

My thoughts on LGBT Performance in the 21st Century
by David C. Jones

Random ramblings the day after Orlando:

We must empower our people and politicize our challenges. The forces of “evil” will twist the words and tried to takeover the message and make it about them. We can’t be passive and well intentioned. We need to claim our pain and stop being polite in our storytelling. We need to shout out loud and own our stories and not worry if they will be accepted. Not be concerned if straight audiences will relate to them or find them enticing.

We have our own stories and many of them only queer audiences will get and that’s okay. I personally love seeing a film or a play that is so specific to my community that I am profoundly honored and grateful to have been spoken to.

Some of our stories have universal connection and are relatable to wide section of society, those are important too but we must not shy away from our own in an attempt to be accepted or make people feel comfortable.

Also – we must stop writing noble and bland queer characters. It diminishes us when we create characters that aren’t layered, interesting and nuanced that are not as contradictory as we are in real life. When I see a play with saintly queer character I see a victim and often I see an ideal that is trying to appeal to straight audiences, a character that says “Don’t you know how hard it is for us? Look what we must endure”. It is whiney and one-dimensional.

We are also PAST the time to include diverse faces and voices in our stories and on our stages. I adored the show The Gay Heritage Project it was brilliantly acting and excitingly staged and it was so white and it knew it. The show referenced its whiteness and acted coyly sheepish but there was a better solution.

All white casts and tokenism also diminishes are stories ability to relate and connect to the queer world as well as audiences beyond.

Older generations use to notice colour when it entered the room. Newer generations notice an absence of colour. Our stories must look like us. In many urban centres in Canada the Caucasian population is in the minority now. We work with people of colour, we ride the bus with people of colour, we shop with people of colour, we sleep with people of colour then we walk through some theatre doors and BAM! a world of white is often what we find.

Speaking of youth, we must embrace new media. Digitally connecting with audiences is important as younger generations are communicating and story telling in innovative ways. Youth advisories can help us connect to new audiences and engage them in a way they can relate to, in a way that excites them.

There – that was my brain dump when I was in a fit of rage. I really loved The Gay Heritage Project BTW.

Look forward to meeting you all.

