

Orchestra for the Earth would like to make a statement in light of the global protests at the killing of George Floyd in police custody in the United States, a movement which has forced all of us to confront the reality of racism in our own societies. We stand in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and its aims to end racism and violence against the BME community across the world.

OFE's aim is to use music as a catalyst for the love, understanding and protection of the natural world. Black Lives Matter is therefore especially important to our work because we believe that classical music is for everyone and that a greener future is a fairer future. Climate change is linked to social inequality, [disproportionately affecting BME communities](#) and underrepresenting their voices, and classical music continues to suffer from a [major lack of diversity](#) at every level.

OFE is a relatively newly formed organisation, and diversity and inclusion have been important issues for us from the start. We acknowledge that our musicians and collaborators are still predominantly white and middle-class, and that, while symptomatic of the industry at large, this is a failing on our part. Recent events have motivated us to improve and intensify our efforts, and we hope that as a younger organisation we will be able to build from the grassroots up. We commit to doing so in the following four areas:

Understanding our failings. The Black Lives Matter protests over the past few weeks remind us to listen to these voices and understand that they are highlighting a real and serious problem. The lack of diversity in the classical music industry is rooted in the same structural inequality as all racial inequality. We recognise that institutional racism stems from [unconscious biases](#) that affect decisions we make on all levels. If we can understand this better, we can do our best to mitigate against racial prejudice.

Our charitable partners. OFE collaborates with a number of excellent environmental organisations, using our concerts as a platform for their work. We pledge always to consider how these organisations engage with issues of diversity and racial inequality, and prioritise working with those who do so most effectively. We chose World Land Trust as the focus of our [recent OFE Online performance](#) partly because of their exceptional record in empowering minority communities in conservation projects.

Building a diverse orchestra. There is no doubt that the classical music industry as a whole is a poor representation of wider society, and many orchestras, including OFE, exaggerate that imbalance. There are many BME musicians whom we are failing to reach in our recruitment. We therefore pledge to increase our

efforts to build a more representative roster of musicians, diversifying our networks and monitoring our fixing processes. We will look carefully at how other musical organisations build diversity and inclusion into their practices and ask to consult with those with expertise. In addition to the musicians themselves, we work with a small group of volunteers and our Board of Trustees, as well as other external collaborators, and recognise that these are also in need of diversification.

Reflecting diversity in our repertoire. BME composers past and present suffer from profound under-representation in classical programming. We commit to exploring the repertoire of works by historical BME composers in our own concerts, and ensuring balanced representation among the living composers whose music we perform and commission. We believe this not only to be a fair and right approach to programming, but one that will deepen and enhance our music-making.

From now on, we will publish an annual Diversity and Equality Report, detailing policies as they develop and our progress in achieving their aims. As well as racial issues, the report will focus on wider aspects of diversity.

While we have been galvanised to take this action by the recent protests, we are doing so because fundamentally we value and celebrate the work of BME musicians, environmentalists, and members of our society. Diversity of thought and experience enriches everything we do. We have a long way to go before we have truly fair representation, but we are committed to achieving that goal.



Alycia Jewes
Chair of the Board of Trustees



John Warner
Founder & Artistic Director

22nd June 2020