



more  
than a  
youth  
theatre

Stage2



# BLM FORUM OUTCOMES: STAGE2 BOARD RESPONSE



# OUR PRINCIPLES

- **WE PLACE THE WELLBEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE OF ALL WE DO**
- **STAGE2 YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY IS COMMITTED TO PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, TO PURSUING NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES AND PRACTICE AND ELIMINATING UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF AGE, GENDER, MARITAL STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, RELIGION, CLASS, NATIONALITY, CREED, COLOUR, ETHNIC ORIGIN, POLITICAL BELIEF OR [DIS]ABILITY.**
- **WE RECOGNISE THE NEED TO ADDRESS UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES AMONGST OUR MEMBERSHIP AND OUR BOARD.**



# THIS DOCUMENT

- **SUMMARISES, AGAINST EACH AREA OF FOCUS FROM THE FORUM:**
  - **THE OUTCOMES SUGGESTED BY THE MEMBERS' FORUM HELD IN RESPONSE TO THE "BLACK LIVES MATTER" MOVEMENT AND ITS ONGOING CAMPAIGN FOR SOCIAL EQUALITY**
  - **THE ACTIVITIES OF STAGE2 IN THIS FOCUS AREA WHICH REPRESENT GOOD PRACTICE AND WHICH WE ALREADY UNDERTAKE**
  - **RECOGNISING WE CAN ALWAYS STRIVE TO IMPROVE, THOSE OUTCOMES WE, THE STAGE2 BOARD, CAN TAKE FORWARD AT PRESENT**
  - **OUTCOMES THE COMPANY WILL DISCUSS FURTHER WITH MEMBERS OVER COMING MONTHS TO IDENTIFY HOW BEST TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE OUR PRACTICE AND ACTIVITIES TOGETHER**



**A MESSAGE FROM ONE OF OUR  
YOUNG LEADERS**

A young Black woman, Liv Grant-Bryson, stands on a stage with her eyes closed and her right arm extended horizontally. She is wearing a black t-shirt with a graphic of a pink flamingo whose legs are replaced by a pair of red and white sneakers. The background is dark.

# Liv Grant-Bryson

Looking around me at the state that our world is in today I wonder how we can call ourselves a developed country and say that we have progressed when the racial hatred and bias is still so prevalent within our country towards black people and other ethnic minorities. However, the recent shift in attitude due to the resurgence of BLM that has sent waves through various communities, allows me to have much more faith in my immediate community that some of the racism and prejudice within our world is being exposed thus allowing me to feel safer and allowing for hope that society will be safer and more tolerant for the generation to come.

Stage2 has been central in allowing me to build up my own confidence as a young black woman living in Britain. The attitude of Stage2 in which no one is ever left out and the narrative that young people have the potential to achieve anything, has allowed me to ignore the stereotypes that society loves to place around POC and feel comfortable enough to chase what I want to achieve.

Being in a leadership position within Stage2 also goes some way to changing stereotypes within the wider community- other young people being able to see me as a role model (in the same way I viewed Maya alongside the other trainee tutors) means that in the future it will no longer be rare to have a diverse range of people that young people can view as models - ideally there will soon be a society where children can aspire to be someone who looks like themselves as opposed to give up on their dreams purely because they find it impossible to view themselves in that position and Stage2 goes some way to paving the way for this change.



Personally being a trainee tutor and future LAMDA tutor has built up my confidence in my own abilities and allowed me to build up the mental capacity to challenge anyone who attempts to question my abilities. Stage2 has reinforced the narrative that my family have always taught me - that I am able to do anything I put my mind to. I was once told that this attitude slowly drips away with age due to the number of hurdles outweighing the echoes of success. Yet, I hope that with Stage2, other organisations as well as growth in awareness of the struggles facing POC, we are able to build a more positive future in which this attitude of success is not thwarted for POC prematurely.

Liv Grant-Bryson (age 16)

## Representation in our Board Membership & Staff

The Forum suggested:

–[ Bring in and retain ] “More Ethnic Minority staff and board members”

What we will continue:

- Uphold the Stage2 central ethos that nobody is ever left out
- Celebrate the diversity of the Company, both past and present
- Strive to improve on this

What we will do now:

- ✓ Actively recruit additional board members to reach 25% Ethnic Minority representation
- ✓ Revise, this year, our equal opportunities employment policy specifically to promote an increase in Ethnic Minority applicants to staff roles.

What we will discuss further:

- ❑ Our focus on the increased inclusion and representation of marginalized groups within our staff and board bodies.
- ❑ How best to promote equality & diversity as part of an ongoing dialogue of best practice.



# Recruiting New Members of the Company

The Forum suggested:

–“Changing how and where we market to attract more members from Ethnic Minorities”

What we will continue:

- Ensure our Equal Opportunities policy and message continue to be prominent in our recruitment drives
- Strive to improve on this

What we will do now:

- ✓ Direct marketing, focusing on areas with more Ethnic Minority families
- ✓ Increase signposting of our Subsidy Fund
- ✓ Build networks with charity and community orgs who can help us do better.
- ✓ Make this an objective for the new Marketing & Development Outreach Coordinator

What we will discuss further:

- ❑ Act on the findings of our M&DO Coordinator in the Autumn
  - ❑ Seeking funding where necessary to support this
- ❑ The further promotion of the Subsidy Access Fund
- ❑ The further promotion of Qualifications as an access point for Ethnic Minorities
- ❑ The provision of opportunities for member suggestions on how to make the Company more relevant to Ethnic Minority members

# Creative Output by the Company

The Forum suggested:

–Expand the Company repertoire in productions and other performance settings to embrace more “Inclusive plays/ diverse plays”

## What we will continue:

- Tackle relevant & socially impactful work, even if it is ‘difficult’
- Be sensitive to the cast and audience perspectives in staging work which deals with ethnicity or race
- 1-2-1 dialogues with people of colour in the company to signpost opportunities

## What we will do now:

- ✓ Actively provide opportunities to lift & celebrate the voices of ethnic minority individuals.
- ✓ Diversify used resources of playwrights / practitioners

## What we will discuss further:

- ❑ How to be more transparent about flexible casting & leadership possibilities
  - ❑ We will actively challenge the narrative & perception that ethnic minorities are limited to and from certain roles
- ❑ Appropriate mechanisms to track and celebrate the representation of ethnic minority members in casts and other company roles, in the context of representation within the company itself
- ❑ A recurring event that actively celebrates marginalized communities through performance (including ethnic minorities)

# Speaking up about Concerns and Issues

The Forum suggested:

- The Company should seek to improve on awareness and processes for “Reporting of any racial issues.”

## Board Statement:

We recognise that as an organisation we are not perfect and even though we have always been well-intentioned in our practice & operation; mistakes happen. We hope that this document demonstrates our willingness to listen and to strive to make our company a safer, more comfortable place to be.

What we will continue:

- Uphold our policies on Safeguarding, Equal Opportunities, Harassment and Bullying, and our processes for Queries, Questions, Concerns, or Complaints

What we will do now:

- ✓ Encourage open dialogue by signposting how to raise issues and concerns
- ✓ Introduce a new, anonymous, issue-raising process
- ✓ Train all staff & board members in Equality and Anti-Discrimination, and refresh this every 3yrs

What we will discuss further:

- ❑ Guidance for staff, visiting speakers, and audience members on conduct at events and performances
- ❑ Any aspects of paperwork for productions and rehearsals where further review is needed to better address concerns for company members from ethnic minorities.
- ❑ How to further enable, in a valuable and meaningful way, avenues for members challenging poor practice

# Major Intended Practical Changes

We've promised and spoken about a lot in this document, here are a few of the ways that Stage2 Staff & Board Members will put in place the mechanisms for change that we've highlighted:

## Members Area on the Website

**A combination of Staff and external professionals will actively work towards the creation of a Stage2 Members Area. This will be an online, accessible platform where members will:**

- **Be able to track their journey within Stage2** – recording their achievements, roles and developments
- **Be encouraged to give termly feedback** – the area will encourage members to reflect and think critically on their role within Stage2 as well as state what their desired “next steps” are.
- **Be able to give critical feedback or raise sensitive issues anonymously** – there will be an area of the platform that will allow members to bypass the current systems, in order to ensure that concerned members can bring issues to staff and board attention immediately and without fear of consequence.



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## **Leadership Programme, Diversity Forums & Community Lead Events**

**Stage2 staff will actively encourage members, who represent a diverse range of communities, to:**

- Actively come forward in forums to give their opinions and wishes on how Stage2 continues to operate (both in terms of performance output and general delivery!)
- To create, manage and be supported in the production of community lead events that actively celebrate the voices of marginalised communities. This may take the form of a Words & Music style event that has a specific theme or topic or something completely different and totally owned by said communities.
- In a new programme that is replacing the Mentor & Trainee Tutor Schemes, Stage2 will canvas for older members from a diverse range of backgrounds, abilities and ethnic groups to represent a strong core of diverse role-models.

# HOW WE WILL TAKE THIS FORWARD



We will engage with Company members to make them aware of these Outcomes and Actions



We will report on these outcomes at each Board meeting to drive progress



We will report back to the Company members about this area of activity for the Company at least once every Term



We will discuss further how best to keep securing inputs on this through the Advisory Board and Forums which the Company provides for its Members



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THANK YOU