

## **Matthew C Williams**

### **Diversity Statement**

My intentions as a teacher and theater-maker go beyond satisfying the syllabus. We live in a time where the paradigm of theater-making is shifting. The source of story and content is now stemming from a greater diversity of artist. Additionally, the makers of theater represent a broader spectrum of people. My interest lies at the nexus of new voices and proven theatrical doctrine. I've spent my tenure as a graduate student at Brooklyn College, one of America's most ethnically diverse universities. I've found that when artists from different backgrounds assemble and collaborate, the depth of their work reflects a wider scope of a collective experience. As a result, this process generates theater that penetrates a spiritual and social boundary that other, less culturally expansive theater does not. Darwin concluded that genetic diversity serves as a way for populations to adapt to changing environments. We in the theater must adapt and realize that our environment is changing. If it does not do so by itself, then we must act to make it so.

I am a tireless researcher and a fanatical seeker of new material, both musical and textual. Culturally diverse material naturally falls into the path of my research. While living in New York City for 20 years, I have embraced a multitude of diverse cultures, whose sounds and aesthetics have helped shape my artistic taste. I am constantly sampling, extracting and infusing these cultural flavors into my work as an educator. As I have studied at Brooklyn College, I have had the opportunity to work with students from Haiti, Iran, Mexico, Pakistan, China, Portugal, West Africa and



Australia, just to name a few. As I have interacted with these students, I have made it a habit of inquiring about their backgrounds and have found ways to connect their life experiences to the material that I teach. As a result of my inquiries, I naturally become more personally invested in these students and my desire for their individual growth increases. I believe that a greater diversity of students in the classroom equates to a more enlightened discourse and it is through this rich cultural infusion of ideas that I continue to grow as an educator and an artist.