



Emanuel School

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

TUESDAY 3rd OCTOBER 2023

BLACK LIVES FINALLY MATTER

Miss KC Smith

Black Lives finally Matter, have you heard it's gone global, yes, it's all over social media, so you should start feeling hopeful? Black Lives finally Matter, we're filling the streets with bodies & banners we're making our voices heard, because we're finally part of your chatter.

Black Lives finally Matter, but why haven't they always? Why do we have to feel thankful, what because, this 'opens new doorways?' Black Lives finally Matter but we're still being told 'your feelings aren't truth', 'black people aren't the victims', 'tell me where is your proof?'

Black Lives finally Matter, it should never have come to this, they knelt on his neck, until his body was empty, merely because of a counterfeit twenty!

Black Lives finally Matter, and we are all EXHAUSTED!

But do Black Lives finally Matter if this is all 'just a trend', surely we mean more than an 'instastory' that exists and then ends.

This is more than reposting, this is more than a few books, this is taking a step back to analyse how our world looks.

This is more than a hashtag, this is more than a documentary, this is a revaluation on life, that contributes to history.

The decision is yours, I can't only try to make you think, with the feelings I express using paper and ink. I can't control your decisions only you have that power, but I urge you to act now, before your future remains sour.

So if you do one thing this year, do something that matters because FINALLY we feel like our existence might just matter.

NAOMI SIMS Scarlett (U6JED)

In light of New York Fashion week, it is important to acknowledge the increasing diversity within the modelling world. Widely credited as one of the first African-American supermodels, it is difficult to ignore the large influence of Naomi Sims who broke down social barriers and overcame many obstacles in achieving her success. Some of these obstacles include being put into foster care, being bullied about her height, and being rejected by agencies due to the colour of her skin.

Despite these obstacles, Sims received a scholarship to study textiles and management at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York in 1966, and simultaneously took night classes in psychology at New York University. As she was continuously turned away by agencies for the colour of her skin, Sims cleverly avoided modelling agencies and went directly to fashion photographers such as Gosta Peterson. The photos of Sims by Peterson made her the first black woman to appear on the cover of "Fashion of Times" on the 27th August 1967. This success gave Sims the confidence to then approach the best modelling agencies in New York. However, she was still met with challenges; the Ford agency led by Eileen Ford refused to even meet Sims directly who said she already had too many models of her "kind". On top of this, Sims also approached the agency which had recently been set up by Wilhelmina Cooper, who refused to include her. Despite this, Sims was able to convince Cooper to allow her to use the agency's business card, attach it to 100 copies of "Fashion of Times" and send it to all advertising agencies in the city. Her approach was successful, and within a few days, Sims was in Cooper's book. Although this was not the typical route taken by models, Sims' tenacity allowed her to model for some of the greatest fashion creators at the time such as Halston, Teal Traina and Fernando Sánchez.

Naomi Sims' appearance in Ladies Home Journal helped to fuel the movement "Black is Beautiful". Sims was the pioneer of a fashion movement that would give rise to runway stars of the 1970s, including Pat Cleveland, Alva Chinn and Beverly Johnson. Her influence continues into the present day as she paved the way for supermodels such as Naomi Campbell, Tyra Banks and Tyson Beckford. By the early 1980s, the Naomi Sims cosmetic collection had expanded to produce prestigious cosmetics. Sims brushed aside comments from feminists who accused her of exploiting female insecurities in saying "I am sure I have my share of black female critics and enemies, it doesn't matter. I adore women and I know I am a woman's woman... I would be nowhere if it weren't for black women."



FLORENCE PRICE

Tallulah (IHLM)

Florence Price was an African-American composer, pianist and organist. She was born in Arkansas (South America) in 1887, into a very religious family. Encouraged to pursue music from a young age by her mother, who was a music teacher, Price eventually went on to study at the New England Conservatory of Music, graduating with honours in both her organ and piano studies. After 2 years as head of music at Clark Atlanta University in Georgia, she married Thomas J Price, and moved back to her hometown in Arkansas, Little Rock.

However, it wasn't long before disaster struck, and the racial tension in Little Rock had escalated to the point that there was a lynching near Thomas' office. Forced to move to Chicago for their safety, it was here that Price's composition career began to take off, publishing her 'Four Pieces for Piano' in 1928. Finally, everything seemed to be going well for Florence Price. She had overcome the difficulties to do with her race and gender, her career was in full flow, and she had a husband and two loving children. But yet again, Price encountered another hurdle. As a female, black musician she was paid very little, and soon she and her family were in serious financial trouble. Instead of working out the difficulties rationally with his wife, Thomas Price became abusive, and



the couple ended up divorcing in 1931, leaving Florence with two children to look after on her own, a job she would have to take on along with her work as a composer. Despite this, just a year later Price wrote arguably her most successful work, her first symphony. In doing so, she became the first African-American woman to have her music performed by a major symphony orchestra, a truly remarkable achievement considering she not only had to look after two children as well, but also had very few people supporting her, just because she was a black woman.

On the 3rd of June, 1953, Florence Price died of a stroke, aged 66, after a hugely successful career. However, despite considerable achievements and writing some incredible pieces, most of her work has gone undocumented, and not many people now have heard of her. Not only was she a great composer, she had to overcome so many challenges in her life, and her determination is so inspiring! Beethoven, Mozart and Bach didn't have to compose under a different (male) name just to get people to take their work seriously. They didn't have to flee their own home because they didn't feel safe there due to their race. Yet they are the composers everyone remembers, everyone has heard of.

Whilst I'm not sure you can compare the likes of Florence Price with the more mainstream classical composers, there is no reason why Florence Price shouldn't have just as much publicity as them. Her way of incorporating her African-American heritage into her works, whilst still taking inspiration from European romantic composers like Dvořák and Tchaikovsky, makes for very interesting music, and is definitely a change from the classical music most people are used to listening to. So if you ever find yourself listening to some classical music, try listening to someone like Florence Price, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor or Scott Joplin. All of them have overcome huge challenges because of their race, and their music definitely reflects that.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT EMANUEL - 4 YEARS ON

Mr R Kothakota

It was fairly early on in my Emanuel career back in 2019 when a bright, motivated and committed Year 11 approached Mr Andrews and myself about marking Black History Month. That student was Miranda Barclay (OE 2021) who would, unsurprisingly, go on to achieve a sterling set of A level grades and become one of our pupil heads of school when in the upper sixth. What was most impressive was her desire for Emanuel to begin to represent and celebrate the wider community, not in response to any event, but as a way of helping to open up a dialogue at school – remember, this pre-dates the tragic death of George Floyd in America in 2020, the subsequent global movement and the formation of our very own Archer Group. Four years later and Black History Month has become an important part of the Emanuel calendar, with an illustrious list of speakers who have attended the school including Christo Brando, Nelson Madela's Prison Warden and friend, author of 'The Black Tudors', Miranda Kaufman, activist, Patrick Hutchison and now, music producer, Sope Soetan. This is alongside bespoke events that ensure race and diversity are not sequestered away, but very much front and centre at Emanuel.

So where are we now? 4 years down and the Archer Group is thriving with a strong membership. Following a school wide piece on the use of language which saw pupils present to staff, their peers and create Life Education lessons, we are following this up with a similar body of work on microaggressions. Never pointing the finger, such pupil-led work is about ensuring that discussions of race and diversity are endemic within Emanuel and we do not shy away from sensitive, but necessary conversations. It's one of the things I genuinely love about the school and see it as a leading light in this area. Our schemes of work have evolved for the better in History, English and RS to include significant moments of black history

So thank you to Miranda, and to those who have picked up the baton and run with it at the school. I hope this year's event will see many more inspired to join in and ensure that black history continues to have its place within our school and the wider community.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mrs A Alleyne-Graham

I hail from the beautiful island called Barbados. Well, that is not actually true, I'm the only member of my family who was born in England, I am part of the first generation of Black Caribbean British. Growing up in London I was not made to feel British, this was the same for many people around me. I'm a black Caribbean person living in London, but this is my home and I have no other "home" to "go back" to. Saying that and also contradicting myself Barbados may be my home that I will retire to, the same way my parents did. My parents were fortunate to return home; they were only expected to come and work in England for a short time, that turned out to be over 30 years. They returned to their birthplace and died in their birthplace.

We all have a history; we all have a family history and an ancestral history that we all should be curious to find out about. Enjoy our 2 weeks of Black History and open your minds to learning something new about different people you see every day.

