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29th October 1981

Dear Parminder,

This is the first of what will be a series of newsletters, designed to regularly inform interested parties of our recent activities as well as our projected plans for the future. We hope that you find this information useful, and welcome any comments or suggestions that you may care to make.

The last few months have been amongst the most active of our career, with a heavy schedule of performances and workshops up and down the country. We appeared at most of the West Country festivals, (Glastonbury CND Festival, Sidmouth International Folk Festival, Elephant Fair, Glastonbury Childrens Festival, etc.) where not only were our performances well received, but up to 200 people attended our daily workshops. The company thoroughly enjoys these 3/4 day engagements, (5 days in the case of Sidmouth) as it allows them to make contact with a large number of people, as well as giving them the opportunity to meet and exchange views with other performers.

A highly successful tour of Greater London was carried out last month, sponsored by the Greater London Arts Association, with performances at Battersea Arts Centre, Crayford, Cranford and Kilburn's Tricycle Theatre. We finished of the week with a performance at the Commonwealth Institute. Our thanks for the excellent organisation of the G.L.A. dates go to John Chapman.

We have spent a great deal of time recently in the North of England, with visits to Yorkshire for the South Yorkshire County Council (Sheffield and Doncaster) organised by Hilary Young. Lincoln and Humberside Arts Theatre and Dance Officer, Neil Wallace arranged a successful series of dates in Grantham, Bridlington and Scunthorpe. We have also appeared at the Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, and in association with Cy Grant, have performed the first of his multi-ethnic 'Concord' revues at the Nottingham Playhouse. This highly professional production was the beginning of a series of dates that Cy has arranged and produced with the co-operation of various County Councils, featuring in each case local minority arts groups with Ekome topping the bill. We have been booked for another two of these shows at Derby Playhouse (1st November) and Birmingham Repertory (6th December) with more to come in the New Year.

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Last month, in association with Avon County Education Authority, we began our education programme at eight primary and secondary schools in the Avon area; though we will probably be adding a further two or three schools to our schedule, provided we are able to find the additional funding required to cover the increased demand for classes.

The programme is going very well, with workshops being held in dance, drumming and steel pan. We are presently producing an educational dossier, a copy of which will be given to each child participating in the project, with additional sheets being added as the course progresses. It is planned to arrange a concert at the end of the course when the children will be able to demonstrate their newly acquired skills. The venue for this mammoth show (more than 200 participants) will be the Colston Hall on the 13th February. We hope you will be able to attend.

Weekly workshops are still being conducted at Reading and Cardiff, where the groups with whom we have been working are now both performing their own 45 minute shows.

During November and December we will be appearing at the Plymouth Arts centre, holding a seminar at Dartington College, as well as performances in Bristol, Derby, Rugby, London and our usual workshop programme.

Also, as part of our educational activities, we have arranged a tour of Great Britain for Sheila Barnett, Director of the Jamaica School of Dance and choreographer of the Jamaica National Dance Company. This was in association with the Commonwealth Institute, who sponsored Sheila Barnett's visit to this country. The tour, which is still under way, has been a tremendous success, offering master classes to dance companies and lecture/demonstrations to dance teachers, p.e. teachers, students of dance and multi-cultural educationalists. Finishing on the 11th November, Sheila Barnett's tour will have visited Reading, Bristol, Dartington, Exeter, Cardiff, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Birmingham, Kendal and London. Our thanks go to Prakesh Daswani of the Commonwealth Institute for his initiative and co-operation.

With a view to opening our own centre in Bristol for the study of African and West Indian music and dance, we have recently applied to Avon County Council to participate in their Urban Aid Programme. As only 10 applicants can go forward for final consideration by the Department of the Environment, and there were 140 requests made in the Avon area, an initial meeting was held to allow the groups themselves to vote for those projects they considered most worthy to go forward. Ekome came third, followed by a further meeting at which Avon County Council's Community Leisure Committee put us second in order of priority. This encouraging response leads us to believe that we stand a reasonable chance of obtaining the funding we require. We will keep you informed of future developments in this important project.

A copy of the letter sent to the 48 strong Resources Committee of Avon County Council is enclosed. Also enclosed is an updated resume of the Company's history.

We hope that you have enjoyed this newsletter, and look forward to a continuing dialogue with you and your organisation.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely,



Barrington Anderson
Manager Ekome Arts

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