

Statement on Systemic Racism and Injustice - June 2020

There are a lot of things to fix in this country, but history says if we don't address this canker, centuries in the making, these things will continue to happen. No matter what level privilege you have, when the system is broken everybody loses. We all have to speak up when injustice happens. No matter what. And music is one of the best ways I know to do so.

-Rhiannon Giddens

Nonesuch.com/journal
July 16, 2015

As a cultural institution, The Ark has a long history rooted in the music of social justice. As an organization, as a community of artists and music lovers, we know this music's powerful language of grief, strength and hope. We know it deeply from our hearts. And largely from the perspective of privilege.

The Ark stands unquestioningly in solidarity with the Black community against the violence and inequity of systemic racism. But standing in solidarity without stepping away from the comfort of privilege perpetuates the system and doesn't bring the solutions we're all working for. It's time—past time, really—to push beyond hesitation and unskillfulness to listen, learn, and actively do the work that teaches our organization and its people how to *live* in solidarity with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Not just in times of crisis. Every day.

We're committed to doing the work that earns The Ark the designation of "ally." And as alliances evolve into partnerships, as we hope over time they will, we understand that true partnership is about more than sharing space. It's about more than sharing music and vision. It's also about sharing power.

The Ark's Strategic Vision Statement for 2020-2024 states unequivocally that "we will seek out opportunities to expand diversity and inclusion within our programming and across our constituents" and determine "how The Ark needs to evolve to provide welcoming inclusion of new partners, constituents and programs."

More voices make a stronger choir. Truly fulfilling The Ark's mission to enrich the human spirit through the power of music in a safe and welcoming atmosphere for *all people* calls us to do more to include and amplify voices of color.