

INCLUSION/EXCLUSION: ANTI-RACISM, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AT THE ACADEMY

UPDATE: JANUARY 2021

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Version 1

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Here is a link to the broad statement of intent the Principal made in June 2020. It remains on our minds and on our [website here](#).

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION: JUNE – DEC 2020

We are committed to undergoing serious reflection and examination of our culture and how it aligns with the need for change across the music industry and the conservatoire sector.

- In August 2020 we held a forum of alumni (from 30 years back to very recent) and staff, to share experiences and ideas. A lot of sobering testimony focused the need and resolve to improve, and generated a wealth of ways to do so.
- We knew that we would learn valuable and challenging information through our independent Safeguarding Review ([published here](#) in November 2020).
- We have now clarified short-, medium- and long-term plans. We continue to hone them by listening and working with students (including the Ethnic Diversity Society and SU), with staff (especially through EDI committee), and with alumni who are helping us maintain a self-critical stance towards cultural change.
- Please keep in touch as we work together, and let me know about ideas and initiatives you are working on.

BLUEPRINT FOR ALL AUDIT

In June 2020 we started talking with Blueprint for All, a Black-led social enterprise consultancy formerly known as the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust. Blueprint for All supports young people through bursaries, mentorship and education. Its consultants have worked with a number of institutions including Welsh National Opera, Arts Council England, the Metropolitan Police and the RIBA.

It is now beginning a thorough audit of all our policies and procedures, from an inclusion perspective. Most importantly, it is conducting interviews with a random selection of staff and students to get 'under the bonnet' of our community and help us navigate the future. If you have not been approached (we have a large community!), please do not assume your voice doesn't matter – you can always email me, the Dean of Students, at ekenny@ram.ac.uk or Sue Watson from Blueprint for All directly at suewatson@blueprintforall.org.

We are planning development in the following areas, and the audit will undoubtedly identify more:

- **Curriculum:** contextualising the white musical canon and introducing more diverse composers both in repertoire and academic classes.
- **Training:** (see below).

- **Profile of the staff and student body:** to continue to be a world-leading conservatoire we need to draw on the talent we have been missing out on, with a more diverse staff and student body (see progress and time frame, below).
- **Alumni and mentoring:** where alumni have the time, goodwill and energy for this, we are seeking it out. But we know that our alumni are by their very nature leading the way in what they do in their musical careers, and are sensitive to the issue of 'emotional labour' – systemic change happens when the majority engages, rather than relying on people of colour to do the heavy lifting in terms of education and real progress.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR?

This is a brief summary – if there's anything else you'd like to let me know about, please do email ekenny@ram.ac.uk.

Language: In our EDI and Access and Participation Committees we have undertaken to review language in the light of inclusion and the BAMEOver campaign, recognising it is important, yet provisional and subject to change. Disney Musical Theatre scholarships are now identified as students from under-represented communities who may have experienced racism. The SU BAME Society has re-named itself the Ethnic Diversity Society.

Anti-racism: Complaints and provision for anonymous reporting are being overhauled as part of our Safeguarding Review implementation. Racial micro-aggressions and harassment will be more directly and safely reportable through our online reporting portal. This is being set up in collaboration with students, staff and the provider Culture Shift, which has installed similar Report and Support portals in over 60 institutions, mainly in Higher Education. Timeline: March 2021.

Training for students will be part of induction from September 2021.

Training for staff will be rolled out by HR and will also be a mandatory part of induction. Existing staff will be asked to complete online modules to highlight equalities and safeguarding issues.

Visiting and guest staff: in the short term, visiting staff and speakers are easier to change. The Composition Department has been working with distinguished composer, pianist and alumna Eleanor Alberga as Composer in Residence, and in seminar with James B Wilson, whose piece *Remnants* was performed at the Southbank Centre by Chineke! in October 2020. Our longer-term priority is to engage more diverse permanent teaching staff. The pandemic has halted our ability to recruit new staff, but this remains a high priority.

Within the **Concert Diary**, the majority of concerts are student-proposed Tuesday and Thursday performances. Students are encouraged to present under-represented repertoire, and this is now an important criterion for selection for both series. The student initiative 'The Under-Represented Composer' is a welcome part of this, and we are committed to allocating a significant proportion of the livestream budget to diverse composers (33% in the spring term – although lockdown curtailed activity, the commitment remains in place).

Artist Development

Jan 2021: Uchenna Ngwe made a welcome second appearance; her first presentation attracted a high level of engagement from students. Uchenna's website resources for black composers were shared [here](#).

Toks Dada, Head of Classical Music London SBC, appeared on the Principal's Leavers Careers Event panel (with Clive Gillinson, Joanna MacGregor, Jess Walker, Anna Wolstenholme and Tom McKinney on 6 Jan 2021). A wide-ranging discussion included diversity, programming and the future of music in the post-Covid world.

Admissions and recruitment

Dec 2020: Scholarships were offered to all students of colour who were awarded a place.

Composers' Club

The first Composers' Club (Feb-March 2020) included 12 state school participants from a number of different backgrounds, with very encouraging results.

Sony Scholarship

From 2022, this will be awarded to one (or we hope two) black students in jazz, composition, or performance thanks to the help of alumnus pianist, composer and recording artist Alexis Ffrench.

Audition support and mentoring

The Academy's Access and Participation Manager, Claire Cooke, is setting up Audition Clubs in state school settings in London and we are developing informal one-to-one mentoring post-audition, along the lines established by Musical Theatre.

Musical Theatre

A network linking students with alumni of colour meets once a term.

Musical Theatre Juniors

Planning is underway for a programme in collaboration with Junior Academy, with outreach activity, pandemic permitting, in summer term 2021. Bursary places for this will be allocated to students from diverse communities.

First String Experience

This is a wonderful beginner programme which runs on a Saturday in our building. We are in discussion with schools in diverse communities in London to embed a parallel programme on school premises, funded by our Access and Participation strategy. When we have finalised schools, we will be seeking young musical leaders of colour to deliver this programme (on a professionally paid basis). Please consider it if you are a current student, or share with recent graduates. The inspiration you can provide is immeasurable.

Staff recruitment

New wording for job advertisements was provided by Blueprint for All consultant Sue Watson, introduced Nov 2020 for counsellor trainee scheme, disability advisor and additional learning support advertisements.

Mental health

We recognise that the background stressors for students of colour are high across the sector, as well as at the Academy. In Dec 2020 four new counselling trainees were recruited by Anita Gould. This has significantly increased the diversity of the mental health support which we offer to all students during this very difficult time. The trainees are receiving intensive mentoring from the existing team.

Curriculum

A number of staff are quietly introducing more diverse composers and performers into their classes. The Library will produce a list of resources we have, as a place to begin exploring in this area, which also of course includes gender, disability and queer studies.

The Library responds to orders from staff and students; repertoire, especially by current and recent Black composers, tends to come with a hefty copyright levy. This is something we are talking about with other institutions, and we may be able collectively to exert some influence on publishing policy.

On which subject:

Groups

Groups are springing up to share information in ways that are historic in our sector. The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama's International Chair for Diversity and Equality, Uzo Iwobi, sums up our thinking perfectly: 'If you want to go quickly, go alone – if you want to go far, go together.'

CUK has an **EDI Forum** including Principals, programme and inclusion leads and other experts. Its diverse membership includes representatives from the Academy, GSMD, TWCMD, BCU, RNCM, Leeds College and drama schools.

A number of our staff are signed up to [this great resource](#).

And students are participating in cross-conservatoire meetings chaired by alumna and Academy double-bass professor Chi-chi Nwanoku.

All these will produce great ideas and resources, so it's important that we link up and communicate. I will produce more regular updates from now, and always welcome yours.

Liz Kenny
Jan 2021