The Facilitation of Ableism in Dance Audience Members

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Introduction

This research looks to explore the challenges faced by arts organizations in making their programs accessible to audience members with disabilities through an empirical and normative analysis of five NYC theaters. Through this research, I set out to answer: if the dance community facilitates ableism amongst dance audience members due to their inaccessible venues and or accommodations offered?
Why is it important?

61 million adults live with a disability making up 26% of society’s population

That is 1 in every 4 people that the art’s community is potentially excluding

Bring awareness on how we can better integrate the disability community to be regular dance audience members
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Classification of disability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobility impaired/physically disabled e.g. arthritis, rheumatism, progressive illness etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blind/visually impaired/partially sighted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deaf/hard of hearing/hearing impaired/hearing aid user</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental ill health e.g. depression, ‘nerves’, anxiety, phobias, agoraphobia, panic attacks etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning disability/intellectual disability including dyslexia, ADD/ADH, aphasia etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hidden disability e.g. speech impairment; epilepsy; diabetes; stomach, liver or digestive problems; skin conditions, allergies; chest/breathing problems, asthma, bronchitis; heart, blood pressure or blood circulation problems; progressive illness not covered above</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any other health problem or disability that limits your day to day activities</td>
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The data results show that while physical disabilities tend to have more accessible features, mental disabilities do not have the same amount of attention.
Analysis

01 **ADA Regulations**
Primarily only address physical disabilities in theater spaces, but does not address mental disabilities other than requiring listening devices.

02 **Location**
All locations of the NYC theaters are accessible and close to public transportation and have handicap-accessible seating and entrances.

03 **Non-visible Features**
There needs to be more resources available online or to contact the theaters for people with non-visible disabilities to access.
Implications

It is the responsibility of the government, organizations, businesses, and other power structures to identify and implement constructive changes to remove barriers and increase access. More attention needs to go into making performances in theater venues more accessible not only for physical disabilities but for mental disabilities as well.
Recommendations

Future research should consider doing an in-person analysis of the venues and survey the disability community as to how accessible they view theaters for dance. This may be able to provide a more accurate representation of what features theaters need to implement to include the disability community better.
Thank You!

Please feel free to contact me with if you have any questions.
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