

Please reply to: Chi-chi Nwanoku OBE

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

19 June 2020

Dear Prime Minister

We, at the Chineke! Foundation and the undersigned - our friends and supporters, are compelled to make a public statement to address the inaction and resistance to the real institutional change that is needed to support the current Black Lives Matter movement and recognise the energy and pain that is being expressed right now by people of colour who have felt abused, powerless, underrepresented and ignored for too long.

Your proposal for yet another government 'fact-finding' commission on Racial Inequalities is simply paying lip service to a movement which is powerful and impactful but needs to see action, not just placatory words. The research has been done, we know the statistics and that structural transformation is needed, so now it is time to take action and implement the recommendations.

The legacy of the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the subsequent Macpherson report of 1999, the Windrush scandal, David Lammy MP's 2017 Review of the police & prison service which made 35 recommendations, and the findings of the EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission) amongst numerous other think tanks and bodies is a huge weight of evidence with expert recommendations from a wide variety of sources.

The worldwide reaction to the current Black Lives Matter following the horrific murder of George Floyd, is not a minority issue. It concerns people of all ethnicities, education and economic background who want a better, fairer world. The Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people protesting and speaking out are being supported by people of all backgrounds and races, here in the UK, the USA and across the globe. They are screaming out for action: for governments across the world to work together to legislate, educate and change people's lives for the better. We would like to see the UK taking the lead on this.

These are the actions we believe government, organisations and individuals can take now, here in the UK:

1. De-colonise the curriculum: create an honest, well researched approach which celebrates the contribution made by writers, artists, musicians, actors, academics and athletes of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse descent, in all areas of science, literature, drama, dance, music and art. We need to teach children of all communities at schools and in higher education about our rich history and to stimulate an open, honest and historically accurate debate about Britain's involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the impact of 17th to 21st century colonialism.

2. The gatekeepers of large, publicly funded institutions have a responsibility not only to commission but to champion writers, performers and educators of British Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds and include their research and personal experiences when commissioning and funding work, and to appoint this British Black, Asian and ethnically diverse talent to programming and curatorial roles. Chineke! Foundation is grateful to have been supported by the Southbank Centre from the very beginning of our journey.
3. Our high-profile institutions should create platforms and spaces for those who feel disenfranchised and unheard, encouraging them to speak out, express themselves and develop their creativity. Nurture and listen to artists who have felt rejected by those in power so that voices are valued.
4. Address the disproportionate effects of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and ethnically diverse communities and look at concrete ways to help.
5. Fight racism with resources and funding - ask those from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse communities who have experiences at all income levels to be involved in the conversation. Institutions, public and privately funded organisations should embark on annual training in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. They should make solid, quantifiable commitments to integrate this directive into their company business plans, not just in equal opportunities policies or by placing a person of colour on their posters or brochures. Make institutions accountable for the lack of representation. We need to have people of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds in leadership roles, boards and at executive level. The decision-makers must be reflective of our wider society.
6. Arts organisations do not want to be the preserve of a privileged elite - classical music, theatre, drama, dance and fine art share an ambition to be accessible to everyone. But all art forms, particularly those which are diverse-led organisations, need your government's continued support and significant additional investment, especially at this critical time, to achieve this.

As artists and performers, we know how important it is to find our voice and have a public platform to express it. This is not the time to silence us. Please listen and take action.

Yours sincerely

Chi-chi Nwanoku OBE



SIGNATORY

Chi-chi Nwanoku OBE, Double bassist, Founder, Artistic & Executive Director, Chineke!
Rob Adediran, Executive Director London Music Masters
James Ainscough, Chief Executive Help Musicians UK
Eleanor Alberga, Composer
Sarah Alexander, Chief Executive & Artistic Director National Youth Orchestra GB

Cath Arlidge MBE, Chief Executive National Children's Orchestra
Alison Balsom, Trumpeter
Sally Beamish, Composer
Nicola Benedetti CBE, Violinist and Founder of The Benedetti Foundation
Nadine Benjamin, Soprano and Founder of Everybody Can!
Martyn Brabbins, Principal conductor, English National Opera
Katie Breathwick, Presenter Classic FM
David Burke, Chief Executive London Philharmonic Orchestra
Phil Castang, Director of Creative Learning and Engagement, Bristol Music Trust
Nicholas Daniel, Oboist, Queen's Medal for Music
Sarah Derbyshire MBE, Chief Executive, Orchestras Live
Julia Desbruslais, Executive Director, London Mozart Players
Susanna Eastburn, CEO Sound and Music
Barbara Eifler, Chief Executive, Making Music
Anthony Fabian, Film Director
Helena Gaunt, Principal, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama
Sarah Gee, Chief Executive Spitalfields Music
Pooja Ghai, Freelance Theatre Director
John Gilhooly OBE, Artistic & Executive Director Wigmore Hall, Chair Royal Philharmonic Society
Paul Gladstone-Reid MBE, Composer
Fiona Goh, British Arts Festivals Association
Emily Gottlieb, Chief Executive, National Opera Studio
John Harte, Chief Executive, Aurora Orchestra
Fiona Harvey, Education and Youth Ensembles Consultant, Association of British Orchestras
Dawn Hill CBE, Chair Black Cultural & President Mary Seacole Trust
Simeilia Hodge-Dallaway, Founder and Artistic Director at Artistic Directors of the Future and Beyond The Canon
Jenny Jamison, Chief Executive, Scottish Ensemble
James Joseph, Music Management
Julian Joseph OBE, Pianist
Sheku Kanneh-Mason MBE, Cellist
Daniel Kidane, Composer
Elaine Kidd, Head of Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, Royal Opera House
Suzy Klein, BBC Presenter
Kwame Kwei-Armah, Artistic Director of Young Vic
Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon, OBE
Sophie Lewis, Managing Director National Children's Orchestra
Julian Lloyd Webber, Principal Royal Birmingham Conservatory
Alistair Mackie, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Donald MacLeod, BBC Presenter
Shirley May, Chief Executive Officer Wordsmith
Annilese Miskimmon, Artistic Director ENO & London Coliseum
Louise Mitchell, Chief Executive Bristol Music Trust
Stephen Maddock, Chief Executive, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
Sara Mohr-Pietsch, BBC Presenter
Gillian Moore CBE, Director of Music Southbank Centre
James Murphy, CEO Royal Philharmonic Society
Stuart Murphy, Chief Executive ENO & London Coliseum
Rufus Norris, Artistic Director National Theatre

William Norris, Managing Director, Southbank Sinfonia
Arike Oke, Managing Director, Black Cultural Archives
Cassa Pancho MBE, CEO Founder & Artistic Director, Ballet Black
Alexis Paterson, Chief Executive Three Choirs Festival
Mark Pemberton, Director of Associated of British Orchestras
Alison Pogson, Managing Director Sage Gateshead
Gavin Reid, Chief Executive of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra
Bob Riley, Chief Executive, Manchester Camerata
Victoria Robey OBE, London Music Masters
Suzanne Rolt, Chief Executive, St George's, Bristol
Abdul Shayek, Artistic Director & CEO - Fio
Matthew Swann, Chief Executive, City of London Sinfonia
Nina Swann, SE Branch Director Musicians' Development Director
Adam Szabo, Chief Executive Manchester Collective
Sarah Taylor, BBC Producer
Shirley Thompson OBE, Composer
Nick Thorne, Executive Director, Orchestras for All
Jo Towler, Executive Director, Music in the Round
Horace Trubridge, Musicians Union General Secretary
Jonathan Vaughn, Vice-Principal & Director of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama
Helen Wallace, Executive & Artistic Director, King's Place
Errollyn Wallen CBE, Composer
Daniel Ward, Actor/Writer of The Canary & the Crow
Alan Watt, Chief Executive, Academy of St Martin in the Fields
Sir Willard White, Bass-baritone
Roderick Williams OBE, Baritone
James Williams, Managing Director, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Lynne Williams, Principal, Guildhall School of Music and Drama
Matthew Xia, Artistic Director and joint CEO - Actors Touring Company
Gary Carpenter, Maria Macmillan; Jo Thomas; Adam Gorb; Fiona Bevan; Alexander Campkin; Jenni Roditi; Paula Gardiner; Martyn Ware; Jason Yarde; Imogen Williams; Helienne Lindvall; William Sweeney; Mark Ayres; Orphy Robinson MBE, Ivors Academy