

9. Matters Raised by membersEthnic Minority Arts

Over the last few months it has become apparent that the Community Arts Panel has received an increasing number of applications for funding from ethnic minorities in particular from Asian and Afro-Caribbean groups. Many of these are from established groups who have only just discovered that funding is available. Some of the applications the panel has received do not strictly fall within the criteria of community arts but it would seem that the applicants feel that the panel might have a more enlightened attitude. It is heartening to see that other panels are investigating this area of work.. However two problems must be overcome 1) How applicants are given correct advice as to which panel they should apply to; and, 2) Having found the correct panel that their application will be considered without due prejudice. It is unfortunate but ethnic minorities seem to receive harsher treatment than other groups and it might be that panels will have to positively discriminate in favour of these groups, all other things being equal. I do not believe these clients have equal opportunity to establish and develop their projects and I feel that GLAA must take the initiative in this direction.

It must be said that the problem is one that the Arts Council has virtually ignored over successive years. There seems to have been little regard for the special needs of these communities and an unwillingness to make provision of funds or facilities towards their projects. It is important that the Executive Committee formulates policy guidelines for panels to operate within and also investigate fully with the aid of the established agencies the most appropriate ways of tackling the problem.

Director's Note:

The Association's expenditure on ethnic arts is detailed in Appendix A to this Report. In the current financial year it will total over £58,000. In drawing up these figures a number of general points might be made:

- (1) The definition of ethnic minority arts includes here all projects which have either been undertaken by ethnic artists in a cultural form influenced by their ethnic origin, or which serve a mainly ethnic community, or which have as their subject matter a cultural issue particular to an ethnic group. Grants to artists of ethnic origin who are working wholly in the mainstream of a cultural tradition indigenous to this country (for example in fine art) are not included. Neither are racially mixed companies, nor are all projects serving racially mixed communities and audiences. It may well be that future statistics should include both these categories.
- (2) The Association's policy has been to encourage applications from ethnic minority groups and to assess them alongside other applications within the existing framework of Advisory Panels and Expenditure budgets defined by arts disciplines. A comment made by the Literature Advisory Panel expresses the practice of this policy:

"Our support for the literature of the ethnic minorities is widespread as part of our general policy. Most goes to writers of material in English but the general feeling is that it would be dangerous and unwise to create a general policy for the ethnic arts (let alone a distinct fund or earmarking of funds). This would create an "ethnic ghetto" which would be a very bad thing. This does not however preclude the possibility of special help in particular cases (Asian languages is something we should look at for example). Nor does it stop the panel giving special consideration to the circumstances of ethnic applications, but we do this with all applications. The best guarantee of continuing and proper support for the arts of the ethnic minorities - or indeed any minorities - is the awareness of the special circumstances surrounding the production/performance of those arts and the needs of the communities they are addressing in the minds of the assessors".

- (3) The awareness of special circumstances is very important to all panels. In particular the criteria of professional status is never rigidly applied in the early stages of a company's development.

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"The Drama Panel does relax its normal policy to help emerging ethnic groups who are still partially amateur, as these groups are fully committed to becoming professional at the earliest possible moment."

Nevertheless, quality of work and aspiration cannot be ignored.

"The Dance & Mime Panel does believe in the value of the ethnic and minority arts in London. At the moment it is initiating an ethnic dance fellowship in Greenwich and an ethnic category within its Dance Awards Scheme. It will not however give an ethnic award simply for the sake of doing so - all recipients of the awards must be of a high artistic standard or show considerable potential."

(4) Most Advisory Panels have (or have had until recently) one or more members drawn from different ethnic minorities. Replacement of retiring members is not always easy. This membership has value but it must not be inferred that such small numbers can ever truly represent all the different ethnic minorities in Greater London. An Afro-Caribbean musician has no more inherent knowledge of or sympathy for Asian Music than an English academy professor.

(5) The more we are becoming familiar with the art of the ethnic minorities, the more the distinction between the different forms of ethnic arts activity appear to be increasingly difficult to make. In so far as those difficulties may represent the first signs of multi-cultural activities and assimilation of second generation ethnic artists to Western European forms and issues, they may be very welcome. Certainly the labelling of "ethnic minority arts" is no longer automatically helpful as a remark from the Visual Arts Advisory Panel illustrates:

"Applications from either ethnic organisations or truly ethnic artists are rare. In the last year we have received two applications through grant aid and visual arts awards from Balraj Khanna, an Indian artist, but he does paint in the traditions of Western rather than Indian art. The visual arts awards also turned up two other possible "ethnic" artists (judging by their names) but their painting (in both cases) would not justify the label "ethnic".

(b) Inter Panel Liaison

(c) Local Authority non-voting co-options

I would like to nominate two local authority members as non-voting members of the Executive Committee:

Cllr. Charles Brooker, Greenwich Borough Council; former Chairman Greenwich Recreation Services Committee; Chairman, Greenwich Theatre; Chairman, Greenwich Festival Committee

Cllr. Terry Hannafin, Brent Borough Council; Chairman, Brent Leisure Services Committee

(Christopher Field)

Greater London Arts AssociationEthnic Arts ExpenditureArts Centres

	1979/80	1980/81
1. Indian Cultural Institute, West Kensington	1,500	3,000
2. The Factory, Paddington	1,500	3,000
3. Moonshine, Kensal Green	3,000	4,700
4. Other centres (say 15% programme, Battersea Chat's Palace, Jackson's Lane, Hoxton Hall Riverside Studios)	5,055	7,905
	11,055	18,605

Community Arts

5. National Association of Asian Youth	425	
6. Sam Uriah Morris Society	200	
7. Afro International Theatre Productions		280
8. Trinbago Carnival Club		455
9. Dagarti Community Arts		365
10. The Factory Carnival Group		145
11. Dominica Joyspreaders Club		540
12. Granada Shortney		270
13. Horizon Dance School		220
14. Steel an' Skin		350
15. Subsidy to community arts workshops operating in areas of high racial mix		(5,355)
	625	2,139

Community Festivals

16. IPA International Festival	150	
17. WF Festival for Racial Harmony	100	
18. Afro Caribbean Arts Festival	215	
19. London Entertains	500	
20. Ealing People to People Festival	350	150
21. Polish Cultural Festival		350
22. Asian Youth Festival		200
23. Bengali New Year Festival		150
24. Multi-Cultural Festival		50
25. Notting Hill Carnival CAC		850
26. Commonwealth Institute, Childrens Carnival		250
	1,315	1,500

NOTE: Many other Festivals not listed here specifically as ethnic festivals had some contribution within their programmes by ethnic minorities and catered for multi racial audiences.

Dance and Mine

27. Indian Folk Dance Classes	150
28. Steel an' Skin performances (m)	30
29. Ekome, Dagarti, Steel an' Skin performances	150
30. Ekome	200
31. Tara Rajkumar	646
32. Lambeth Asian Evening	150

Dance and Mime cont.,

33. Multi ethnic Dance Celebration	104	
34. Won Kyung Cho tour	575	
35. Copasetics tour (m)	500	
36. Alpana Sengupta tour	377	400
37. MAAS Movers tour (m)	408	
38. Greta Mendez fellowship (m)	1,150	2,300
39. Elroy Josephs fellowship (m)	1,150	
40. Aklowa performance		250
41. Simba project (m)		100
42. Will Gaines tour and workshops		778
43. Tara Rajkumar residency		167
	5,940	5,278

Drama

44. Tara Arts Group	175	
45. Black Theatre Co-operative	1,000	1,500
46. Temba	1,000	2,000
47. Omnibus	650	
48. Asian Artistes	300	
49. Bangladesh Centre	300	400
50. Association of Jewish Youth	300	
51. Caribbean Cultural International		500
52. Lambeth Ensemble		500
53. Group 3		200
	3,725	5,100

Film and Video

54/58 16mm Film Workshops (say 15% usage)	4,275	4,800
59/61 Super 8 workshops (say 15% usage)	500	225
62 Keith Greig	508	
63 Compass Films (Bengali Film)	2,725	
64 Stuart Urban	515	
65 Faris Kermani (film in Hindustani)		995
66. Forum Youth Films (Hasan Shah)		2,500
67. Neil Thompson/Ravi Narayanswami		1,512
68. Kelvin Richard		525
69. Amina Patel		350
70. Ken Lyman (Irish Film)		2,000
71. Koninck Studios		
72/78 Exhibitions Grants: Hounslow CRC 15% programme, other venues (5)	156	162
	8,464	14,369

Literature

79. Black Ink	1,000	1,000
80. National Association for Asian Youth (bookshop)	1,000	
81. Staunch (Afro Caribbean Literary magazine)	380	
82. ACER Black Penmanship Awards		150
83. Black Book Fair		800
	2,380	1,950

NOTE: This does not include expenditure under the London Poetry Secretariat or Writers in Schools schemes. Under the PS 81 readings by poets from ethnic minorities have taken place in 40 venues. Under Writers in Schools 18 visits to schools have been made by writers from ethnic minorities. As with community arts there is an unquantifiable benefit derived from our support of community bookshops in areas of high racial mix.



Music

84. Steelband Association of Great Britain	100	
85. SHAPE: Afro Rock Music	60	
86. Icarus Reggae Bank	60	
87. Redbridge CRC, Afro Caribbean Music	50	
88. SHAPE: Vietnamese Refugee concert	65	
89. Bangladesh Centre	75	
90. Lambeth Asian Evenings	300	160
91. Africa Centre (Kora recital)	37	255
92. Dagarti Community Arts	150	
93. Rio Centre, Steel an' Skin	100	
94. NAAY, Commonwealth Institute	150	
95. Khala Ghor Playhouse	50	
96. Asian Music Research Project		400
97. Isafrika (S. African & reggae)		100
98. Bethwin Road (Emmanuel Josiah)		200
99. Bexley CRE (" ")		80
100. Moonshine International Arts Festival		100
101. Master Musicians of Jajouka		250
102. English Gamelan Orchestra		450
	1,197	1,995

Visual Arts

103. Four Corner Films (Fuhual Amin)	-	900
104. Somali Women's Association		500
	-	1,400

Regional Service Organisations

105. Minorities Arts Advisory Service (MAAS)	3,650	4,200
106. SHAPE (say 40% projects)	1,000	1,200
	4,650	5,400

Arts Education

(no direct expenditure but
ethnics artists involved in
two projects 1979/80)

39,351	57,736

NOTE: The last survey based upon 1977/78 Budgets indicated a comparative expenditure in that year of £20,000.

The % increase in expenditure has moved thus:

1977/78	-	1979/80	: 96%
1977/78	-	1980/81	: 189%