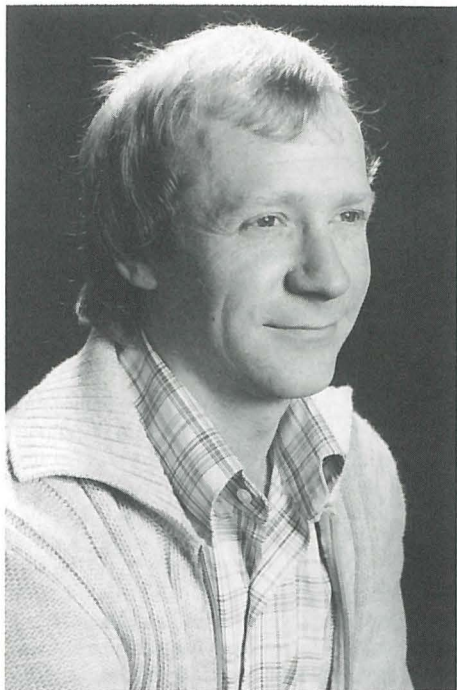


Business in the Arts

“Unless your arts organisation is run well, you won't be able to put on any art because you'll go out of business”

Colin Tweedy on Radio 4's Today programme, 19/7/88



Music by Paul Todd

sample voices. Everything was performed and processed by the Synclavier in one pass and recorded live to two-track tape, which is used for the performance in the theatre.

Paul Todd's Synclavier music for *Henceforward*. . . has to be re-recorded to accommodate changes in the cast, or language.

“There's a Swedish production coming up.” says Todd, wincing at the headache he's given himself. “Having got the skeleton of the piece of music in the Synclavier itself, foreign productions have a choice; to use the English version; sample their actresses over there and send us the samples and we re do them; or they can hire the entire studio and do the whole thing from scratch.”

So what does Ayckbourn think of technology that allows a composer to produce finished product without any intermediaries? “I don't know — it's an absolute dream isn't it, to do the whole thing yourself, but I think in the end I'd miss the company. I mean, I think novelists are wonderful people, but I'd never want to write a novel!”

“The Synclavier takes the boring chores out of recording” says Hashmi. “We are masters of this machine. It could never replace musicians because if you put rubbish into it, rubbish will come back out!”

And has Paul Todd become a convert?

“It's down to the job” says Todd. “I was once asked if I would advocate the use of samples as opposed to real instruments. I can't remember my exact reply but it was something to the effect that — just because somebody's moved the bus-stop doesn't mean you don't catch the same bus.”

As all in the business of managing the arts know, Monday's Guardian is the place to find a job. In the last few years more and more advertisements are seen for posts such as development director, sponsorship manager, general administrator. This proliferation confirms that the arts world has become aware that the administrative side of their operation is as necessary, if not as obviously creatively satisfying, as the artistic.

Yet this throws up its own problem. How can a small arts body afford to pay someone sufficiently qualified in business skills? The answer is that often they cannot; which means that those Guardian advertisements frequently carry not only the low salaries which may deter the experienced but also a less obvious lack of resources for training or for equipment to carry out their business objectives.

This is no criticism of the arts world. Management training is notoriously expensive; and the company that has to budget carefully to pay their actors, or print their posters, or buy petrol for their tour, is forced to put these first in their list of priorities. The time was ripe for business to lend a hand; and ABSA (the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts) together with IBM, addressed this issue with the launch of a new initiative, Business in the Arts, in July of this year.

Business in the Arts is a daring scheme which aims to assist arts management in substantial self improvement by enlisting the practical support of business and its resources. The concept of mutual beneficial partnerships between arts and business has been highly successful in the field of sponsorship. As sponsorship enters its second decade, ABSA recognised that there was more to offer from business to the arts, in the form of training, skills placement and the ability to offer hard-nosed advice. The intention is that business management training courses will be opened to the arts; that business people will be matched and placed with an arts group to fulfill a particular need (for instance on accounting practice or personnel matters); and that arts organisations will become more aware of their business needs and, through awareness, find ways of meeting them.

When the scheme was launched in July it already had the support of eight founding companies who put their money behind helping the arts to become better businesses. These companies (IBM, Marks and Spencer, Arthur Andersen, British Petroleum, National Westminster Bank, ADT, WH Smith, and ICI) feel that if the arts are to

flourish, it is vital for the arts organisations to be able to conduct their affairs as successful businesses.

The potential for success is vast. The recent report, Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain by John Myerscough for the Policy Studies Institute, exposed to those who had hitherto not been aware of the fact that the arts are major generators of money, employment, tourism and urban development. Recent initiatives by the Arts Council and Business in the Community have recognised the role that the arts have to play in inner city regeneration. All the more necessary, therefore, to ensure that these employers, exporters and developers that make up the arts management world are building on solid business foundations.

So how does Business in the Arts propose to achieve this? The scheme was launched deliberately early in its development in order that a whispering campaign could transmit its ideas both to the arts world and back from it. It has always been the intention that the scheme should not force advice or assistance on reluctant arts organisations, but rather should tailor the ways in which such advice and assistance is given precisely to suit the needs of the arts world.

To that end a pilot scheme was devised and launched in the West Midlands Arts area on 23rd September 1988. This pilot is to be run as a test case over a period of three months. After that, it will be thoroughly analysed in order to evaluate areas of success and also to spot problems before the scheme is expanded into a nationwide programme. In addition to the pilot a number of placements have been made in other parts of the country; these will serve as a control to the pilot proper, in case there are any aspects of that which are region-specific.

ABSA has been immensely impressed and encouraged by the enthusiasm and interest shown by both business and the arts in the pilot area and also in the form of letters of enquiry received by the office. We are closely aware that this enthusiasm gives an indication that business in the arts is potentially a very big programme; at present, however, we are deliberately following the development as originally envisaged and as outlined above rather than letting the scheme grow too fast. To those regional arts associations, arts organisations and businesses who are waiting for direct involvement we can only say that we want to get it right first time; we would ask them to please stay interested, please come and talk to us and please bear with us as the lessons from the early months of the scheme