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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?*<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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

ISU, Wonsook Kim CFA, School of Music  
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