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America the Beautiful

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*America the Beautiful. Illinois State University.
Wonsook Kim CFA, SoM, Are We Ready to
REDI?*¹ By Dr. Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum (Nana)

America the Beautiful
Illinois State University, Wonsook Kim CFA
School of Music
How can we heal the Land
When can we heal
The Land
Beautiful America
The landscape is silent
Mute
Bleeding
Silently

If we knew ourselves
Each other
Loved ourselves
If we understood how our mistreatment of others
Harm us all
If we understood how by silencing and
alienating others
Keeping them out
Blocking their talents, ways of being, and their
voices
Stall our progress and healing
We would look in the mirror, closely

When and how
Can we heal ourselves
The Land
According to Sage Alice Walker
The arrow goes into the heart
At every instance of injustice, meanness, cruelty,
shaming

How can we take out the arrows in our hearts
Where is our Beauty
Who are we
Why are we stalling

When can we “Tear this Old House Down”
As enslaved Africans sang
Decolonize our ways
Claim and accept all
Drink water, the first medicine, together

Heal our communities

Book clubs and solidarity statements
Position pledges
Rhetorical commitments don’t change engrained
systems
Structures that were crafted to keep many out
from the very beginning
Structures that validate certain cultures
Delegitimize and discount many
Even in this multi-cultural, multi-musical
America

D. E. I. meetings, Circles
Go merry go round, merry go round
Keeping antiquated structures in place
Solidarity statements don’t change structures
Enacting forward-facing policies and Laws do
There Will be pushbacks
But *petemprem* hard wood can’t be afraid of
osono the elephant
Wise Nigerian Ibo say, Soil your hands with
sand, you will soil your mouth
We must be Bold. Focused. Steadfast.

If we choose to draft
Solidarity statements must be written for
All groups whose hearts were
Arrowed. Broken. Dehumanized.
Not just for certain groups
Even if the throwers of arrows are
Our own beautiful students, colleagues
Administrators and staff
Audre Lorde says guilt and defensiveness are
bricks in the wall
Against which we all flounder
They serve none of our futures

If penned
Solidarity statements must
Accompany more intentional
Operational policies
Unapologetic bold innovative initiatives
Refreshing and relevant

¹ REDI (Representing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) is
Illinois State University School of Music’s EDI committee.
Dr. Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum (Nana)
December 4, 2022

Revolutionary
Methodically benchmarked
Followed up, followed up
With checks and balances
Receipts

Illinois State University, Wonsook Kim CFA
School of Music
People come to us because we seem welcoming
What are Our Commitments to All Our
stakeholders. Students. The land.
What new paths can we chart
For whom do we speak when we program only
certain music, look the other way
Offer empty words
Virtue Signal
Round and round
Stack up Pillars atop Pillars
Where are we going
We crow like *akokɔnini* the rooster
Ko-ku-rokoo, ko-ku-rokoo, ko-ku-rokoo.....
When will our crowing lead to paradigm shifts
Action
Positive change
Ken-ke ki-ke ka-kaa-ka ka-ko-ka

Us, us, us
Yes
Us
ISU, Wonsook Kim CFA, School of Music
I am talking to us
What is taking us so long
Why the push backs
Whose jobs are we protecting
Whose ethnicities, lifestyles, lived experiences
are we guarding, validating
Whose are we policing, silencing, banning
A mother knows what All her children will eat
Do we know what All our children will eat
We keep dra—gging, cir—cling, tal—king
Academic, social-emotional motor, and civic
growth occurs when all voices are centered
Come on, now

Why can't L-amour est un oiseau rebelle
Wade in the water to Ly O Lay Ale Loya
Why isn't Clara Schumann breaking bread with
Thana Redhawk, Stella Chiweshe, and Galba
When will our Circles create structures that
Center and celebrate all voices
Hey-yaa, hey-yaa
Dr. Ama Oforiwa Aduonum (Nana)
December 4, 2022

The Trumpet *Shall* Sound
Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la
Shouldn't the *Daegeum*, *Karnay*, and *Dizi*
Panpipes *also* sound
Why aren't we lifting every voice and singing
mariachi, gospel, kriti, carols, Feliz Navidad on
our stage during our Music for the Holidays
Tan-gu tan-gu ki-ta-ta-ka tom

For the sake and scholarship of our amazing and
amazing students
Our institution, our world, our land
Why can't we validate and celebrate multiple
ways of musicking, theorizing, mentoring, being
Credit all ensembles for graduation requirements
Yodel for peace
Dance
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie warns us about the
"Danger of A Single Story"
Ko-ko-gya, ko-ko-gya

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We are honored
To be in the presence of beautiful
Brilliant and creative students
Let's mentor them mindfully
Firm, and with compassion, love, joy
Adopt multiple ways of validating work
Home away from home must be welcoming
Since *ɔkɔɔ nwo anoma*
The crab does not give birth to a bird
Let's be good examples
They look up to us
Ko-ko-gya, ko-ko-gya

We are beautiful
Huh!
A group of stunning, accomplished, and talented
world class performers and scholars
Huh!
Brilliant and Sassy Students *et* Staff
Administrators
Huh!
Professors
Aa-ba!
Artists *dan* Activists *cum* Essential Intelligentsia

Hands down
No cap



Come
 We must call in and call out
 When just policies are not implemented
 Call in and call out
 When required courses, ensembles do not
 validate lived experiences of All students
 Our stakeholders’
 Call in and call out
 Interrogate music and human rights
 When policies are not equitable
 Welcoming for all

Though There is a Balm in Gilead
 Hold ourselves, each other accountable
 When faculty, staff, administrators, students
 Contaminate our community, our members with
 meanness, injustice, cruelty, shaming
 When policies keep some out
When policies keep some out
 The arrow goes into the heart
 We All lose
Ohmmmmm

America the Beautiful
 ISU, Wonsook Kim CFA, School of Music *éééé*
 Fabulous Community
 This is our inflection point
 Come
 I invite you into this revitalizing space
 Let’s be courageous
 Remove the shields
 Yes
 We can

Come
 Be trendsetters
 Trailblazers
 Open our arms
 Re-imagine and re-structure our curriculum
 Create welcoming spaces, multicentric spaces
 Treat All faculty, administrators, students, staff,
 and music cultures
 Regardless
 With love, dignity, kindness, compassion
 Sincerity and urgency
 Respect
 Yes
 We can

Let Us
 Validate, value, and center different ways
 Of being, knowing, seeing, feeling, singing
 Yes. Representation matters
Ati deka metua xɔ o
 One stick cannot build a house
 Therefore just a seat at the table is not enough
 More than Tokenism
 Diversity ornaments
 Not enough

Magnificent community
 Wise Ghanaian Akan say
Wo foro dua a, foro tenten, na wo te hwe a,
atumpan ama wo dammirifua
 When you climb a tree, climb a tall one, so that
 when you fall, the talking drums will play
 condolences for you
 We must climb Very tall trees
 Yes
 We can

Illinois State University
 College of Fine Arts
 School of Music
 Beautiful America
 Let’s work together to heal the land
 Ourselves
 Let’s bring joy to each other’s hearts
 Sing for restorative, social, emotional justice
Tan-gu tan-gu ki-ta-ta-ka tom
Ki-ke-re-ke, ki-ke-re-ke, pu-tum pu-tum Pa Pa
 Deck All the halls with love and compassion
 Joy

Come, come
Co me

Stay beautiful
Everyone

Yes
We can