

# Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Anti-Racism Action Plan

## *Second Quarterly Update, March 2021*

The following actions and areas of work arising from the RCS Anti-Racism Action Plan, first published in September 2020, have been undertaken since the last quarterly update (December 2020). Some of this work is student and alumni-generated (including extra-curricular examples), and shines a light on the responsibility of the institution to celebrate the voices that continue to engage and challenge us throughout this process of learning.

### Governance

A recruitment process for the RCS Board of Governors is ongoing, with appointments to be confirmed before the next ARAP update (June 2021). A recruitment agency with experience in seeking a diverse range of suitable candidates for Board level positions brought forward a number of candidates from a range of backgrounds, to the process.

### Resources

RCS' Information Services Team have been working to expand and contextualise the diversity of our collections.

The Library is committed to countering contemporary and historic racism and inequality in our collections. We will endeavour to build inclusive collections, reflective of the global performing artist talent pool, and the RCS stance on anti-racism and injustice. The Library Team is undertaking extensive work which includes working with academic colleagues on guidance and resources for reading list creation on the [Library Portal](#), the [D is for Diversity](#) year-long blog series and our [Diversifying the Library Collections](#) page.

We also acknowledge that our collections do contain materials that are historic in nature and may contain – either in their content or descriptions – terminology or representations which are inappropriate, outdated, or offensive. This terminology is often not changed or updated in our catalogues as it demonstrates the attitudes and language contemporary to the creation or description of the item. It does not reflect the current attitudes of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. To that end we are engaging with colleagues and the Students' Union to ensure that these works have context and explanations as to their place (or otherwise) in our collections. We welcome all comments and contributions to this work.

### Diversity Fund 2020/21 (including looking ahead to upcoming quarter, and beyond)

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Overview of proposal</b>
Ballet	Paul Liburd MBE to be invited to teach classes, repertoire and host a masterclass/Q&A at RCS over a 3-4 day period in Term 3 (April/May 2021)
Centre for Voice	Additional Voice Teacher contracted - AY 20-21
Musical Theatre V1	Series of masterclasses to BAMT2, BAMT3 and MA throughout AY20/21
CPP	Performance Labs x 3 by artists of colour, 2 to CPP1 during T2, and 1 to CPP3 in T2

Filmmaking	Hiring Africa in Motion to deliver 3 x Q&A sessions with filmmakers for film festival in November.
Filmmaking	Delivery of Intro to African Cinema - 6 x 2hr sessions. Term 2
MACCT plus others	Contract for OTV Mentor work 27 Nov - 29 Jan 2021
Various	Student input to meetings

### **Representation** (student experience forums)

We recently passed a grim milestone of one year in lockdown and, as we held further student experience forums this quarter, we recognised that our Asian and Pacific Islander Community of students and staff have either had direct experience of, or been affected by, unacceptable racist attitudes arising from a 'blame culture' around the emergence of the pandemic. This is given visibility by some sections of media, social media and in some parts of global society at large. This was only compounded by the horrific killings of Asian-Americans in Atlanta, GA, on March 16<sup>th</sup> only days before the anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre (21<sup>st</sup> March, 1960). Knowing the impacts of events historical and in the present day on members of our community increases our resolve to stamp out racism in all its forms. We plan further Student Experience Forums in the remainder of this calendar year and encourage members of any underrepresented community to come and discuss how RCS can best support students to be heard, at all levels of the Conservatoire.

A Staff-Student Charter has been drafted by Amadu Khan (EDI Officer) with support from other colleagues and students, and will be further consulted upon after Easter. Amongst other things, it articulates a mutually-respectful relationship between members of our community, and rejects any form of abusive behaviour.

### **External Relations**

The latest edition of RCS *Review* contained an article on the ARAP, including input from Zweyla Mitchell Dos Santos (current SU VP for DDPF) and Dr Lois Fitch (Assistant Principal), reflecting on the conversations and experiences that had given rise to the plan in the Summer of 2021, as well as the process students and staff have been through to arrive at the published plan and ongoing update work.

RCS' Black Union has created a blog piece to be shared in alumni news.

*Triptych*, a project made and presented by Shakara Rose Carter (MACCT) was completed for sharing on the RCS@Home platform.

Development monies received from the William Grant Foundation towards RCS' work in diversity and outreach, have been used to create an online festival ('ETCH'), a collaboration organised by SU Cultural Diversity Officer Jasmine Ong, which will present an engaging programme of events comprising a decolonised festival, taking place over six months and culminating in COP26.

### **School of DDPF**

Individual Departmental/Discipline plans are progressing in consultation with students and staff, and the School Management Team has met to consider the strategic direction of anti-racism planning across the portfolio. Heads of Department welcome input from all students in this process.

### **School of Music**

A second draft of the School ARAP is due to be considered at the Management Team, and students are being consulted as part of the development process. We continue to seek opportunities to diversify repertoire, visiting artists and the perspectives that can be brought to bear on both established and unfamiliar works, canons and performance practices.

### **Production**

Life models of Black and ethnically Chinese heritage have been introduced into classes, as have BIPOC visiting specialists.

Responding to points made in the initial ARAP, training and reviewing of procedures in relation to management, in production, of different hair types for example, is underway. Additionally, investment has been made in different colour head microphones for performers.

Texts by BIPOC writers (including Amanda Gorman) have been included as focus texts, including *The Hill We Climb* as the central text in the PTM Soundscapes competition.

### **AdvanceHE**

The Assistant Principal has attended a Working Group meeting for an AdvanceHE collaborative project - '*Embedding race equality in FE/HE – understanding and developing an Anti-Racist Curriculum*' and will continue to be involved in the project as it progresses, representing RCS in this sectoral initiative.