



June 9, 2020

Dear SAO Members,

The past few months have been a time of rapid change and profound disruption for all of us. Now, the SAO Board is compelled to reach out to our members in the face of recent violence. The SAO strongly condemns all acts of racism, violence, and oppression against Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) and we stand with those fighting for reform and justice around the world.

As Suzuki teachers who believe that Every Child Can, our pedagogy is rooted in the philosophy of hope and possibility. However, we must acknowledge that, although every child possesses ability, not all children are afforded opportunity. Systemic barriers mean that our Suzuki teachers, Suzuki students, and Suzuki repertoire do not reflect the racial and socioeconomic diversity of our larger community. Specifically, we acknowledge that Black, Indigenous, and other racialized artists are marginalized and excluded from many arts settings and are underrepresented in all aspects of the Suzuki community.

We are ready to listen, learn and work together with inclusivity and respect. However, actions speak louder than words. To truly make our beliefs a reality it is necessary to educate ourselves and take action. The SAO Board approaches this work with humility. There is much that we do not know and there is a great deal to be done. To begin, we are taking the following steps to combat systemic racism:

- 1) Already, we have implemented a requirement that all Board members complete formal governance training. The initial course in 2019 included education on the concepts of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). We commit to having all new Board members complete such training in the future.
- 2) We have compiled a [list of resources](#) to increase awareness of racism and systemic injustice. Many are specific to our Canadian context and some are tailored for children. There is also a dedicated list in French as well as English. In seeking more answers, we offer this list of resources to you.
- 3) Going forward, the Board will draft an updated strategic plan for the SAO beginning this fall. We commit to bringing an equity lens to this work, specifically considering ways to welcome, support and nurture BIPOC colleagues, students, and contributors.

Finally, although we do not know how the coming weeks and months will unfold, we remain accountable to our membership. We commit to communicate the progress of our anti-racist initiatives throughout the coming year. We recognize that lasting systemic change is a long-term process, and remind ourselves that where love is deep, much can be accomplished.

Sincerely,

Leni Jabour,
Chair

Debbie Hammond,
Vice-Chair

Kate Einarson,
Treasurer

Liz Biswas,
Secretary

Carmen Evans,
Past-Chair