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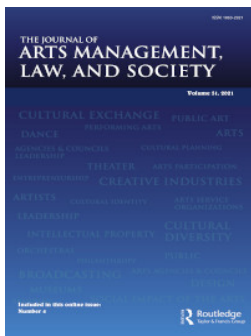
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Access, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Cultural Organizations - Insights from the Careers of Executive Opera Managers of Color in the U.S.

Kristina Kolbe

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(by either native or non-native speakers), which further reinforces the position of English as a lingua franca. Another example of Grincheva's fine-tuned observations could be the clarification of the opposition of the museum's Western object-oriented concept versus the practices of indigenous societies in preserving their own traditions.

To conclude, this book is strikingly insightful and informative. Further strengths of the publication, among others, are its highly critical approach and cross-disciplinary investigation of issues. Museum staff, diplomacy professionals, and scholars will find it a valuable resource for education and research and a helpful tool to design online museum platforms.

Reference

Grincheva, Natalia. 2019. *Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy: Post-Guggenheim Developments*. London: Routledge.

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Access, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Cultural Organizations - Insights from the Careers of Executive Opera Managers of Color in the U.S., by Antonio C. Cuyler. New York, NY: Routledge, 2021, 132 pp, £96.00 (hardback), £29.95 (eBook), ISBN 978-1-1385-8710-6

It is not only since global anti-racist struggles and decolonizing efforts have increasingly entered mainstream public debates that the cultural and creative industries have tried to reckon with their institutionalized inequalities in the name of “diversity.” Connected therewith, there has been a growing body of critical scholarship that has since examined the consequences of such diversity discourses for raced, classed and gendered inequalities (to name but a few) in the cultural sector (e.g., Erigha 2018; Nwonka 2015; Saha 2018). The classical music world, however, has been rather understudied in this respect. On one hand, this is rather understandable given Western art music's deep entanglement with overt elite culture, institutional whiteness and histories of imperialism which continue to shape its institutional workings today (e.g., Bull 2019). On the other hand, however, it is precisely these unequal entanglements that not only make an examination of classical music's inequalities urgently needed but that also have to be borne in mind critically when the realm of classical music indeed sets out to “diversify” itself (e.g., Kolbe 2021). This is where Antonio C. Cuyler's new book *Access, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Cultural Organizations – Insights from the Careers of Executive Opera Managers of Color in the U.S.* presents an important, thought-provoking and timely intervention.

Drawing from an impressive scope of 13 years of research and based on a number of in-depth expert interviews with executive opera managers of color, Cuyler interrogates the ongoing lack of racial diversity amongst opera managers in the United States – an analysis that is by no means less relevant for other parts of the (Western) world. Reflecting on the ways in which race and racism have shaped the career of his interviewees, Cuyler not only

offers an insightful and deeply personal analysis of structural inequalities in and beyond the opera world but also reflects on how the sector might be able to attract and retain more diverse practitioners in the future. Identifying opera's institutional whiteness as a key challenge for the sector to play an important role in contemporary cultural and public life, the author also stages the question whether a more racially diverse opera management might be able to help the art form affirm its place in today's society. In so doing, Cuyler moreover presents a critical reading of current institutionalized access, diversity, equity, and inclusion (A DEI) practices in the opera industry, with a specific focus on OPERA America's policies, and draws out where and why such efforts most often have fallen short from their referred objectives (1-14). Based on his analysis, the author then presents constructive and practically minded recommendations on how to rethink A DEI work in a profound and sustainable fashion. Reflecting on the career trajectories of his research participants, Cuyler then turns toward the new generation of potential opera workers and specifically outlines career advice for all "Arts Management practitioners and students who may view their class, different ability, ethnicity, gender, race, or sexual orientation as a liability in their pursuit of executive careers" (2; 92-116).

The book comprises six interview-based chapters, suitably described by Cuyler as Acts I-VI, which are framed by an introductory overture and a concluding final. In the introduction, the author provides a clear overview of the racial disparities persisting in the US opera sector today, while also documenting how the genre itself has struggled to attract audiences and funding. Chapters two to seven then zoom into the narratives and experiences of the six opera executives of color interviewed for the purposes of this book, starting with Henry Akina, then Torrie Allen, Wayne Brown, Michael Ching, Linda Jackson and ending with Willie Anthony. Throughout the chapters, Cuyler finds a skillful balance between letting his interviewees account for themselves while also identifying and hooking into the key moments of their respective trajectories. Coupled with Cuyler's own reflections on the field of opera and arts management, the chapters provide for an insightful conversation about the ways in which the opera world has been shaped by, and actively enacts, a hegemony of whiteness, while also presenting nuanced and personal stories about resilience, career strategies and a deep love for music. In this vein, all interviewees add valuable insights to this important discussion, not least by embodying rather different professional avenues that led them to the role of opera (artistic) director. Whether starting as a stage director (Akina, Jackson), orchestral manager (Brown), as a singer (Allen), composer (Ching) or conductor (Waters), the book demonstrates the creative and political significance of having people of different artistic trajectories and backgrounds in leading executive positions.

Personally, it is the interview with Linda Jackson, the Managing Director of Connecticut Opera, which stayed with me the most. It is this conversation that most clearly unpacks the structural and lived intersections between race and gender and which illustrates in special ways how the genre of opera can be reinvigorated when being embodied, managed and represented by different people with diverse yet specific experiences of life and of music (48-68). In conclusion, Cuyler draws the main insights from the book together to establish a list of recommendations for a more equitable and inclusive opera sector (such as multifaceted approaches to opera education, the establishment and support of African, LatinX, Asian, Arab, and Indigenous opera companies or mentorship schemes) in the name of what he calls "creative justice." Defining the latter "as the manifestation of all people living creative and expressive lives on their own terms" (113; see also Banks 2017; Cuyler 2019), he ends by asking what it would mean for the opera industry to actively seek creative justice for all and to rethink their personnel, managerial and artistic practices

through this lens. It is not only in this way that Cuyler's book presents a critical and timely read – and a call for action – for all those working toward a just, vibrant and meaningful classical music world.

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