

Black History Month Competition

The theme for Black History Month this year, which celebrates 35 years, is "Time for Change: Action Not Words." The ongoing accomplishments and contributions of Black people to the UK and the rest of the world are not simply being recognized for one month. It is also the right moment to keep fighting racism, reclaim Black history, and make sure Black history is celebrated all year long.

The Institute of Commonwealth Studies is showing "A Story of Bones" as part of Black History Month. Annina Van Neel discovered the most heinous atrocity committed on the island — an unmarked mass grave in Rupert's Valley housing an estimated 9,000 previously enslaved Africans — while serving as the environmental officer for St Helena's controversial £285 million airport project. It is among the most important remnants of the transatlantic slave trade that are still present in the world. Haunted by this historical injustice, Annina Van Neel is currently fighting for the proper memorialization of these forgotten victims alongside renowned African American preservationist Peggy King Jorde and a group of disenfranchised islanders, many of whom are descendants of the formerly enslaved. Disturbing facts about Britain's colonial past and present are revealed by the resistance they encounter.

This unique event, sponsored by our AHRC-funded Windrush Project and organized by the Institute of Historical Research ([Opens in new window](#)) and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies ([Opens in new window](#)), examines the ways in which music has reflected the experiences of the "Windrush Generation" and improved British society. We are thrilled to announce that there are three especially important guests.

The first one is Professor Shirley Thompson OBE, a composer, conductor, violinist, and filmmaker of international fame, will be joining us. Daniel Rachel, a former musician who is now an accomplished author, is the next. *Isle of Noises: Conversations with Great British Songwriters*, his debut book, was named Book of the Year by the Guardian and NME. Finally, is professional musician and songwriter Alexander D Great (Alexander Loewenthal), who has performed on stage, radio, and television in Trinidad, Dominica, and the UK.