I have chosen acting as my career of choice due to its ability to connect. It is not just entertainment but a way for others to either escape or feel not so alone in this big world. Representation is important. It feels good to be able to see you on a stage or screen, no matter what color, shape, size, sexual orientation, or gender you are. The idea of having an inclusive cast on a stage or a screen grows bigger every day, we are becoming more inclusive and accepting as time goes on. So, what needs to change? How we view that inclusion. People still throw a fit if a white character is then portrayed by a person of color. gay characters are still just that, a character, you could even say caricatures. it is exceedingly rare to find the LGBTQ+ community represented properly, gay men or lesbians are seen as a laugh. Bisexual characters are over sexualized and very rarely in serious context as a human being. It is still extremely infrequent to see trans or non-binary characters in mainstream media. This is all for marketing purposes. Too many people are still afraid to let minorities take center stage as human beings due to the

fear of backlash. I understand that many things in the industry rely on what a production will do best once it hits the box office but that is not at all what the original idea of art stood for. Art is expression, art is connection. Art is not a cash grab. At the end of the day people want to see people that they can relate to. In no way am I saying cut all Caucasian people out of media but instead make it equal enough that everyone feels like they can truly see themselves up there. Think about the youth of our world. I remember growing up never truly seeing a character that looked like me. I was too white, or too black, or not smart enough, or pretty enough to really fit the mold. As a young girl it used to really bother me when my white friends wanted to dress like Tiana or Jasmine because those were what I thought of as "my characters." they had so many to

choose from, why did they have to take mine? Looking back at that situation it is lovely. The fact that my Caucasian friends are taking more interest in the ethnic princesses instead of calling them ugly or weird just because they were different, however if there was more representation in the first place, I do not think it would have been as frustrating. The statement of them taking what I called "my characters" would not stand as strong because we both would have just as many outstanding characters to look up to and choose from. Relating to not only the color of their skin but their attributes, personality, and morals. Let me be that catalyst for this change. Being someone who sees myself in those little girls eyes and the discipline your program can give me to better my craft. giving me the ability to build a platform.

I want the relatable aspect of theatrical arts and performing arts to be more prioritized. Keeping the everlasting breathe of fresh air theatrical arts can give us. What I mean by that is reaching larger audiences not by walking on eggshells of what society wants to see on a stage or screen, but what the people want to see. If backlash due to being inclusive is a fear, let us normalize it. If older audiences get used to seeing people that are not the cookie cutter; white, cis, American. I wonder how that could affect society. I believe that media can be the first step to it all, it holds so much power when it comes minuscule impact such as fashion or trends yet has such a substantial impact on the individual viewers themselves.