



## **FREEDOM 200 CHAMBER ORCHESTRA – Musicians Biog**

**Website link:** [www.freedom200.com](http://www.freedom200.com)

The Orchestra has been formed in 2007 to participate in events to commemorate 200 years of the Parliament Act abolishing Slave Trade in the UK. It is uniquely made up of a high number of musicians of African descent; the biggest complement of its type in the UK. The ensemble is led by Chi-Chi Nwanoku, MBE.

Freedom 200 has organised events to mark the bicentennial anniversary which includes a commemorative publication - [Our 200 People](#) - identifying and profiling 200 people of African descent who have achieved excellence in their chosen fields or contributed significantly to Civil Society.

### **Olawale Opayinka – Executive Director**

Freedom 200 is the brain child of Olawale Opayinka, who is an Actuary but in recent years has devoted himself to International development. He has used the Arts and African heritage to positively project draw attention to development issues in sub-Saharan African. Previous events include Awesome Praise – [www.awesomepraise.org](http://www.awesomepraise.org) – a musical concert that brings together African, African Caribbean and African American artists playing different genres of Music.

The idea for a Chamber Orchestra was aimed at profiling gifted Classical musicians in the bicentennial year; the mix of black and white musicians is to show through the arts the advance and legacy of the abolition of slavery 200 years on and lastly to inspire young black people to take up classical music.

### **Chi-chi Nwanoku MBE - Double Bass/Director**

Chi-chi Nwanoku was born in London of Nigerian and Irish parents. At the age of seven she discovered music on a neighbour's piano when she was taught to play a 12-bar blues by her friend's older brother. She then began her education as a classical musician. She took up the double bass and started her pursuit of a career in music at age eighteen.

Chi-chi studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she received her LRAM teacher's diploma, and her ARCM performer's diploma with Honours. On graduation she was awarded the Principal's Prize and the Eugene Cruft Double Bass Prize.

Chi-chi went on to win four scholarships including one from The Royal Society of Arts, to further her studies with Franco Petracchi in Rome. She has become one of the UK's most sought after Double Bassists, and has developed a worldwide reputation as one of the finest exponents on her instrument today. Chi-chi plays an instrument made by Nicolas Amati (Cremona), dated 1631.

Her first professional position was as Principal double bass with the London Mozart Players, and since then she has worked as principal and soloist with many of Europe's prestigious chamber orchestras and ensembles. These include the Academy of St Martin's-in-the-Fields, English Baroque Soloists, London Classical Players and the Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique.

She is currently Principal Double Bass with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (of which she is also a founder member), and Endymion Ensemble.

She is Professor of Double Bass Historical Studies at The Royal Academy of Music, of Double Bass at Trinity College of Music in London, and of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. Chi-chi was made a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in 1998. She was awarded an MBE. for her Services to Music in the 2001 Queen's Birthday Honours.

Her extensive discography includes three recordings of Schubert's 'Trout' Quintet, with Domus, Hausmusik and Trio Fontenay with Nabuko Imai (viola), for Virgin, EMI and Teldec respectively. There are also recordings of the Schubert Octet, Beethoven Septet, Rossini String Sonatas (a Quattro) and Boccherini 'cello sonatas (with Richard Lester/Hyperion).

She lives in London with her two lively children, Jacob and Phoebe.



### **Althea Ifeka**

Althea Ifeka is based in London, where she works as a freelance soloist and private teacher. Born in Nigeria of Nigerian and English parentage, she later moved to Australia where she began studying the oboe at the age of eleven with Sharman Pretty at the Canberra School of Music.

Four years later she was awarded the Australian Music Examinations Board Licentiate Performance Diploma. She completed her education at Girton College, Cambridge, the Royal Academy of Music, London and the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta. In 1992 she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for doctoral study at the Eastman School of Music in the US.

Althea has just returned from Paris, where she won 3rd Prize at the Paris-Ville d'Avray International Interpretation Competition, which this year featured the oboe in recently-researched 18th-century repertoire and contemporary works of extreme difficulty.

Althea is the first British prizewinner in 10 years of open competition at Paris-Ville d'Avray. Other career highlights include the recent release of her debut CD - *From Leipzig to London* - on the *Oboe Classics* label, in which she performs with harpsichordist Katharine May. Their disc received excellent reviews in a number of publications including *Gramophone* magazine.

In 1996 Althea gave the British premiere of *The Songs of the Magi*, an oboe concerto by the African-American composer Adolphus Hailstork. Past orchestral engagements include Guest Principal Oboe and Cor Anglais with the RPO, the BBCSO, the Royal Opera House Orchestra, the RTE NSO, and several seasons as playing Principal in Matthew Bourne's productions of *Swan Lake* and *Nutcracker!* at Sadler's Wells.

### **Everton Nelson**

A graduate of the Royal College of Music in 1990, Everton has carved out a career that has encompassed many fields including acting, live performance, session work, arranging, re-mixing and production. Having toured the world with Japanese composer Ryuichi Sakamoto, Everton has gone on to be featured in Gary Oldman's directorial film debut 'Nil by Mouth' and appeared with him in the film 'Immortal Beloved'. Being heavily involved in the London session scene Everton now concentrates his time performing, writing and arranging.

### **Clare Deniz**

Clare Deniz hails from a highly musical family, as both her parents were professional musicians. Prior to her Purcell Room recital debut Clare has held the post of principle solo 'cellist with the Royal Ballet playing solos for Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev.

The Incorporated Society of Musicians chose her for their prestigious 'Counterpoint' contemporary recital series. Her special interests are in English music and especially the rarely heard works of Arnold Bax and French repertory and has broadcast recitals from Reading Festival and for the BBC Oxford.

Her musical training began after winning a Junior Exhibition to The Royal Academy of Music after only one year's tuition she later became a full time student.

Clare was honoured in 1990 by nomination and election as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts by the Royal Society of Arts council.

Clare has recently obtained a Postgraduate diploma from Queens' University Belfast and a Masters Degree from London University.

### **Daniel Meyer**

Daniel began learning the violin at the age of 5 studying with his Father, also a violinist. After his studies at the Royal College of Music he joined the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and then the BBC Symphony Orchestra. He devotes his spare time to voluntary work and has recently trained as a mediator.



### **Martin Lawrence**

I am from Cumbria, a physics graduate, and am 2nd horn in the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. I also work with musicians to help physical problems, using yoga and massage.

### **Sophie Barber**

A freelance violinist who enjoys a rich and challenging mixture of musical genres, including contemporary, classical and baroque.

Sophie was a founder member of the Goldberg Ensemble and the Barbican Piano Trio. On leaving College in 1983, she became a member of the City of London Sinfonia and the Academy of St.Martin-in-the-Fields. She has also held the position of Principal Second Violin in the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Sophie is now a member of the London Chamber Orchestra and, after a period of further study on the classical and baroque violin, of L'Orchestre Romantique et Revolutionnaire. She also appears regularly with the English Baroque Soloists, the Florilegium Ensemble and the La Chambre Philharmonique in Paris.

As leader, Sophie performs regularly with Matthew Bourne's dance company New adventures, the Royal Ballet Sinfonia and the London concert orchestra. She has also made a number of appearances in this role with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

### **The full ensemble includes:**

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Company</b>
Chi-Chi	Nwanokwu, MBE	Bassist/Conductor
Jenny	Adejayan	Cellist
Clare	Deniz	Cellist
Kwesi	Edman	Cellist
Martin	Lawrence	Horn
Stephen	Stirling	Horn
Althea	Ifeka	Oboist
Uchenna	Ngwe	Oboist
Sally	Jackson	Bassoon
Catherine	Musker	Violist
Susie	Meszaros	Violist
Catherine	Bradshaw	Violist
Rowland	Sutherland	Flute
Everton	Nelson	1 <sup>st</sup> Violin (Principal)
Ralph	de Souza	1 <sup>st</sup> Violin
Samson	Diamond	1 <sup>st</sup> Violin
Jackie	Shave	1 <sup>st</sup> Violin
Sophie	Barber	1 <sup>st</sup> Violin
Daniel	Bhattacharya	2 <sup>nd</sup> Violin (Lead)
Daniel	Meyer	2 <sup>nd</sup> Violin
Patrick	Kiernan	2 <sup>nd</sup> Violin
Rick	Koster	2 <sup>nd</sup> Violin