

*This document was last revised March 3rd, 2024. We welcome your thoughts and questions at [bradleyfrizzellclarinet@gmail.com](mailto:bradleyfrizzellclarinet@gmail.com), and we appreciate your contributions to create a more equitable future in our organization.*

## DEAI Plan for Black Sheep Contemporary

### Land Acknowledgement

The land on which Black Sheep Contemporary is based stands on part of the ancestral territory of the Munsee Lenape people. We pay respect to Munsee Lenape peoples, past, present, and future and support their continuing presence both in the homeland and throughout the Lenape diaspora.

### Mission

Black Sheep Contemporary focuses on educating audiences about contemporary classical music in the Jersey City community. The ensemble accomplishes this through our Four Core Goals: Perform, Collaborate, Commission, Educate.

- Perform music written by living or recently deceased composers. We seek to give repeat performances to pieces to promote them and to provide the composers with performance opportunities for work of non-traditional instrumentation.
- Collaborate with other musicians and artists in other disciplines. We wish to create works and performances that allow artists to experiment in mediums that are not their primary focus.
- Commission new pieces by living composers, with a focus on emerging composers and marginalized voices.
- Educate the community and our audiences about new music. We aim to expand our audience base past the typical contemporary-classical concert goer by educating others about what we do, why it is important, and how they can become involved.

### Vision

Firstly, to create a safe environment where all audience members can come to learn and enjoy contemporary classical music. Secondly, to connect artists across all disciplines. Lastly, to always compensate our artists for their work.

### Equity Commitments

Black Sheep is dedicated to an ongoing process of equitable and anti-oppressive practice, including anti-racism, anti-ableism, feminism, LGBTQ2S+ empowerment, and inclusion of people of lower income economic backgrounds.

We operate at the intersection of art and educational work in Jersey City. We work to cultivate a community that amplifies artists of color, artists with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+ artists, female identifying artists, and local artists. We strive to create a community in which people can interact in a way that is respectful, life-affirming, and anti-oppressive. We are sensitive to the ways that people have, and continue to be, disenfranchised and marginalized in distinct and intersecting ways, especially in the world of classical music.

We commit to:

- Seek knowledgeable advisors for dialog about actionable equity practices and move toward a financial stability that enables compensation for their time.

- Initiate dialog about equity with our fellow artists (musicians, composers, choreographers, dancers, visual artists, etc), technical assistants, administrative assistants, and volunteers.
- Implement recommended changes whenever possible. In the event it is not possible, share rationale to the best of our ability in a written format (or other format preferred by recipient).
- Strongly and explicitly encourage disenfranchised and marginalized people to apply for opportunities at Black Sheep Contemporary, especially through our Scores Database page on our website.
- Programs and partnerships that amplify diverse voices (such as musicians/artists that are disabled, female identifying, and members of the LGBTQ2S+ or BIPOC communities) and create shared authority.
- Increase visibility of diverse voices by featuring these artists/workers in our outgoing media.
- Expand our engagement with, and contributions to, our neighborhood by forming and deepening supportive relationships with our community in the forms of libraries, shared art spaces, schools, and the people living in the area.
- Support from leadership to realize these plans, including the necessary allocation of resources and prioritization of fundraising efforts
- Revisit and revise these commitments to ensure they are guiding us toward the equitable, anti-oppression work we strive to do within our field and our community.

### Implementation

#### Leadership:

- Our organization is run by Nicole DeMaio, a Hispanic woman.
- Our administration consists of mostly LGBTQ2S+ individuals.
- The majority of administration leadership is female identifying.

#### Hiring:

- We will always strive to have a diverse spread of artists for each event with a priority for people in the BIPOC, female identifying, and LGBTQ2S+ communities.
  - This hiring extends to workers, collaborators, educators, etc.
- Composers of all backgrounds are encouraged to send in works for future consideration via our Scores Database: <https://www.blacksheepcontemporary.com/scores-database.html>
  - Unlike many traditional call for scores, this database has no submission/adjudication fees. Composers can submit as many pieces as they would like free of charge.
  - We will compensate composers based on their assigned preference in the form (purchase of score, score and parts rental, or donation from composer)

#### Audience Engagement:

- We seek to include a wider diversity of audiences through several means:
  - Performing in non-traditional spaces such as galleries, outdoors, museums, etc.
  - Educational events in community spaces, libraries, schools, etc.
  - Education in both the concert environment and online to create a safe environment for understanding of contemporary art.
  - Open rehearsals and live streams of events for those that cannot afford ticket prices.
  - Prioritizing underserved areas in communities for events.

### Financial Transparency

We recognize that under-paid labor reinforces systems of oppression, especially in the world of classical music. The music world often underpays its artists which excludes most people except the top percent of wealthy from taking music work. This system is often both intentionally and unintentionally used to exclude many people of BIPOC, female identifying, and LGBTQ2S+ artists. Within this society, we are

working to build a financially sustainable model to be able to both create and support a network of underserved communities in both the artistic and audience world.

Black Sheep Contemporary is a fiscally sponsored non profit that aims to pursue our mission and vision, uphold our equity commitments, and deeply benefit both our geographic and artistic community. To achieve these goals, we have formulated and shared a transparent financial plan as a means of illuminating our priorities, attracting like-minded financial support, and, most importantly, strengthening community trust.

Our goal for the end of December 2025 is to shift the administrative side of our work from an exclusively volunteer system to one of compensation that contributes to our organizational sustainability. On the artistic side, our musicians and collaborators are compensated with stipends and a percentage of revenue (if applicable). We recognize that their compensation, like that of our administrators, is rarely commensurate with the full scope of their work. We actively seek to increase our revenue for the benefit of our musicians, artists, dancers, collaborators, and workers.

Black Sheep Contemporary is funded with a combination of earned income, grants, and individual contributions. As of 2016, Black Sheep Contemporary is fiscally sponsored through Fractured Atlas. Organizational revenue will be distributed/spent each year according to the following Financial Priorities Map:

### **Financial Priorities**

#### **1st Priority - Pay Artists and Workers for Their Work**

- All artists/workers shall receive a stipend for concerts and a smaller fee for each rehearsal leading up to the event. We will never ask artists to work for free.

#### **2nd Priority - Cover Administrative Costs**

- Additional Funds will be used to cover the cost to run the organization and to compensate the administrators for their time.

#### **3rd Priority - Diversify**

- If the 1st and 2nd priority are satisfied, split additional Revenue into:
  - Special projects (including savings for future special projects)
  - Debt payments (paying down the debt to the leadership)

We will assess the Financial Priorities annually in September, or more frequently as needed, and adjust accordingly.