



BREAKING DOWN RACIAL BARRIERS

ANTI-BLACK RACISM IN THE CANADIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY **VOLUME 1**

JULY 2021

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Alberta Music, Breakout West, Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA), Canadian Music Week (CMW), Canadian Federation of Musicians (CFM), East Coast Music Association (ECMA), Guild of Music Supervisors, Canadian Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (CARAS) & The Juno Awards, Manitoba Music, Music Managers Forum Canada (MMF), MusicBC, Musique/Music NB, Music Canada, Music Nova Scotia, MusicOntario, Music PEI, Music Publishers Canada, NCRA-ANREC, RBC/Music MVP Project, SOCAN (The Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada), UNISON Benevolent Fund and WorkInCulture.

DISCLAIMER

Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organizations or government agencies which have supported or provided funding for this project. No organization, business or corporation, government or government agency is in any way bound by the recommendations contained in this document.



ANTI-BLACK RACISM IN THE CANADIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY VOLUME 1

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INTRODUCTION

2020 provided an unprecedented and eye-opening look at the systemic racism experienced by Black people worldwide.

Born of the collective frustration of a lifetime of conversations on the inequitable treatment of Black people in a music industry built on the blood, sweat and tears of Black music practitioners, professionals and creatives, Breaking Down Racial Barriers (BDRB) was initiated as a community roundtable series on anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry.

Precipitated and catalyzed by the combination of the racial reckoning created by the Black Lives Matter movement, the police killing of George Floyd and the viral impact of #BlackOutTuesday, BDRB set out to conduct meaningful conversations leading to actionable, measurable solutions to anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry.

Music industry mainstays Ian Andre Espinet and David “Click” Cox initiated, curated and coordinated “Breaking Down Racial Barriers” - a 100% Black-led roundtable discussion series on anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry. CENTRED in the voices and lived experiences of working Black music professionals from the vast segments of the music industry, the BDRB roundtable was presented by the Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA), supported by the newly formed ADVANCE, Canada's Black Music Business Collective, and assisted promotionally by CIMA peer and partner organizations from across the national industry.

The 10-week discussion series (August to October 2020) featured first-hand testimonials and experiences of over 60 Black music industry professionals from across the country and provided a harrowing look into the systematic, systemic, institutional racism and oppression entrenched in all aspects of the music industry's public and private sector ecosystem.

Each episode focused attention on a specific area of the music industry in which anti-Black racism persists and served to expose the web of intersections, which have, and continue to create systematic barriers to Black music professionals. The series examined anti-Blackness in key areas including economics, media, creative spaces and live events; barriers faced by artists and professionals within organizations, corporations and institutions; and the impact which racism has and continues to have on succession and retention of Black people in the industry.

Upon conclusion of the series, CIMA commissioned this report to summarize the findings of the roundtable series. It provides a snapshot of anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry, the spaces in which it proliferates and persists, and its systemic, systematic and institutional causes. Finally, it provides recommendations to be implemented.

On Wednesday, June 2nd, 2021, the 1-year anniversary of #BlackoutTuesday - the viral global action to protest anti-Black racism - BDRB, CIMA and ADVANCE partnered to host the signing of a virtual declaration event where music industry leaders made public their commitment to ending anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry.

The Declaration signing event was attended virtually by over 500 viewers and has garnered signatures from over 450 industry companies and organizations to date - with a mandate to enlist ongoing industry commitment.

Based in key tenets, the BDRB Declaration espouses that:

Efforts will look different for solo entrepreneurs, small businesses, organizations, corporations and government institutions. Thus, it is important to understand that an inability to execute all commitments listed herein, does not constitute failure. Rather, starting points for signatories will differ, with efforts progressing over time: start where you are, and work towards the goal.

In addition to the BDRB Roundtables, the Declaration, and this Report, BDRB has plans to further the initiative which includes consultations and ground work throughout the music industry to build a path towards actionable, measurable solutions and accountability in the industry.

We are standing on the precipice of change and positive progression for people of Black and African descent. Systemic racism at the institutional, governmental and organizational levels has been acknowledged. Meaningful discussions for action and change are beginning to take place.

These are important first steps in creating a strategy for addressing these issues. Next, we must seek to understand the root causes and actual impact of anti-Black racism. Crucial information is required to understand the barriers for Black music professionals. Data and statistics are key to laying the groundwork in effectively addressing funding challenges for Black music professionals.

This mission is a massive undertaking. The issues are complex and nuanced. The Black community is not homogenous, and therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all approach possible in the creation of solutions. Very little precedent exists in policy to guide the work in this space, and, until the recent formation of ADVANCE, no umbrella organization has existed in recent history to coordinate efforts of those doing the work. And, although consultation with the Black community is standard, few of the existing reports have been authored by members of the affected group, and consequently lack critical lived experience & insight.

It is our hope that the BDRB initiative will serve as an integral tool in the industry wide effort to eradicate anti-Black racism, and that collectively these works will lay the groundwork for the next generation to continue.

We commend the Canadian music industry and government for taking the initiative to make change for the long-term betterment of the Black community. There is much work to do. We believe that the industry will support policies and initiatives which create increased equity and collaborative effort between levels of government, organizations and private sector companies. We look to the community to be accountability partners in this change.

The BDRB initiatives aim to assist the corporations, organizations and government bodies operating in or around the Canadian music industry to gain an understanding of anti-Black racism in the industry and its potential solutions.

INTRODUCTION

This Report provides a synopsis and executive summary of recommendations based on the 10-part BDRB roundtable discussions.

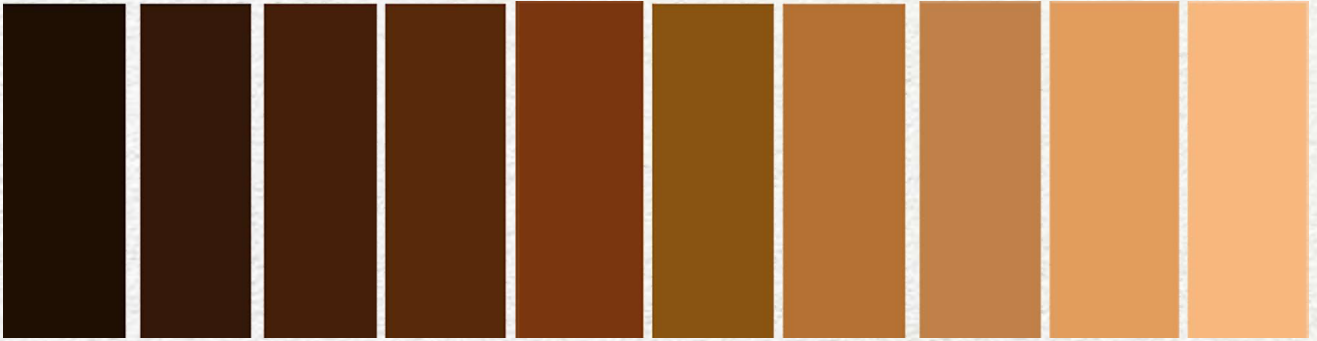
We would like to acknowledge the partnership of CIMA, with special gratitude to Sam Rayner and Matt Badoe, as well as the advice and guidance of past and current Presidents Stuart Johnson and Andrew Cash; and the support of Shauna De Cartier, Tim Potocic and the entire CIMA Board. We would also like to thank ADVANCE, Canada's Black Music Business Collective, its founding Board of Directors, and its Executive Director, Keziah Myers.

We are grateful for the financial support of FACTOR and The Government of Canada and Canada's private radio broadcasters.

BDRB and CIMA would also like to extend a special acknowledgment to the contributions of the 63 Black music professionals from across the national music industry who provided their unfiltered truths during the BDRB Roundtables in 2020. Their testimony forms the base on which this report is built. Thank you to:

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Hindz	Randy "Manifest" Reid	
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Ian Kamau	Sajae Elder	
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	Stephen "Zip-Loks" Hennessy	

The purpose of this Executive Summary is to provide a snapshot analysis of anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry. However, there are a number of notable considerations which must be addressed before embarking on dissecting a subject as robust as anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry.



1 THE BLACK COMMUNITY IS NOT HOMOGENOUS.

Any conversations had or strategies employed must recognize the heterogeneity, distinct, and unique experiences of the global Black diaspora.

“It is important to note the heterogeneity of [Black] communities within the context of the global diaspora. This is essential as there are several variations of Black identity [in these borders]”.¹

These communities include but are not limited to: those who were enslaved in New France and Upper Canada as far back as the 1630s, Black people who arrived via the numerous U.S. wars (1630's Independence, 1812, Civil War); free men and women who settled to create communities in southern Ontario; Maroons who arrived in Nova Scotia from Jamaica in the late 1790s; those who escaped the United States via the Underground Railroad; 20th century settlers in the West; Caribbean immigrants in the early and late 20th century; and immigrants from African nations in the late 20th century.²

To this end, corporations, organizations and governmental bodies wishing to create change toward equity, should include - and as far as possible - consult with members of the community to incorporate perspectives of its members on decisions and initiatives created to suit their needs.

In other words, no conversations should be initiated - or plans executed - regarding the needs of the Black community, in any spaces which it occupies, without speaking to the community.

1. See Winks, Robin: The Blacks in Canada, McGill-Queens University Press, Second Edition; Cooper, Afua: The Hanging of Marie Josephe Angelique, 2005, Harper Collins; Trudel, Marcel: Canada's Forgo en Slaves: Two Centuries of Bondage, 2013, Vehicule Press.

2. Ibid.



2 BLACK ISSUES REQUIRE BLACK FOCUSED SOLUTIONS.

All aspects of the industry must be viewed, reviewed and re-envisioned through a lens which considers anti-Black racism. To this end, all solutions employed in the creation of diversity, inclusion, equity etc (where it pertains to Black people) must be focused in anti-Black racism.

The experiences of Black people - and Black people specifically in the context of the Canadian music industry are unique and particularly distinct from those of “minority, marginalized” or other groups - based in the contributions which Black people have made, and continue to make to the music industry.

Thus, barriers faced by Black people in all sectors referred to in this summary and any further report, require solutions specifically tailored to Black persons in their respective sector, as the issues faced are specific, and often unique to the group. This is consistent for Black persons working as professionals in all sectors and arenas of the industry.

3 WORDS HAVE POWER.

Although no universal consensus exists with respect to language where it pertains to race, for the purposes of this report and in the interest of creating a level of shared understanding, we must be clear in our language. Failing to use specific language makes it difficult to eradicate racism.

We must stop calling the present race crisis in Canada where it pertains to Black people anything *other* than what is. Labelling behaviours committed against Black people “prejudice”, “mistreatment” or “discrimination” inadequately describes the scope and intensity of what is being experienced.

It is critical to identify what we are seeing as anti-Black racism in order to provide proper context to current discussions. As off-putting and harsh as the term may seem to some, the emphasis given to the term **anti-Black-racism**, and its use in this report is completely and utterly intentional.

That said, this report is focused singularly on **anti-Black racism** and will specifically address racism against Black people in the Canadian music industry. This report is **NOT** a discussion of BIPOC, IBPOC, POC (People of Colour), marginalized, visible minority or any other umbrella term. Although these terms seem innocuous, they allow those uncomfortable with race to get out of saying the word “Black”.

Using the term anti-Black racism eliminates the “one-size-fits-all” approach to eradicating racism. While racism affects all of the aforementioned groups, and while Black people are a part of the tangled web created by colonial behaviour worldwide, anti-Black racism speaks to the specific manners in which Black people are impacted by racism – the ways in which they are dehumanized, targeted and disproportionately affected by systems which create barriers to their potential.

Black is not a negative term. It identifies an – albeit - heterogeneous group of people. Terms such as BIPOC etc serve to speak of the included groups as a collective, and erase the unique identities, and in this case, more importantly, barriers and issues faced.

As children, many of us were taught that Canada was envisioned as a “mosaic”, where ethnic groups have been encouraged to maintain their unique cultural characteristics, while becoming “Canadian”. Hence, the hyphenated titles people often use to describe themselves when asked their nationalities, eg. Jamaican-Canadian.

In reality, Canada in all its politeness prides itself on being “colour-blind”, a position which creates shortcomings in the fight for equity. When we do not “see colour or race”, it impedes our ability to differentiate the ways in which people of different races are perceived - and treated.

Not “seeing race”, has ultimately rendered the practice of collecting race based data a non-priority. Subsequently, when there is an issue, it becomes difficult to assess the scope and severity, and how it affects different groups proportionately, because little to no data exists to substantiate it - in essence rendering any conclusions anecdotal.

4 MUSIC PROFESSIONALS

For the purposes of this report, music professionals refers to those working full or part time in the music industry, including the wide range of participants in all parts of the value chain including but not limited to those involved in the creation, writing, production, publishing, distribution and presentation of original music. The industry includes amongst others: musicians, songwriters, record labels, managers, agents, music publishers, concert promoters, presenters & more...³

3. Ontario Creates. “Industry Profile - Music.” Ontario Creates. Accessed January 19, 2021. <https://ontariocreates.ca/research/industry-profile/ip-music>.

5 BLACK MUSIC

Black music is defined by Webster's dictionary as “music created by African-American musicians; that has a melodic line and a strong rhythmic beat with repeated choruses.”⁴

For the purposes of this report, however, Black music will be defined as:

Music of Black Origins: music created, produced or inspired by Black people and/or people of African descent including but not limited to those encompassing “urban” and “pop” genres. These include negro spiritual, gospel, rumba, blues, bomba, jazz, salsa, R&B, samba, calypso, soul, cumbia, funk, ska, reggae, dub reggae, house, detroit techno, hip hop, gqom, afrobeat, soca, calypso, edm, rock and roll and country music⁶ – amongst others.

Defining the music, and understanding the history behind it, is a first and critical step in understanding and dismantling racism in the Canadian music industry. Further, it is critical in categorizing the music properly, both in understanding it’s consumption, for measuring it’s success, and for allocating resources and reward for such.

4. “Black Music,” Wikipedia (Wikimedia Foundation, March 1, 2021), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_music.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

AREAS OF IMPACT



Photo Credit: Brea Soul @breasoul

The objective of this report is to identify and elucidate key issues faced by Black music and entertainment professionals and practitioners in the Canadian music industry. Subsequent volumes will expand on the following key areas of impact.

Roundtable participants expressed issues, concerns and experiences in various spaces surrounding (but not limited to) the following areas:

ANTI-BLACK RACISM

- ⊗ Cultural appropriation
- ⊗ Self-determination (absence of Black community involvement in decisions pertaining to them)
- ⊗ Lack of diversity, inclusion and equity on boards, committees, key-decision making spaces et.al
- ⊗ Systemic exclusion from roles across and throughout the music & entertainment ecosystem
- ⊗ Microaggressions in the workplace and throughout the industry
- ⊗ Muting of Black voices & fear of reprisal for calling out of racism & inequitable systems
- ⊗ Palatable Blackness, colourism & shadism
- ⊗ Performative allyship and it's negative implications
- ⊗ The impact of economic scarcity on Black community infrastructure building & development
- ⊗ Stereotyping
- ⊗ Systematic erasure of Black people and culture (lack of recognition, exclusion from spaces etc)
- ⊗ Tokenism and “the parading of the Black employee”
- ⊗ White fragility, white supremacy & white feminism

DATA

- ⊗ The need for economic impact studies including but not limited to those which assess:
 - ⊗ Racial disproportionalities and disparities in the industry
 - ⊗ The financial contribution of Black music and culture in Canada
- ⊗ The need for anti-Black racism studies to capture lived experiences of discrimination and racism in workplaces, organizations and spaces
- ⊗ Underrepresentation of Black people across sectors of the industry (trades, unions, leadership etc)
- ⊗ Reports written by qualified members of Black community & lack of Black representation in current report and research firms utilized by industry and government
- ⊗ Collection, management and use of POI (Participant Observer Information) with input from Black community and stakeholders

REPRESENTATION

- ⊗ Disproportionate representation of Black people in artist roles versus all other industry roles
- ⊗ Absence of Black music professionals and Black owned in areas of the Canadian music industry including but not limited to:
 - ⊗ leadership, executive and C-suites of corporations and organizations;
 - ⊗ record label executives, professionals and staff;
 - ⊗ music publishers, recording studios, engineers, record labels, retail and online music stores, performance rights organizations;
 - ⊗ live music / live music performance spaces (sound and lighting engineers, booking agents, promoters, music, nightclub and concert venues, road crew);
 - ⊗ talent managers, artists & repertoire managers, business managers, entertainment lawyers;
 - ⊗ grant organizations and in judge, jurors, committee & boards roles;
 - ⊗ audio or video music content broadcast such as digital service providers (DSPs, UGCs);
 - ⊗ satellite, internet radio stations, broadcast radio and TV stations in roles outside of on air;
 - ⊗ music journalists and music critics;
 - ⊗ music educators and teachers;
 - ⊗ music award shows & prizing organizations as judges, jurors, committee & on boards
 - ⊗ publicists, sync, agents
 - ⊗ radio tracking & plugging
 - ⊗ musician's unions, composers, performance-rights & musicians organizations
- ⊗ Membership gaps and lack of representation by Black people on boards of directors and in executive roles in music organizations and Music Industry Associations (MIAs) nationally
- ⊗ Underrepresentation of Black people throughout music industry trade ecosystem including but not limited to the following: studio assistant, mixer, sound engineer, video editor, studio manager, audiovisual technician, boom operator, audiovisual engineer, sound designer, audio engineer
- ⊗ Lack of ownership/need for community infrastructure creating structures such as record labels, live venues, studios, sound and lighting companies, research companies, grant writers etc
- ⊗ In advisory, board roles and employed in municipal, provincial and federal arts councils and music related organizations and decision making bodies



Photo Credit: Tee Murphy @teeography
Leila Day | Toronto Soul Music Festival, 2021.

ARTISTS

- ⊗ Inequitable access to funding & resources (versus peers of other races & genres)
- ⊗ Need for / lack of Black decision makers and relatable contacts in spaces (including record labels, media (especially radio), live (venues, festivals & concerts))
- ⊗ Lack of infrastructure / need for Black representation in professional, technical, support and ancillary areas of the industry (ie. agents, managers, publishing, sync, music managers, booking agencies, licencing, rights & royalties; graphic designers, videographers, marketing and social media, sound & mixing engineers, lighting et al.)
- ⊗ Absence of outlets for Black music across media
- Portrayal and narratives of Black people by media leading to:
 - ⊗ Inequitable access to media / mistreatment by media (ie. lack of coverage, interviews, misquoting etc)
 - ⊗ Inequitable access to sponsorship and endorsement opportunities
 - ⊗ Unequal treatment at awards shows
 - ⊗ Absence of outlets for Black music (and in particular: radio & live)
 - ⊗ Perpetuating stereotyping and box fitting of artists based on race / genre
- ⊗ Genre categorization issues with Cancon, CRTC, award shows and radio (ie. “Urban, Pop”)
- ⊗ Lack of access to / mistreatment & inequitable treatment by venues
- ⊗ Shortage of performance opportunities
- ⊗ Comparable success of non-Black peers performing Black music genres due to systemic biases
- ⊗ Inequitable share of revenues generated from Black intellectual property returning to it’s creators
- ⊗ Need for outreach by industry and government organizations in creation of access and education

LIVE EVENTS

- ⊗ Inequitable treatment of Black event producers by venues (room rental rates, bar guarantees etc)
- ⊗ Lack of access to venues & public spaces for Black music events and audiences
- ⊗ Absence of grant funding opportunities for Black music genres & difficulty accessing information
- ⊗ Stereotyping of musical genres, audiences and behaviours
- ⊗ Othering / European genres as standard of acceptability (ie. World music, Urban, Reggae etc)
- ⊗ Grant support for Black concerts, festivals, presenters, agencies, and ancillaries (sound, lighting, production companies etc)
- ⊗ Lack of collaboration between stakeholders to remove intersectional barriers to live events (ie. city zoning & permits, liquor licencing)
- ⊗ Creation of music-friendly and musician-friendly policies
- ⊗ Absence of cultural tourism marketing
- ⊗ Lack of recognition and understanding of the integral role of the DJ (Disc Jockey) in Black music as an artist, discovery, dissemination, distribution and marketing tool for Black music artists & genres
- ⊗ Exclusion from consideration as tourism, heritage and cultural attractions

MEDIA

- ⊗ How media has perpetuated oppression and fueled anti-Blackness & inferiority
- ⊗ The impact that the desensitization of Black suffering & humanity and amplification of violence play in the stereotyping of Black artists & music professionals in their everyday lives
- ⊗ The need for Black owned/run media including radio, print, broadcast and digital in creation of an unfiltered voice & celebration and amplification of Black success
- ⊗ The absence of Black decision makers including but not limited to editors, program directors et.al in all media spaces & the role this plays in social narrative, hiring practices and industry succession
- ⊗ The importance of Black radio to community & infrastructure, as mandated under Diversity of Voices
- ⊗ Outdated and systemically biased demographic data collection and attribution
- ⊗ Prohibitive or special restrictions / conditions on radio stations playing Black music genres

SUCCESSION + RETENTION

- ⊗ Lack of opportunity / ability to secure work in qualified employment fields
- ⊗ Talent & brain drain (to U.S. and other markets) due to systemic and industry ceilings
- ⊗ Internships: barriers created by unpaid opportunities, nepotism & referral processes
- ⊗ Box checking: the impact of promotion without adequate preparation (ie. set up for failure);
- ⊗ The harm caused to Black music professionals hired to meet quotas without changes to workplace culture
- ⊗ Decision makers and persons in positions of power who are disconnected from the music and culture; and the role this plays in decisions about who and what is amplified
- ⊗ Lack of mentorship and training (especially for Black women)
- ⊗ Absence of / need for career development

OUTREACH + ACCESS

- ⊗ Need for organizational outreach to decrease membership gaps
- ⊗ Feeling unwelcome in organizations and spaces
- ⊗ Need for use of community based strategies, outreach, publicity & advertising media
- ⊗ Need for increased presence on mailing lists
- ⊗ Lack of information sharing / access to information
- ⊗ Unawareness of organizational mandates and programming

RESOURCES

- ⊗ Funding for Black community led & run organizations for disbursement
- ⊗ Need for dedicated funding for Black artists, entrepreneurs
- ⊗ Need for seminars and knowledge exchanges in the sector

OUTREACH + ACCESS (CONT'D)

GRANT FUNDING

- ⊗ Perception: access to grants is directly related to proximity to funder & legacy networking
- ⊗ Lack of response with respect to unsuccessful applications
- ⊗ Perception that grant systems are not for Black applicants
- ⊗ Larger and historical organizations gaining access to equity resources through inclusion mandates & at the expense of smaller Black run organizations
- ⊗ Absence of assistance for Black industry ecosystem & gig economy (ie. DJs)
- ⊗ Instability and lack of sustainability created by lack of core funding / programming resources
- ⊗ Historic under-resourcing of Black companies vs large companies and organizations
- ⊗ Shorter history & experience with grant organizations
- ⊗ Lack of capacity (application processes are arduous and exhaustive to smaller companies/orgs without dedicated/full-time or experienced staff)
- ⊗ Need for dedicated funding for development of Black organizations and grant applicants
- ⊗ Recognition by grant funders that Black community organizations often act as training institution, production and presenter – a concept overlooked by funders
- ⊗ Revision or removal of economic barriers to applying (eg. incorporation, years in business, number of staff, annual revenues)
- ⊗ Necessity for removal of barriers / creation of tiered caps on Black grants
- ⊗ Allowance for stacking of grants
- ⊗ Diversification of eligibility aka (type of business) which take into consideration community history
- ⊗ Need for removal of Eurocentric standards regarding musical genres, culture and arts
- ⊗ Lack of understanding and awareness of funders and respective roles

POSITIONS (BOARDS)

- ⊗ Need for review and revision of board governance
- ⊗ Creation of dedicated voting seat for member of Black community on boards
- ⊗ Overall number of Black people in decision making and advisory roles



Photo Credit: Tandem X Visuals on Unsplash



KEY TENETS + RECOMMENDATIONS

To build an inclusive Canadian music and entertainment industry, it is critical to address the anti-Black racism which exists in its systems and working environments.

The eradication of anti-Black racism requires a commitment to anti-racism - an active, conscious and *ongoing* effort to work against racism: to acknowledge; to atone; and to create mechanisms that dismantle systems which perpetuate racism, and to create actionable solutions with measurable outcomes.

For the betterment of Black music practitioners and professionals nationwide, BDRB has created recommendations based on key tenets which should be exercised across every area of the music industry. These recommendations were the basis for the BDRB Declaration to End Anti-Black Racism in the Canadian Music Industry, which was signed by over 500 companies as of June 2020.

INDIVIDUAL WORK TOWARD EQUITY

Efforts will look different for solo entrepreneurs, small businesses, organizations, corporations and government institutions. Thus, it is important to understand that an inability to execute all recommendations does not constitute failure. Rather, starting points will differ, with efforts progressing over time: start where you are and work towards the goal.

Anti-racism begins with awareness and education of individuals and moves toward more formal practices such as policies, procedures and systems change in organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Begin by committing to smaller, more manageable personal goals such as:

Acknowledgement: having uncomfortable conversations about race and identify personal conscious / unconscious biases

Educating yourself and those around you on anti-Black racism: reading articles and news stories; purchasing books on anti-racism, white privilege, white fragility; watching videos & documentaries; listening to podcasts

Advocacy: Speaking up when you hear racist statements; using your voice and platform, no matter the size, to show your support; following and re-sharing the content of advocates on your social media to amplify Black voices and knowledge

Expanding professional social networks

Donating or volunteering at organizations doing anti-Black racism work

Creating space through mentorship or paid co-op / internship opportunities within your space

Anti-Black racism training: registering and attending free / low-cost workshops online

THE CREATION OF ANTI-BLACK RACISM POLICIES AND TRAINING

Dismantling anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry will require the re-envisioning of all foundational policies, procedures and practices through a lens of anti-Black racism.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Creation of a plan of action for the elimination of anti-Black racism in spaces, including:

Engaging in ongoing anti-Black racism, anti-oppression and inclusion training (at all organizational levels where applicable)

Instituting policies outlining varying levels of remedy for acts of anti-Black racism ranging from education to dismissal

Creation of a code of conduct and resource guide on anti-Black racism, equity, diversity & inclusion

Development of an equity, diversity and inclusion task force or committee

Curated training provided by Black professional consultants specializing in anti-racist systems change

Improved policies, initiatives and practices in federal, provincial and municipal institutions

Regular consultations with Black communities to provide guidance and support to improve outcomes for Black music professionals in spaces

COLLECTION, TRACKING AND PUBLIC REPORTING OF RACE BASED DATA AND KEY METRICS

The collection of available data on workplace diversity and key metrics including the racial breakdown of staff and employees at all levels (where applicable):

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Creation of a plan of action for the elimination of anti-Black racism in spaces, including:

The collection of available data on workplace diversity and key metrics including the racial breakdown of staff and employees at all levels (where applicable):

Data on self-identifying Black staff at all levels of the organization, corporation or governmental institution, including, but not limited to, the collection of key metrics (where applicable) pertaining to:

- o Percentage of Black employees
- o Percentage of Black employees in management at all levels of the organization including entry & intermediate positions and senior management
- o Percentage and number of Black board members

A commitment to actively and voluntarily participating in market studies and research initiatives led by or supported by Black community organizations, and:

- o Conducting surveys of staff which audit & examine workforce demographics and company culture
- o Development of strategies and recommendations which respond to issues raised by the survey
- o Development of plans to implement recommendations
- o Voluntary annual public disclosure of the workplace diversity data including diversity of staff, pay ranges et.al. (via annual reports, corporate shareholder statements, websites)

Leveraging relevant data from past research such as economic impact studies etc.

Make money available to increase reliable, usable and comparable data and evidence regarding racism and discrimination

REPRESENTATION THROUGHOUT THE MUSIC INDUSTRY ECOSYSTEM

For decades, the music industry has profited off of the intellectual property of Black creatives and professionals. Increasing representation and diversity throughout the entire industry is key to creating equity in the Canadian music industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The creation of practices which expand the talent pool through the hiring, succession and retention of Black employees in all industry positions – from administrative and technical to executive and board roles through:

RECRUITMENT & HIRING

Including an open invitation, and statement of commitment on all employment postings, to the hiring of Black applicants, which particularly encourages and welcomes submissions of interest from potential Black employees.

Adoption of practices such as:

- o Open hiring: Consideration of those who may be excluded from traditional hiring processes by considering, for instance, work experience in lieu of formal education
- o Cluster hiring: the process of hiring new employees in groups rather than individually. This concept has become a common practice in organizations and institutions looking to boost equity and diversity in their hiring practices.

Updating screening processes, diversifying hiring panels and conducting standardized interviews to reduce implicit bias (with a focus on competencies)

Revisiting recruiting approaches/techniques (including 3rd party agencies) to drive greater Black representation

Creating diversity & inclusion objectives (eg. X percentage by Y date or year over year)

Voluntary submission of music industry-related positions in your organization to Black employment boards such as the ADVANCE Music employment board

Advertising employment postings in Black community media & spaces frequented by Black applicants

REPRESENTATION (CONT'D)

MENTORSHIP

Professional development activities and career advancement, including but not limited to:

- o mentorships & sponsorships (pairing high performers with leadership)
- o paid internships
- o apprenticeships
- o specialized training
- o workshops

RETENTION & SUCCESSION

o Tracking sources of Black employee attrition rates by utilizing exit surveys for all staff departures

Developing a work culture which supports professional mentorship and career development opportunities

Offering formal mentoring for Black employees

Being intentional about providing access to information & key relationships that will lead to success

Creating clear career paths & setting milestones with measurable and accountable outcomes

Specific solution targeting for Black women, including access to mentorship, management & leadership training

Prioritizing internal promotion vs. external hires

BOARDS & EXECUTIVE ROLES

Implementation/modification of unique models such as the NFL's "Rooney Rule" which mandate interviewing quotas, where at least one Black candidate is interviewed for available leadership positions

Review and revision of bylaws and governance models

Tying leadership performance evaluations and bonuses to progress on equity, diversity and inclusion objectives

Allocating budgetary resources to better support Black executive and professional representation in music departments and areas other than just "Black music" or "urban"

BLACK COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS, INVESTMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

Organizations can demonstrate leadership by delineating between BLACK RUN, BLACK LED and Black serving partners and supporting and guiding creative initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

BLACK COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Community consultation for needs analysis

Identify partner-based opportunities for programme creation

Collaboration with relevant Black-run organizations, charities and community organizations that are:

- o driven by the vision of artistic leaders
- o stimulating the emergence of new artistic voices
- o addressing challenges and identifying opportunities

INVESTMENT, FUNDING & GRANTS

Invest in multi-year, core/operations based funding to create sustainability and stability (as opposed to project based funding). This funding should be allocated to grassroots organizations toward:

- o operational and project support of professional and emerging artists, entrepreneurs and creation of cultural organizations
- o grants for the creation of advertising and social media positions to raise awareness and increase capacity and community outreach
- o the creation of a Black music industry incubator to accelerate new business ventures for artists, artist entrepreneurs, music industry entrepreneurs and music trades

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

- o Project based funding for specific activities
- o Composite grants which encompass several individual activities
- o Specific funding support for artistic development
 - o research
 - o creation
 - o production
 - o networking, mentorship and marketing

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (CONT'D)

BLACK OWNED BUSINESSES

The creation of supplier diversity programs: the adding of Black businesses to supply chains and the delegating of a set percentage of annual expenditures accordingly (X%)

Ending relationships with associates, partners, suppliers and board members that do not share a commitment to dismantling racism

Viewing investment and donation through the lens of racial justice

Revising RFP (Request for Proposal) processes to ensure fair, bias-free and equitable access to opportunities

Investment in Black talent – beyond artists and professionals throughout the entertainment industry pipeline including music trades, practitioners and professionals

Considering the creation of partnerships and 50/50 deals with Black-owned companies including but not limited to record labels, publishing, live entertainment, media, festival companies and other businesses throughout the industry ecosystem

Dedicated grant funding and resources for Black music professionals and entrepreneurs

Grants for professional development activities and career advancement

Tax holidays and subsidies to companies hiring Black owned businesses and staffing

PAY EQUITY, FAIR TREATMENT AND SUPPORT

Despite a lack of empirical data to substantiate the disparity in the wages of Canadian Black music professionals versus their peers (especially Black women), studies have shown that closing pay gaps within industries results in increased productivity and profit.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Conducting ongoing wage equity audits, and making necessary adjustments to achieve wage parity and equitable pay

Ensuring equal access to education and career development for all intersections of Black identity including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language preference and other socio-demographics

Access to paid parental sick leave, Black centred mental and primary health care, where feasible

Expanding efforts to provide anti-racism, implicit/unconscious bias training for all staff, volunteers, executives and board members

Developing and implementing anonymous methods for communicating and rectifying issues of racism to HR departments, management or leadership

Publicly acknowledge support of Black community organizations and causes

SHARING OF BEST PRACTICES

Sharing best practices and initiatives which promote anti-racism, equity & inclusion throughout the industry

Discontinuance of the use of the outdated euphemism “Urban” as a catchall for Black music genres such hip-hop, R&B, Soul, Reggae, Soca and other musical genres of Black origin

Corporate accountability: encouraging and inspiring industry peers by sharing and promoting social justice and anti-racist initiatives to support a change in the culture of the industry

CONCLUSION

This Report should be seen as a step in the process toward the eradication of anti-Black and systemic racism in the Canadian music industry.

In the creation of the BDRB Roundtable, we began an honest and candid conversation on anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry. The BDRB Declaration signing event brought the music industry to the table to commit to long term, measurable and accountable change. This Report provides suggestions for individuals, companies, organizations and government on the long road toward equity.

The submission of this Report, therefore, emphasizes that, our commitment to the eradication of anti-Black racism in the industry did not begin with the Breaking Down Racial Barriers roundtable series, and will not end with the Declaration, this or any subsequent report.

The process of confronting anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry unearthed a number of issues requiring immediate attention in a structured and sustained way. Thus, although there is immense pressure for much overdue change, it is imperative that organizations resist the urge to succumb to the pressure for publicly visible action. This will not yield true, sustainable results – and is most likely to appear performative. It is more important to do what is right than to do what looks right. Our hope is that this report helps those working in the Canadian music industry to make that distinction.

APPENDIX

BDRB x CIMA DECLARATION TO END ANTI-BLACK RACISM IN THE CANADIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY





Declaration

TO END ANTI-BLACK RACISM IN THE CANADIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



CIMA
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT
MUSIC ASSOCIATION

ADVANCE
CANADA'S BLACK MUSIC BUSINESS COLLECTIVE

To build an inclusive Canadian music and entertainment industry, it is critical to address the anti-Black racism that exists in the systems and working environments within which Black music professionals and creatives operate.

The eradication of anti-Black racism requires a commitment to anti-racism - an active, conscious and ongoing effort to work against racism: to acknowledge; to atone; to create mechanisms that dismantle systems which perpetuate racism, and to create actionable solutions with measurable outcomes.

Efforts will look different for solo entrepreneurs, small businesses, organizations, corporations and government institutions. Thus, it is important to understand that an inability to execute all commitments listed herein, does not constitute failure. Rather, starting points for signatories will differ, with efforts progressing over time: **start where you are and work towards the goal.**

Anti-racism begins with awareness and education and moves toward more formal practices such as policies and procedures.

Begin by committing to smaller, more manageable goals such as:

- Acknowledgement: have uncomfortable conversations about race and identify personal conscious/unconscious biases
- Educating yourself and those around you on anti-Black racism: reading articles and news stories; purchasing books on anti-racism, white privilege, white fragility; watching videos & documentaries; listening to podcasts
- Advocating: Speaking up when you hear racist statements; using your voice and platform, no matter the size, to show your support; following and resharing the content of advocates on your social media to amplify Black voices and knowledge
- Expanding professional social networks
- Donating or volunteering at organizations doing anti-Black racism work
- Creating space through mentorship or paid co-op/internship opportunities within your space
- Anti-Black racism training: registering and attending free/low-cost workshops online

BDRB (Breaking Down Racial Barriers) with partners **CIMA (The Canadian Independent Music Association)** and **ADVANCE, Canada's Black Music Business Collective**, hereby call upon the individuals, organizations, small businesses, corporations and government institutions of the music industry to play a role in eradicating anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry.

TO THESE ENDS, WE HEREBY DECLARE A COMMITMENT TO:

1. THE CREATION OF ANTI-BLACK RACISM POLICIES AND TRAINING

Dismantling anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry will require the re-envisioning of all foundational policies, procedures and practices through a lens of anti-Black racism.

To this end, we declare our commitment to:

- Engaging in ongoing anti-Black racism, anti-oppression and inclusion training at *all* organizational levels
- Instituting policies outlining varying levels of remedy for acts of anti-Black racism - from education to dismissal
- Creating a plan of action for the elimination of anti-Black racism, including, where possible:
- Creation of a code of conduct and resource guide on anti-Black racism, equity, diversity & inclusion
- The development of an equity, diversity, and inclusion task force or committee
- Curated training with Black professional consultants specializing in anti-racist systems change

2. COLLECTION, TRACKING AND PUBLIC REPORTING OF RACE BASED DATA AND KEY METRICS

The lack of race-based data perpetuates systemic racism. To work towards diminishing, and ultimately eliminating systemic and anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry and reducing racial disparities, **we hereby commit to:**

The collection of available data on workplace diversity and key metrics including the racial breakdown of staff and employees at all levels including:

Data on self-identifying Black staff at all levels of the organization, corporation or governmental institution, including, but not limited to, the collection of key metrics pertaining to:

- Percentage of Black employees
- Percentage of Black employees in management at all levels, including senior management
- Percentage and number of Black board members

And a commitment to actively and voluntarily participating in market studies and research initiatives supported or led by Black community organizations, and:

- Conducting surveys of staff which audit & examine workforce demographics and company culture
- Development of strategies and recommendations which respond to issues raised by the survey
- Development of plans to implement recommendations
- Voluntary annual public disclosure of the workplace diversity data including diversity of staff, pay ranges et.al. (via annual reports, corporate shareholder statements, websites)

3. REPRESENTATION THROUGHOUT THE MUSIC INDUSTRY ECOSYSTEM

For decades, the music industry and its sectors have profited off of the intellectual property of Black creatives and professionals. Increasing representation and diversity throughout the entire industry is key to creating equity in the Canadian music industry.

To this end, we commit to:

The creation of practices which expand the talent pool through the hiring, succession and retention of Black employees in all industry positions – from administrative and technical to executive and board roles through:

HIRING

- Including an open invitation, and statement of commitment on all employment postings, to the hiring of Black applicants, which particularly encourages and welcomes submissions of interest from potential Black employees.
- Adopting practices such as:
 - Open hiring: Consideration of those who may be excluded from traditional hiring processes by considering, for instance, work experience in lieu of formal education
 - Cluster hiring: the process of hiring new employees in groups rather than individually. This concept has become a common practice in organizations and institutions looking to boost equity and diversity in their hiring practices.
- Voluntary submission of music industry-related positions in your organization to ADVANCE Music employment board
- Updating screening processes, diversifying hiring panels and conducting standardized interviews to reduce implicit bias (with a focus on competencies)
- Revisiting recruiting approaches/techniques (including 3rd party agencies) to drive greater Black representation
- Creating diversity and inclusion objectives

RETENTION

- Tracking sources of Black employee “drop-off” by utilizing exit surveys for all staff departures
- Developing a work culture which supports professional mentorship and career development opportunities
- Offering formal mentoring for Black employees
- Being intentional about providing access to information & key relationships that will lead to success

SUCCESSION

- Creating clear career paths & setting milestones with measurable and accountable outcomes
- Specific solution targeting for Black women, including access to mentorship, management & leadership training
- Prioritizing internal promotion vs. external hires

BOARDS & EXECUTIVE ROLES

- Implementation/modification of models such as the NFL's "Rooney Rule" which mandate interviewing quotas, where at least one Black candidate is interviewed for available leadership positions
- Review and revision of bylaws and governance models
- Tying leadership performance evaluations and bonuses to progress on diversity and inclusion objectives
- Allocating budgetary resources to better support Black executive and professional representation in music departments other than just "Black music" or "urban"

4. PAY EQUITY, FAIR TREATMENT AND SUPPORT

Despite a lack of empirical data to substantiate the disparity in the wages of Canadian Black music professionals versus their peers (especially Black women), studies have shown that closing pay gaps within industries results in increased productivity and profit.

To this end, we commit to:

- Conducting ongoing wage equity audits, and making necessary adjustments to achieve wage parity and equitable pay
- Ensuring equal access to education and career development for all intersections of Black identity including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language preference and other socio-demographics
- Access to paid parental sick leave, Black centred mental and primary health care, where feasible
- Expanding efforts to provide anti-racism, implicit/unconscious bias training for all staff, volunteers, executives and board members
- Developing and implementing anonymous methods for communicating and rectifying issues of racism to HR departments, management or leadership
- Publicly acknowledge support of Black community organizations and causes

5. SHARING OF BEST PRACTICES

The BDRB Declaration signifies our collective commitment to the eradication of anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry. We commit to sharing best practices and initiatives which promote anti-racism & inclusion throughout the industry.

We commit to:

- Sharing best practices and initiatives which promote anti-racism, equity & inclusion throughout the industry
- Discontinuance of the use of the outdated euphemism "Urban" as a catchall for Black music genres such hip-hop, R&B, Soul, Reggae, Soca and other diasporic music forms
- Corporate accountability: encouraging and inspiring industry peers by sharing and promoting social justice and anti-racist initiatives to support a change in the culture of the industry

6. PARTNERSHIPS & INVESTMENT

We recognize that eradicating racism will take a collective effort. The creation of partnerships and investments in/with the Black community is a first and critical step in this process.

To this end, we commit to:

- The creation of supplier diversity programs: the adding of Black businesses to supply chains and the delegating of a set percentage of annual expenditures accordingly (eg. X%)
- Investing in Black community organizations and businesses
- Ending relationships with associates, partners, suppliers and board members that do not share a commitment to dismantling racism
- Viewing investment and donation through the lens of racial justice
- Investing in core-funding to grassroots Black-led, Black-run organizations, charities and community organizations
- Revising RFP (Request for Proposal) processes to ensure fair, bias-free and equitable access to opportunities
- Investment in Black talent – beyond artists and professionals throughout the entertainment industry pipeline
- Considering the creation of partnerships and 50/50 deals with Black-owned record labels, publishing, live entertainment, media, festival companies and other businesses throughout the industry ecosystem
- Dedicated grant funding and resources for Black music professionals and entrepreneurs

7. MOVING BEYOND PERFORMANCE

This declaration should not be seen as a box checking exercise. Eradicating anti-Black racism in the Canadian music industry will require more than performative action.

WATCH: the 10-part CIMA ‘Breaking Down Racial Barriers’ roundtable discussion series (August-October 2020) to gain understanding of issues faced by Black music professionals nationally.

SHARE AND INFLUENCE: Spread the word about the BDRB Declaration and your commitment to change on social media.

READ: the forthcoming detailed BDRB (Breaking Down Racial Barriers) Report on anti-Black racism in the Canadian music & entertainment industry.

I commit to the eradication of anti-Black racism throughout my organization and the Canadian music industry and I vow to achieve as many of the goals as possible set out in this Declaration.



Declaration

TO END ANTI-BLACK RACISM
IN THE CANADIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



CIMA
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT
MUSIC ASSOCIATION

ADVANCE
CANADA'S BLACK MUSIC BUSINESS COLLECTIVE

Signatory:

Representative of:

This _____ day of _____, 20____

Signed: _____



**BREAKING
DOWN RACIAL
BARRIERS**

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CANADIAN INDEPENDENT
MUSIC ASSOCIATION

ADVANCE
CANADA'S BLACK MUSIC BUSINESS COLLECTIVE



www.BDRB.ca

www.CIMAmusic.ca | www.ADVANCEmusic.ca

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