

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!  
Lincoln Abbotts, Executive Director, ABRSM  
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!  
Anthony Bowne, Principal of Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Drama  
Martyn Brabbins, Principal Conductor, English National Opera  
Katie Breathwick, Presenter Classic FM  
Elise Brown, Agent  
David Burke, Chief Executive, London Philharmonic Orchestra  
Phil Castang, Director of Creative Learning and Engagement, Bristol Music Trust  
Lolita Chakrabati, Actor and Writer  
Pam Chowhan, Head of Planning, Southbank Centre  
Edmund Connolly, Partnership Manager, Google Arts & Culture (UK)  
Toks Dada, Classical Programme Manager at Town Hall Symphony Hall, Birmingham  
Nicholas Daniel, Oboist, Queen's Medal for Music  
Sarah Derbyshire MBE, Chief Executive, Orchestras Live  
Julia Desbruslais, Executive Director, London Mozart Players  
Josie Dobrin, Chief Executive, Creative Access  
Susanna Eastburn, CEO, Sound and Music  
Barbara Eifler, Chief Executive, Making Music  
Sir Mark Elder CH CBE, Principal Conductor, Hallé Orchestra  
Mick Elliott, Chief Executive, ABRSM  
Anthony Fabian, Film Director  
Jonathan Freeman-Attwood CBE, Principal, Royal Academy of Music  
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  
Richard Hawley, Freelance Music Producer  
Sir Lenny Henry CBE, Stand-up Comedian, Actor, Singer, Writer, TV Presenter, Co-Founder Comic Relief  
Dawn Hill CBE, Chair, Black Cultural Archives & 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  
Vladimir Jurowski, Principal Conductor, London Philharmonic Orchestra; Artistic Director & Chief Conductor, Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin; Artistic Director, State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia "Evgeny Svetlanov"; Principal Artist, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; Artistic Director, "George Enescu" International Festival; Music Director designate of the Bavarian State Opera  
Sheku Kanneh-Mason MBE, Cellist  
Daniel Kidane, Composer  
Elaine Kidd, Head of Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, Royal Opera House  
Kanya King CBE, Producer, Founder MOBO Organisation  
Suzy Klein, BBC Presenter  
Kwame Kwei-Armah, Artistic Director of Young Vic  
Ben Larpent, Director of Artistic Planning, Philharmonia Orchestra  
Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon, OBE  
Colin Lawson CBE, Director, Royal College of Music  
Sophie Lewis, Managing Director, National Children's Orchestra  
Tamsin Little OBE, Violinist  
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  
Professor Linda Merrick, Principal, Royal Northern College of Music  
Simon Millward, Director, Premiere PR  
Annlese 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  
David Nice, Classical Music/Opera Editor, The Arts Desk, Lecturer and Broadcaster  
Rufus Norris, Artistic Director, National Theatre  
William Norris, Managing Director, Southbank Sinfonia  
Phil Noyce, Managing Editor, Classic FM - Global  
Arike Oke, Managing Director, Black Cultural Archives  
Cassa Pancho MBE, CEO Founder & Artistic Director, Ballet Black  
Sunita Pandya, Director of Artistic Planning, Partnership & Admin, Southbank Centre, Chair Tara Arts  
Alexis Paterson, Chief Executive, Three Choirs Festival  
Yshani Perinpanayagam, Pianist, Music Director, Composer  
Mark Pemberton, Director of Associated of British Orchestras  
Paul Philbert, Timpanist, Royal Scottish National Orchestra  
Alison Pogson, Managing Director, Sage Gateshead  
Sir Simon Rattle, OM CBE, Music Director, London Symphony Orchestra  
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  
Colin Salmon, Actor  
Professor Jeffrey Sharkey, Principal, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
Abdul Shayek, Artistic Director & CEO, Fio  
Eugene Skeef, Composer, Founder & Artistic Director, Umoya Creations  
John Stapleton, Journalist and Broadcaster  
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  
Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp CBE, Director of the Africa Centre  
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 Vaughan, 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  
Samuel West, Actor & Director, Chair, National Campaign for the Arts  
Sir Willard White OM CBE, Bass-baritone  
James Williams, Managing Director, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra  
Lynne Williams, Principal, Guildhall School of Music and Drama  
Roderick Williams OBE, Baritone  
Roger Wright CBE, Chief Executive, Aldeburgh Music  
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