS RELEASE

---

**ADDRESS**

2340 Lee Rd.  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

**CONTACT**

216.932.6838  
dobama.org

**CONTACT:**

Nathan Motta

Artistic Director

[nmotta@dobama.org](mailto:nmotta@dobama.org)

DATE: March 10, 2021

## **DOBAMA THEATRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES ANTI-RACISM ACTION PLAN: THE *LOVE AND RESPECT DOCUMENT***

Dobama Theatre's newly adopted *Love and Respect Document* is a living document for anti-racism action and the next steps in creating a culture of authentic inclusivity at Dobama Theatre.

For the past year, Dobama Theatre, like so many other organizations, has found itself in a unique time. The convergence of a shutdown due to global pandemic and a renewed focus on the epidemic of racism in America that resulted from BIPOC activism following the murder of George Floyd created a moment when we found it essential to intensely examine our practices and those of the American Theatre. This work was further propelled and galvanized by the #WeSeeYouWhiteAmericanTheatre movement.

Dobama Theatre formed a Task Force consisting of staff, board members, community representatives, and a contracted facilitator from ALJP Consulting to create a plan of action. (Members of the Task Force that came from outside the organization were compensated for their time.) Weekly Task Force meetings were held from September through January. This *Love and Respect Document* is the result of that work.

The document is divided into three parts: *The People*, *The Work*, and *The Process*. *The People* come first in this document, as they also do in our core values. These steps care for the whole person and create a larger, more equitable table for all to pursue our mission together. *The Work* outlines what actions are being taken to root out white supremacist and patriarchal structures and to replace them with organizational tools built on consensus, communication, trust, and circular management models. *The Process* describes how we will move forward in equitably representing and investing in the community we serve, and how we will continue to assess our progress, remain accountable, and determine further action in years to come.

The Dobama Theatre Board of Directors unanimously adopted the *Love & Respect Document* on March 8, 2021. Dobama has made this commitment to action and we will be held accountable.

Some highlighted actions found in the document include:

- Institute 5-day rehearsal weeks (formerly 6-day rehearsal weeks).
- Add a full-day “Company Cooperative” for collective conversations and training at the start of every rehearsal process.
- Eliminate all 10-out-of-12 technical rehearsals and add more days for technical rehearsal within the production process.
- Reimagine the Board of Directors.
- Ensure representation in Education programs.
- Include an Intimacy Director, Intimacy Choreographer, and/or EDI Advocate on every production staff.
- Use circular management structures built around consensus so that every employee has agency and contributes in decision making.
- Create a new Strategic Plan that incorporates active social justice work at every level of the organization.
- Provide training in anti-racism and implicit bias at every level of the organization.
- Move internship program to a paid model to remove financial barriers for access to theatre mentorship.
- Revisit this document annually to assess our progress and adjust action items in an effort to hold the organization accountable and to continue Dobama's transformation into an equitable institution.

For the complete *Love and Respect Document* or for more information on Dobama Theatre's other equity and inclusion commitments, visit: [dobama.org/antiracism](https://dobama.org/antiracism)

## **ABOUT #WESEYOUWAT**

In reaction to civil unrest in our country, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) theatremakers formed a collective of multi-generational, multi-disciplinary, early career, emerging and established artists, theater managers, executives, students, administrators, dramaturges and producers, to address the scope and pervasiveness of anti-Blackness and racism in the American theater. Their response was to draft a strong testimonial letter, 'DEAR WHITE AMERICAN THEATER', collectively crafted by theatremakers from across the country, exposing the indignities and racism that BIPOC, and in particular Black theatremakers, face on a day-to-day basis in the theater industry. As the calls for long overdue change swept across every aspect of our society, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color theatre workers met the moment, developing a new social contract for work environments that cares for and sustains their artistry and lives.

For more information, visit: [weseeyouwat.com/about](https://weseeyouwat.com/about)

## **ABOUT ALJP CONSULTING**

ALJP Consulting is dedicated to making change in the arts and culture sector by putting artistry and equity at the heart of their consulting practice. They offer talent searches, career coaching, strategic planning, and community building guidance and facilitation. Founded by Principals Al Heartley and Jocelyn Prince, ALJP Consulting has made a deep impact on the theatre industry in a short time, leading multiple successful executive searches and other initiatives with multiple important institutions across the United States. For more information, visit: [aljpconsulting.com](http://aljpconsulting.com)

## **ABOUT DOBAMA THEATRE:**

Dobama Theatre is dedicated to premiering important new plays by established and emerging playwrights in professional productions of the highest quality. Through theatrical production, community engagement, and education programming, Dobama nurtures the development of theatre artists and builds new audiences for the arts while provoking an examination of our contemporary world.

Dobama Theatre was founded in 1959 by Donald and Marilyn Bianchi, Barry Silverman, Mark Silverberg, and Marilyn Bianchi and has worked consistently to professionally produce plays of consequence not previously offered at other area theaters with a company of trained theatre artists.

Dobama produces at least six mainstage productions each season that are regional premieres of important new plays. Dobama's Marilyn Bianchi Kids' Playwriting Festival (MBKPF) is the oldest event of its kind in the nation and provides year-long workshops and other resources to students in grades 1-12 to write their own plays. The Dobama Emerging Artists Program (DEAP), is a 4-week summer intensive in July that provides a technique-based, conservatory training model for serious high school and college undergraduate acting students while also serving early career designers and stage managers, offering both training and opportunity. The Playwrights' GYM is Dobama Theatre's playwriting unit – a group of professional playwrights who are given resources for forums, readings, workshop productions, and marketing to help cultivate new work.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Office (hours limited during pandemic): 216.932.6838

Website: [dobama.org](http://dobama.org)

E-mail: [hello@dobama.org](mailto:hello@dobama.org)

###