



Emanuel School

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Monday 3rd - Friday 28th October

TUESDAY

Centuries of Diversity

Mr J Bowler



Hidden Voices in Chemistry

Freya Mills - Upper sixth

Chemistry, the study of the fundamental particles which build our universe, has united scientists globally. However, for centuries key Black figures in the field have had their discoveries misattributed and their relevance undermined. For those passionate about the sciences, it is crucial to acknowledge the racism still prevalent in STEM today. Here, I will shine a light on some of chemistry's current Black trailblazers that you should know.

Modern society has become increasingly reliant on phones, but the technology behind screens still lags behind. Malika Jeffries-El is looking to change this. Jeffries-El's research into organic semiconductors promises to bring more energy-efficient and longer-lasting blue LEDs to our phone screens, making screens more heat, moisture and corrosion resistant. She is also working on organic photovoltaic cells, which would allow the construction of lightweight, bendy solar panels to revolutionise renewable energy.

As our understanding of the climate crisis grows, knowledge of Earth's atmosphere has become vital. Vernon Morris has pioneered research into how dust storms, becoming ever more frequent as global temperatures rise, can impact the ozone layer and human health. But if that's not impressive enough, Morris has championed Black

people in chemistry. The Aerosol and Ocean Science Expeditions research group he created produces half of all Black PhD students studying atmospheric chemistry and employs dozens of students of colour in every expedition.

Countries and corporations worldwide are struggling to find ways to reduce their CO2 emissions to curb climate change. However, Etosha Cave is asking the novel question, "What if we could convert carbon dioxide into more valuable substances?" Cave's research group, Opus 12, is breaking new ground in green chemistry by employing transition metal catalysts, electricity, and water to turn CO2 into plastics, diesel fuel and household cleaners. These innovative techniques are creating new possibilities for healing our planet, and it is all thanks to Cave's determination and desire to, in her own words, 'compete against the status quo.'

In the UK, black people are incredibly underrepresented in scientific fields, making up less than 1% of the STEM industry in the UK. There is a risk of romanticising the struggles faced by historical Black scientists, claiming that the bigotry they experienced is a thing of the past. With so many incredibly talented black scientists carving new paths in their respective fields, we must work to pave the way for the next generation to reach even greater heights.

BlackKlansman

Jack Lee - Lower Sixth

BlackKlansman is a film based on the true story in which Ron Stallworth, a black man, and Flip Zimmerman, a Jewish man, infiltrate the order of the Klu Klux Klan (KKK). Set in 1972, Ron Stallworth begins regular phone conversations with the KKK leader David Duke. Flip Zimmerman, pretending to be Ron, goes in person to their meetings and the pair expose a bomb plot, saving many lives.

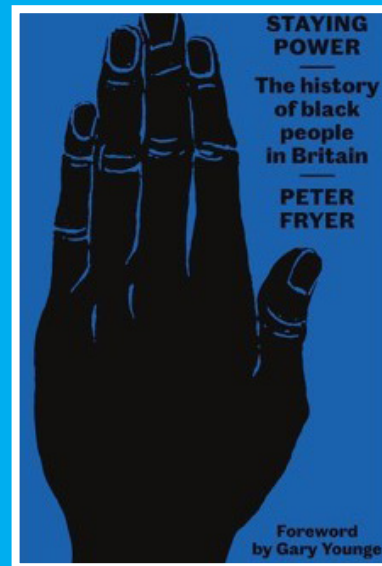
The film is very raw and viscerally graphic scenes accurately depict the violent nature of the KKK and the treatment of black people. BlackKlansman is directed by Spike Lee- who is famous for tackling the issues of racism. Lee also directed Do the Right Thing, which is studied in the Film Studies A-Level course. BlackKlansman utilises a real historical story to bring to light the mistreatment and injustice that millions suffered and are still suffering today. The film was released in the aftermath of the 'Unite the Right' white supremacist rally that resulted in the death of Heather Danielle Heyer. BlackKlansman has an incredibly poignant ending as it uses footage of the car attack that took place in 2017 and ends with an upside-down American flag- signifying distress and the need for radical change.

If you were to pose the question "In what year was a black person first documented as being on the British Isles?" to a member of the British public, you would receive a variety of answers. 1948, with the arrival of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury port might be popular; or perhaps during Britain's sustained role in the Transatlantic Slave Trade in, say, 1790? Reasoned answers, but historically inaccurate. As Peter Fryer explores in his astonishing book, Staying Power, the first recorded evidence of black people on the British Isles is in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD during the Roman occupation, over 1,500 years ago. There are fascinating records of North African legions stationed in York and along Hadrian's wall to defend, consolidate and order the outremitters of the growing Empire. As such, there was an important black presence here long before the idea of England was born, before Alfred the Great pushed back the Vikings and his son, Athelstan, became the first King of England, before William conquered the Anglo-Saxons, before a sense of national identity was forged in the fires of the 100

Year War, and long before the modern world and nation states emerged from the wake of the French Revolution.

Historical understanding like this helps contextualise the absurdity of contemporary racism, with the often heard jibe of 'go back to where you came from'. The British Isles have long been cosmopolitan, international and diverse, albeit distorted by intense and appalling racism rearing its ugly head with unseemly regularity. For example, Miranda Kaufmann has uncovered evidence of a thriving black population in Tudor England in her wonderful book Black Tudors, including the story of John Blanke, a trumpeter in Henry VIII's court who was so talented that he negotiated a doubling of his pay.

Black History Month gives us the space to reflect on this illustrious and varied history. Do so this year in the knowledge that this island has been shared by many ethnicities, personalities and ideas for a long, long time.



How Zamrock Invisibly Changed Africa's Musical Landscape

Oscar Trier - Lower sixth

Hypothetically, if you were to ask me for a music recommendation now this minute, I would respond with one word: Zamrock – Zambia's criminally underrated, trailblazing answer to British and American psychedelic music that happened right under the 'cultural nose' of the west.

At the time of release, most Western audiences weren't paying attention to the Afro-beat movement—with notable exceptions, of course: drummer Ginger Baker apprenticed himself to Fela Kuti and became an evangelist for African drumming; Brian Eno and Talking Heads' David Byrne (who also introduced thousands to "world music") imported the sound of African rock to New Wave in the 80s, as did post-punk bands like Orange Juice and others in Britain, where music from Africa generally had a bigger impact.

By the mid 1970s, newly independent Zambia had fallen on hard times. Having only just escaped the ties of British colonialism, conflict loomed on all sides of this landlocked nation. Despite the president, Kenneth Kaunda protecting the country from war, Zambia descended into isolation and poverty. Kaunda supported rebel movements in neighbouring countries Angola, Zimbabwe and Mozambique and stood up against apartheid South Africa.

Zamrock was built by taking influence from Hendrix, The Rolling Stones, and the funk of James Brown; it flourished among the Zambian youth with psychedelic fills, flamboyant dress, and livewire

performances, despite the often-bleak lyrics (sung in the country's constitutional English). One of the bands at the forefront were WITCH: aka We Intend to Cause Havoc, headed up by the legendary Emmanuel "Jagari" Chanda, who happens to be one of the only survivors of the original band.

The scene in Zambia at the time was bombarded with music from South Africa. Many acts felt that they were simply copying the music of others. So, they decided to fuse a bit of their local music with traditionally "western" soul and rock. When independence was won, the 'One Zambia One Nation' Slogan helped unite musicians in a cause: To increase Zambia's cultural significance through music. At the time, Cymande had just become big on the world stage, inspiring artists to incorporate African drums with western instruments. Politicians at the time said that the prominent groups "needed to do something much more authentic." They wanted a new sound, and from that point on, Zamrock was born.

Kenneth Kaunda (a musician himself) decided that the radio should play 90% African music. He wanted mostly Zambian music to be played on broadcasting services and this boosted the mass appeal of the Zamrock craze. Soon, bands were touring Africa with frenetic, psychedelic live shows that played to sold out venues every night, along with recording albums in a hope to compete with the western market.

The climax of the success was from 1972 to 79.

A prominent star of the time, Rikki Ililonga, says: "what we played was not really that sophisticated. Rock'n'roll is 3 chord stuff. It's simple music, but we enjoyed it; we were having fun and getting paid for it." Another star, Violet Kafula, of the band Crossbones, says: "It's saddening that here in Zambia we are almost forgotten, extinct if you may call it".

Fortunately, in recent years the advent of streaming services has allowed these artists to make a comeback as part of a new resurgence of long - forgotten Afrobeat artists and have subsequently garnered respect and recognition among musicians and music lovers alike. The Zamrock movement deserves to be known by many. A powerful statement of cultural pride and experimentation that, to this day, stands as one of the most widely overlooked, yet powerful, black musical success stories.

I have recommended some of my favourite Zamrock albums below for your auditory pleasure/interest.

- Africa – Amanaz**
- Lazy Bones!! – Witch**
- My Ancestors – Ngozi Family**
- Black Power – The Peace**
- Zambia – Rikki Ililonga**
- Wings Of Africa – Musi O Tuna**
- In The Past – Witch**
- The Foot Steps – Blackfoot**

