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STATEMENT ABOUT THE GOLDEN DRAGON

We recognise that the conversation around our production of *The Golden Dragon* continues and acknowledge that our first statement has not helped answer the questions and concerns that have arisen, so we'd like to clarify the choices we have made.

Music Theatre Wales shares the concern about the lack of diversity in our sector and we support and are actively involved in attempts to increase diversity, particularly in encouraging people from a wide variety of backgrounds to enter the opera world. The talent pool of singers able to perform material like *The Golden Dragon* is especially small, and we recognise that we all need to do more to widen it.

The casting process was both rigorous and colour blind. We chose the best singers we could find who were capable of tackling extremely challenging music. However, it's clear our marketing materials have caused misunderstanding about the nature of the work by saying that some of the characters in *The Golden Dragon* are Asian and/or Chinese.

There is no attempt in the production to imitate other races. In fact, each member of the cast deliberately plays characters that are against type, in age, gender and even species. However, we recognise that having an all-white cast playing some Asian characters has caused offence to some. There was certainly no intention to do this and we are sorry that people who have read about the opera have been offended.

The Golden Dragon is an opera that presents the plight of those who are most vulnerable to exploitation: illegal immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and people who have been trafficked. In deciding to stage this opera, we wanted to shine a light on a disturbing subject. Our production was a sincere attempt to engage with these complex issues.

We have already invited some of the people who have criticised us for these choices to see the opera for themselves and to talk to us afterwards about the issues raised by the production and explore how we can work together to increase diversity. We welcome this dialogue.