



Lydia Wagner  
teaching artist

[lydia-wagner.com](http://lydia-wagner.com)

763-219-2478 • [lydicwag@gmail.com](mailto:lydicwag@gmail.com)

## ***Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement***

---

I believe in inclusion and diversity in our theatres, classrooms, 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.

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 effective 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.

Theatre, musical theatre in particular, has created a standard form that often is exclusionary. Historically, musical theatre has shown and been uplifted by a singular

type of person - with singular abilities, body types, etc. I have been fortunate enough to help guide students to breaking down these areas in a variety of ways. During my time teaching at Carthage College, I worked with a student who used a hearing aid and was actively losing their hearing with age. This student was to be the stage manager for one of our musicals. As a musician, you think that could be one of the worst things to happen; how can you create what you cannot hear? How can you follow the music to be able to call the show appropriately? By working with this student and the college's Learning Accessibility Office, we were able to equip the classroom with some necessary resources for accessible education. But we also developed individual processes that this student could use throughout their career to interact with music even without being able to hear it in the way we conventionally think of music interaction. The art we made was better because of this student's unique abilities and I seek to create space for all capable artists to create when that space has not historically been available.

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.