



The Dramatists Guild, Theatre Communications Group, and Shakespeare Theatre Association are joining together to stand with Nataki Garrett and condemn in every possible way the unconscionable harassment and death threats that she has received as Artistic Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Nataki's expertise and vision steered OSF, one of the most prominent regional theatres in the country, through the pandemic, surviving under unprecedented financial pressure caused by an industry in lock down. The theatre not only survived; it thrived as she presented a vibrant first season, which included productions of Shakespeare that employed diverse casts as well as new plays by a diverse group of brilliant contemporary writers. Many subscribers and theatergoers were thrilled with what they saw. But, as a leading advocate for diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in the American theatre, and the first Black woman to direct such a celebrated performing arts organization, she became the target of death threats, which have forced her to travel with a security team in public.

This violent response to her artistic choices strikes right at the heart of who we are, not just as members of the American theatre, but as citizens. If, by producing writers of the global majority, an artist like Nataki Garrett can be subjected to death threats, what does that say about the precarious situation our theater industry is in? In the face of violence, how will systemic change ever occur? We urge the industry to treat writers fairly, and to dismantle gatekeeping systems that stifle the expansion of the theatrical canon, impacting whose stories get told, how they get told, and by whom. Everyone of good conscience must stand together to reject hate and to embrace empathy; it is the only path towards systemic change.

Four Ways Theatremakers Can Support Nataki Garrett

1. OSF Website.

Leave a comment expressing support for Nataki on OSF's website:

<https://www.osfashland.org/contact-us>

2. OSF Social Media.

Post a statement of support for Nataki and tag OSF's social media channels.

OSF Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/osfashland>

OSF Twitter: <https://twitter.com/osfashland>

3. Ashland.news.

Write to the Ashland.news editor Bert Etling at betling@ashland.news.

One of the most vocal opponents of Nataki's programming is Ashland.news columnist Herbert Rothschild, who is urging his readers to "keep talking about this subject — among yourselves and with OSF management as well as in this publication. The stakes for Ashland are high. I'd bet on Shakespeare."

4. The Oregonian.

Write a letter to The Oregonian, the largest paper in Oregon: letters@oregonian.com

OR

Tweet a statement in support of Nataki and tag The Oregonian.

<https://twitter.com/Oregonian>