

Finance and General Purposes Committee
Arts and Recreation Committee
Staff Committee
Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee

Report (12.7.85) by Director of
Recreation and the Arts

Item	
32vii	2426
BLACK DANCE CIRCUIT Prog. Ref. A12	

Summary: This report puts forward proposals for a London based black dance circuit involving major, local based groups from UK and groups from Asia, Africa and the Americas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That approval be given to incur expenditure of up to £105,368 gross £71,348 net, as per the costs identified in the main report for the Black Dance Circuit.
- (ii) That the consent of the Secretary of State be sought for the project, under Section 9(1) of the Local Government (Interim Provisions) Act 1984, and clause 91 of the Local Government Bill, if required, in respect of any contracts to be entered into by the Council in connection with the project.
- (iii) That the Director of Recreation and the Arts be authorised to set up an advisory committee and appoint the two **CONSULTANTS** identified in paragraph 6.

RA/REU/PG/1623

1 BACKGROUND

Dance, like all other art forms, is one of the oldest avenues of expression. It offers a chance to express oneself verbally or physically and is an effective way of communication. Unlike Western societies where this art form is learned by a selected interested few, dance in African and Asian societies in particular, is a way of life, where every member is involved to differing degrees throughout their lives. Dance therefore is an integral part of society and is used as an artistic, educational and a social medium of communication. As a result it is both part of and a reflection of their life experiences.

Elements of their cultural heritage is inevitably carried by the bearers wherever they live. Hence, members of the black community in England are rich in their cultural life styles. The Asian community from the onset have continuously encouraged this particular art form. Recently, we have seen a growing interest in re-kindling the dormant abilities of the Afro-Caribbean community. This is partly due to and has been enhanced by several African groups, in particular from Ghana and South Africa, now living and working in Britain. There has also been a growing interest in contemporary/modern dance which invariably reflects the experiences of black people in Britain.

2 INTRODUCTION

In the past, dance groups were content to rehearse and perform in church halls and small local community centres for minimal or no money. Today, the situation has not changed much particularly in relation to financial assistance which is still marginal. Unlike the other art forms, black dance has not received the same level of funding or support by funding bodies. Black dance forms are seen as 'ethnic' and 'community based' and not in the same league as the dance form, ballet. The Euro-centric view of art has led to black dance companies being seen as non-professional. Today, there is still no black dance company in Britain earning their living through dance. Most companies which receive support from funding bodies receive project funding not revenue funding. This situation must be improved. Black dance needs to be popularised and generally given a high profile as well as black dancers being employed on a regular basis in both community and mainstream venues. We aim to do this through the Black Dance Circuit which will be organised on a yearly basis. The Circuit will include performances ranging from traditional/classical to folk/modern dance.

3 PROPOSAL

It is proposed to establish a dance circuit throughout the London area with dance troupes/groups mainly from the UK. African, Asian and American dance groups will also be invited to perform. Local, newly developing dance groups will be billed alongside the better established groups. All major dance groups, particularly those from abroad, will hold classes/workshops in dance studios and venues in London in order to teach and popularise their particular dance style to a wider audience. It is envisaged that the Black Dance Circuit will become an independent structure operating on a regular basis and organised by the Black Dance Forum.

4 PROGRAMME

Twenty-one dance performances over a seven month period will be organised in town halls, community centre and major dance venues in London. One major and two local performances will be staged per month. Each major performance will feature one dance troupe from abroad and one well-established group from the UK. Local shows will feature groups from the vicinity and one major group from the London area. A list of UK based groups and possible major/local venues is attached (see appendix 1/2). Dance troupes from abroad will give at least one major class/workshop in established dance studios and suitable major/community venues.

The dance circuit will run from September 1985 to March 1986.

5 ARTISTES

A total of four dance troupes from Africa, Asia, America and the Caribbean invited to perform and give classes during their four/five day stay in London. It is proposed to contact various high commissions/embassies in London to obtain advice and information on dance troupes in their countries as well as National Regional Arts Councils in Africa and Asia.

Many of the London based dance groups involved will be those supported by the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee. New, inexperienced local groups will be given the chance to perform and will be actively encouraged to participate in classes workshops.

6. MANAGEMENT

It is proposed to employ two consultants on fixed term contracts, to provide specialist services necessary for the running of the Dance Circuit. One consultant will co-ordinate the Dance Circuit and the other will organise and manage it. Persons with the specialist skills and expertise needed for the Dance Circuit cannot be identified from within the Council's staffing, and it is for this reason that use of external resources is proposed. One consultant will be responsible for all administration, publicity, booking of venues, health and safety of artists/audience and financial control under the direction of the finance department and the REU. The other consultant's main duties will include devising of a structured programme, contacting of all artistes abroad and in UK. The consultant will also be responsible for the hospitality of all artistes and will be present at all performances. Both consultants will be based in the Race Equality Unit which will be responsible for the supervision of the Dance Circuit.

An advisory committee consisting of an REU representative and two dance specialists will be set up to advise and assist in the running of the programme.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

7 BUDGET

A breakdown of the proposed budget is as follows:-

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		£	£
CONSULTANT(1) FEE (8 months, MG9 inc.LW & NI)		8,339.00	8,339.00
CONSULTANT(2) FEE (8 months, MG11 inc.LW & NI)		6,815.00	6,815.00
<u>HALL HIRE</u>			
(a) Local Venues		3,500.00	
(b) Major Venues		10,318.00	13,818.00
<u>PA LIGHTS</u> (inc. Prof. Staff Costs)			
(a) Local Venues		3,706.00	
(b) Major Venues		7,700.00	11,406.00
<u>ARTISTES FEES</u>			
(a) Local Venue Artists		12,600.00	
(b) Major Venue Artists		12,000.00	24,600.00
<u>PUBLICITY</u>			
(a) <u>LOCAL VENUES</u> (14)			
Posters (4)		800.00	
Leaflets		280.00	
Tickets		200.00	
Art Work		260.00	
Putting up		350.00	
Ads.		2,000.00	3,890.00
(b) <u>MAJOR VENUES</u> (7)			
Posters		1,200.00	
Art Work		500.00	
Leaflets		200.00	
TICKETS		500.00	
Putting up Posters		900.00	
Advertisements		10,000.00	13,300.00
<u>TRANSPORTATION/HOSPITALITY</u>			
<u>ACCOMMODATION</u>		5,000.00	5,000.00
<u>AIR FARES</u>		3,200.00	3,200.00
		12,000.00	12,000.00
<u>MISCELLANEOUS</u>		3,000.00	3,000.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE:

£ 105,368.00

INCOME

£

Estimated income from 21 performances

(a) LOCAL VENUES

100% capacity for 14 performances with average
of 300 seats = 4,200 people

Tickets at £1.50

60% capacity audience = $2,500 \times £1.50$

3,780.00

(b) MAJOR VENUES

100% capacity for 7 performances with
total of 16,800 people attending

Tickets at £3

60% capacity audience = $10,080 \times £3$

30,240.00

TOTAL INCOME:

£34,020.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

105,368.00

TOTAL INCOME

34,020.00

ANTICIPATED DEFICIT:

£71,348.00

This budget has been prepared with the help and advice of a dance adviser. The estimated subsidy per head of £4.54 and all items and costs have been examined and considered to be reasonable and necessary considering the nature of the project and the benefits accruing to London and Londoners.

8 BENEFITS

- (a) Local and major concerts will reach a large section of the community. Black dance will be given a high profile as more people will become familiar and learn to appreciate these dance forms.
- (b) A platform for new young dancers will be created. They will be given the chance to perform and the opportunity to learn valuable new techniques from the professional dance troupes from the UK and abroad. This will also lead to the discovery of new talent.
- (c) Employment will be provided for black dancers.
- (d) Links will be formed with major dance troupes in Africa, Asia and the Americas thereby creating conditions for exchange and opportunities for dancers in the UK to be placed with companies abroad for a period of time. This has been successfully achieved with the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

9 CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY PEOPLE

The Black Dance Circuit aims to educate Londoners and increase their understanding of black dance forms. Through this media it is hoped that a better understanding of the culture of black people will be created.

10 CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO WOMEN

A substantial number of women will be employed in the Black Dance Circuit and every effort will be made to ensure that there is no discrimination against women in any aspect of the work.

11 IMPLICATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities will be actively encouraged to participate in the Dance Circuit particularly in classes/workshops and organisers will ensure that all venues will have access for people with disabilities.

12 CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO GAY MEN AND LESBIANS

There will be no discrimination by the Black Dance Circuit on grounds of sexual preferences and organisers will ensure that no material produced offends this group.

13 STAFF SIDE CONSIDERATIONS

Staff in the Race Equality Unit have agreed to the placement of additional staff within the Unit to organise the Black Dance Circuit. Representatives from the Departmental Joint Committee have also been consulted and are in agreement.

This initiative is part of the Race Equality Unit's initiatives but there is no specific provision either in the 1985-86 base budget and in the reserves so far allocated. The expenditure can be met, however, from within the base budget provision for a grant to the London Borough of Lambeth in respect of debt charges for the Brixton Recreation Centre, which has now been funded through the stress borough programme.

APPENDIX 1

SUGGESTED LIST OF DANCE GROUPS IN UK

Danse De L'Afrique
Rare Earth Youth Dance
Shobana Jeyasingh
Great Indian Dancers
Punjab Dancers
Allowa
Dance Company 7
Inner Vision Dance Company
Fusion
Osisiuka
Yea Asantewa
Phoenix Dance Company
Uthingo
Black Tuio
Jazira Dancers
Triveni
Shikisha
Sanita Jolvalla Dance Group
Mayapi
Brazilian Contemporary Arts
Hip Hop Roadshow
London Youth Dance
Colombian Folk Dance Group

APPENDIX 2

SUGGESTED LIST OF VENUES

LOCAL

Islington Hown Hall
Poplar Town Hall
Stoke Newington Town Hall
Battersea Arts Centre
St Matthew's Place
Africa Centre
YAA Asantewaa Centre
Broadwater Farm Youth Association
Walthamstow Assembi Hall
Cranford Community Centre
Jacksons Lane Community Centre

Southall Arts
Brixton Rec. Centre
The Albany
(1) West London
(2) Central London

MAJOR

Riverside Studios
London Contemporary School of Dance
Bhavan Centre
Queen Elizabeth Hall
Salders Wells
Royal Festival Hall
Commonwealth Institute

Black Dance Circuit

Report (15.7.85) by the Director of Finance

1. This proposal is to be funded from the revenue base budget and may therefore proceed.

2. The main report seeks approval to the Black Dance Circuit as detailed in paragraph 4 at a cost of £105,368 gross, £71,348 net and the appointment of one consultant and one co-ordinator each for a period of 8 months from 1 August 1985.

3. The proposal involves the arrangement of 21 dance performances during the period September 1985 to March 1986. It is proposed to organise 7 major and 14 local performances.

4. A detailed budget for the Dance Circuit is set out in paragraph 7 of the main report, and can be summarised as follows:

	£
Consultants Fee	8,339
Co-ordinators Fee	6,815
Hall Hire	13,818
PA/Lights	11,406
Artists Fees	24,600
Publicity	17,190
Transport	5,000
Accommodation	3,200
Miscellaneous	3,000

Total Expenditure	105,368

5. The largest element of expenditure relates to the artists totalling £44,800 (fees, transport, accommodation and fares). The artists fees range from £300 for the local dance groups to £3,000 for the major groups appearing at the larger venues. The accommodation and air fares are for the major artists and have been costed on the basis of 10 artists performing with each of the 4 major dance groups. The transportation and hospitality costs, £5,000 are for all the artists involved with the proposed Dance Circuit. (approximately £10 per artist).

6. Box office income of £34,020 is estimated to accrue from the 21 performances and covers 32% of the gross expenditure. Seat prices will be £1.50 at the local venues and £3.00 at the major venues.

7. The following table sets out the subsidy per head on the major and local performances and for the overall dance programme.

	Major Venue Performances £	Local Venue Performances £	Total £
Direct Costs	58,518	23,696	82,214
Indirect Costs (pro rata to direct costs)	16,480	6,674	23,154
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Total Gross Cost	74,998	30,370	105,368
Less Income	30,240	3,780	34,020
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Estimated Attendances	10,080	2,520	12,600
Subsidy (net cost) per head	£4.44	£10.55	£5.66
Average income per head	£3.00	£1.50	£2.70

8. The Director states that he considers the cost to be reasonable considering the nature of the project. (paragraph 7 of the main report).

9. The Committee will note the very high net cost per head, viz £10.55, for the local performances both in absolute terms and in relation to average box office income per head which amounts to £1.50.

10. The Committee will need to be satisfied that the benefits of the Circuit proposals generally and, in the light of paragraph 9 above, the local venue performances in particular, are commensurate with the expenditure involved.

11. No provision was made for this proposal in the 1985/86 base budget. However, the expenditure can be met from the base budget provision for grant to the London Borough of Lambeth in respect of debt charges for the Brixton Recreation Centre which has now been funded through the Stress Borough Programme. (AR 2305 approved 4.7.85).

12. Under financial standing orders, this report requires the concurrence of the Financial and General Purposes Committee as it involves expenditure in excess of £50,000 in a full year.

FN/C3/2259.

Concurrent report (10.7.85) by

Head of Legal Branch

APPLICATION FOR GRANT: BLACK DANCE CIRCUIT

Section 145(1)(a) and (d) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that the Council may do, or arrange for the doing of, or contribute towards the expenses of the doing of, anything necessary or expedient for the provision of an entertainment of any nature or of facilities for dancing and the development and improvement of the knowledge, understanding and practice of the Arts and the Crafts which serve the Arts.

Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.

In my view, the grant could be made under a combination of the above powers stated.

In deciding whether to exercise this power and incur the proposed expenditure, the Committee must act reasonably and must comply with the Council's fiduciary duty to its ratepayers fairly to balance those ratepayer's interests against the interests of those likely to benefit from the expenditure. The Committee should therefore take into account all relevant considerations (and no irrelevant ones) and should be satisfied in the light of those considerations that in respect of any grant decided upon:-

- (a) the benefits to London or its inhabitants expected to be derived from the expenditure warrant and are commensurate with the expenditure;
- (b) it is financially prudent for the Council to incur the expenditure.

DG/LB/G3/5145/5138