



June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Broken Rhythms Victoria Society  
Board of Directors  
Victoria, BC  
brokenrhythmsvictoria@gmail.com

### **RE: Letter of Solidarity Regarding Tenyjah Indra Mckenna**

Anti-Black racism is real and rampant in Victoria, BC and throughout our local performing arts community. For many years, BIPOC artists have been mistreated and excluded both covertly and overtly. More recently, we have witnessed these injustices within one of Victoria's major theatre companies.

Tenyjah Indra Mckenna is a first generation Caribbean Canadian, raised in Montreal, QC but currently residing in Victoria, BC where she is an active member of the performing arts community. Tenyjah hails from a music-oriented family where she grew up playing the tuba, oboe and alto saxophone while also singing in choir and performing in theatre; her first play was at the age of 9 where she performed as Tybalt in *Hamlet*. In addition to her more than 20 years of theatre experience, she also has a degree in Liberal Arts from John Abbott College and a PhD in Social Sciences from Concordia University.

Over the last 4 years, Tenyjah has experienced ongoing Anti-Black racism from Langham Court Theatre and their supporters. In 2017, Tenyjah was denied the opportunity to audition for the show *Les Belles Soeurs* after being told by the show's director that Black people were not living in Montreal during the time the show was set. Not only were the director's statements factually incorrect, the director's decision to deny Tenyjah the opportunity to audition was racist.

Following the director's denial and what can be summarized as an inadequate response by Langham Court Theatre, Tenyjah courageously filed a complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal. Since this time, she has experienced ongoing harassment and discrimination which includes being verbally abused and spit on by strangers, as well as being told to leave town for bringing a complaint against Langham Court Theatre. In addition, Tenyjah has taken on additional financial burdens to cover legal expenses for her case with the Human Rights Tribunal. The following materials provide more details on Tenyjah's experience and her human rights complaint.

### **Relevant Articles/Documentation**

- November 5, 2019: [Langham's request to dismiss human rights complaint denied by Human Rights Tribunal](#)
- November 9, 2019: [Black woman told she couldn't seek role in play; rights tribunal hears complaint](#)
- May 2, 2021: [Actor who made discrimination complaint says she faced backlash, including verbal abuse](#)

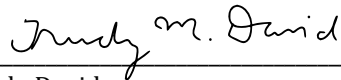
As an organization and dance company that has been fortunate to learn and benefit from Black and Indigenous artists, histories and ways of being and knowing, our goal as a company is to make sure we are spreading awareness and doing our part to dismantle systemic racism and racist practices, in all dimensions of the arts. As such, **The Board of Broken Rhythms Victoria Society stands in solidarity with Tenyah.**

- We acknowledge the systemic racism that Tenyah has experienced from Langham Court Theatre;
- We acknowledge the ongoing trauma and financial burden that Tenyah has experienced since courageously making a complaint with the Human Rights Tribunal; and
- We continue to stand against all forms of racism and discrimination in Victoria's performing arts community.

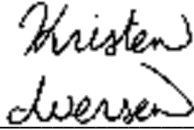
As Board members, we, along with our Artistic Director, still have much to learn about the lived experience of BIPOC artists, but we remain committed to expanding our awareness, taking active steps to support BIPOC artists, and standing against injustice in all of its forms.



Tania Betiku  
*President, Broken Rhythms Board of Directors*



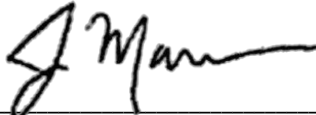
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