

7th March, 1986

WITHOUT PREJUDICE



L'ACADCO

23 Hopefield Avenue
Kingston 6
Jamaica - W.I.
809 - 92 - 76633/4

Mr. Alex Pascal,
British Committee for a Caribbean
Focus 1986
Commonwealth Institute
Kensington High Street,
London W8 6NQ
ENGLAND.

Dear Alex,

This letter will attempt to detail the unfortunate series of events surrounding our recent performance in London. This report is found to be necessary to deal with charges of dishonesty, difficult behaviour and, indeed, theft, which we understand have been made against our dance company and its administrators.

My full report begins as follows:

1. At our first meeting in London in October, 1986, in your office, Paul Lanipekun, yourself and myself discussed the Caribbean Focus 1986, and our possible inclusion in that festival. I was then under the impression that Paul Lanipekun was employed to the Focus/Institute and was the person directly responsible for the dance section of the Caribbean Focus. It was reported that funds were not available to bring L'ACADCO to London in 1986, but if we were able to obtain sponsorship, bookings could be arranged to include us in the Focus as well as other commercial performances in Britain.
2. When we were setting out our 1986 program in December, 1985, I called Paul Lanipekun to enquire how things were progressing at his end. He advised that the response to his initial circular had been disappointing, but that we must continue to plan for a September 1986 visit to London.
3. Paul Lanipekun's letter dated 3rd December arrived mid-January. I should mention here that this letter is written on Commonwealth Institute stationery, and is signed by you on behalf of Paul Lanipekun. Included in this letter is a request for "a letter of management of the tour to facilitate action on the company's behalf, during Focus 1986". Our own management, Colann Limited, insisted that this matter be clarified.

cont

L' Antoinette Stines: Artistic Director/Founder.



4. At this time we were preparing for our trip to Paris, and since we were obliged to pass through London, I contacted Paul Lanipekun by telex to enquire if a performance might be arranged in Britain to a) assist with funds which were in short supply, and, b) act as L'ACADCO's introduction to London audiences, which performance, having received good reviews, would provide ammunition to solicit financial assistance for the return trip. It was further mentioned that even if a performance could not be arranged, our Artistic Director, L'Antoinette and myself would stop over in London to discuss Focus and receive clarification required by Colann Limited on the management letter.
5. Paul Lanipekun called advising that a performance had been arranged at the Commonwealth Institute Arts Theater for the sum of /1,500.00, and a one-day workshop for our Artistic Director, at a fee of /100.00.
6. It was explained to Paul Lanipekun that, under the conditions of the special Apex fare on which the group was travelling, a stop-over penalty of /50.00 per ticket, or, for twelve persons, /600.00 would be charged by British Airways, and that this sum would be required by us immediately on arrival as we had planned to return to Kingston the morning after the performance.
7. When asked about accomodation, Paul Lanipekun advised that 'the Council' had provided a house to accomodate groups participating in Focus, and that 'the Council' was charging /5.00 per person, per night, or, for our visit a total of /240.00. The rate seemed reasonable for accomodation in which we could cook, bathe, and sleep in comfort and security. The sentence, "L'ACADCO will receive /750.00 in its hands after expenses", was used several times.
8. Dennis Alexander of Black Dance Circuit, and Paul Lanipekun met us at the airport, and Paul Lanipekun took us to the Council house at 39 Jeffreys Road. It was then that we discovered that the gas had not been connected and that, although the rooms had been carpeted and painted, the house was unclean, one toilet did not flush properly and the temperature was extremely cold. In London the day of our arrival the temperature was -7° during the day, and would therefore be significantly lower in the evening hours. For persons coming from the tropics, this is a painful experience.

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9. We re-arranged the beds to obtain the most economical use of the three small electric heaters which had been provided, but we were still unable to relieve ourselves of the heavy outdoor clothing in order to try to keep warm. We further discovered that, as there was no gas, there was also no hot water in which to bathe, nor cooking facilities to prepare food. The disappointment and discouragement was seen on the faces of the dancers.
10. It was only when Paul Lanipekun, myself and the Artistic Director settled down for a discussion of the performance and the up-coming tour that we requested clarification on the request for the latter of management. It was agreed that such a letter could only come from Colann Limited, who no doubt would require additional information.
11. It was then too, that we were presented with the following expenses by Paul Lanipekun, which he said were to be paid out of the £750.00 we were to receive 'in our hands':
 - a) Coach rental from the airport - £90.00
 - b) Rental of Brixton Recreational Studio for class and rehearsal - £10.00
 - c) Rental of the house - £205.00
 - d) Approximately £114.00 to transport members and sets back to the airport, by train from Brixton
 - e) Snacks consisting of crackers, bread, cheese etc. which had been supplied - £30.00
 - f) Cost to video the performance - £125.00
12. Lanipekun left that evening stating he would try to obtain 'hospitality funds' to assist in providing us with more funds, and arranged to meet us the next morning with the £600.00 required to re-write the tickets.
13. The Artistic Director and myself decided that, unless the terms and conditions of the initial agreement were adhered to, we were not going to perform on the 19th February.
14. After discussion, argument and negotiation, Paul Lanipekun agreed to take care of all our expenses in London and provide us with £1,100 in our hands.
15. It was during this last round of discussion that I heard of the expenditure allegedly made by Paul Lanipekun on ~~a~~ personal account, he complaining that he was 'out of pocket'. I stated that, clearly, he could not have expected L'ACADCO to be responsible for any such expenditure, not having any knowledge of these matters, not had we given any instruction to spend money. Under the circumstances, it would have been impossible for us to pay any of the bills undertaken by Paul Lanipekun.

16. It was at this meeting also that we discovered that he was operating his own promotional company, the name of which is still unknown to me, and that the cheque from the Black Dance Circuit had been made out to his company. It must be clearly understood that, up until that time, we had been under the impression that Paul Lanipekun was operating as an employee of the Commonwealth Institute. Up until that time, all correspondence had been sent to and from the Institute, all calls made to and from the Institute and the telex message I sent to him, was sent to the Institute.
17. We met Anita Brevelde and Tommy Pinnock who had come to accompany L'Antoinette to a radio interview. During conversation, when asked how we were fairing, we spoke of the extremely cold accomodation and our concern that dancers might suffer from torn or pulled muscles.
18. They were obviously shocked at the treatment we had received, and intimated that certain other matters required investigation as they related to agreements between Lanipekun and themselves. They offered their apologies, stating that London and the Black Dance Circuit had never intended that dancers be treated in this way, and accomodation at the Hillgate Hotel and a hot meal - all at their expense.
19. This offer, as you can appreciate, was received with great enthusiasm, and we quickly evacuated the house, which by this time had become known as 'the tomb', and had ourselves re-installed in the Hillgate.
20. After listening to allegations and counter allegations, it became obvious that L'ACADCO had found itself in the center of several political and opportunistic affairs, and, at this stage, all we wished to do was perform well and return to Kingston before getting further involved.
21. We were provided with funds from the Black Dance Circuit to pay for our re-ticketing and were advised that a 'stop-payment' order had been placed on the cheque given to Paul Lanipekun. Further, they undertook to settle the balance owing to us as per the original arrangement. This they did do.
22. I had to leave London the morning of the 20th when a meeting of all concerned parties was held. L'ACADCO was represented by L'Antoinette.

23. It was at this meeting that, for the first time, L'ACADCO viewed a contract between the G.L.C./Black Dance Circuit and L'ACADCO, dated 13th February, and signed for and on behalf of L'ACADCO by Paul Lanipekun. At no time had authority been given for this action, not indeed, had he requested any such authority during conversations with me while we were in Paris.

I very much regret that this letter has had to be written and that it is, of necessity, long and wordy. This is my attempt to be fair and accurate.

In closing, I wish to re-iterate the following points:

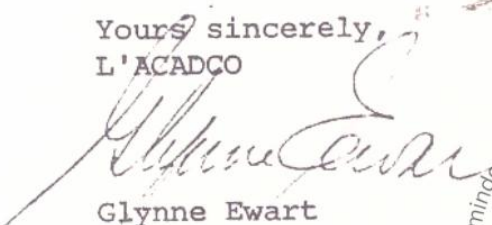
- a) we were under the impression, prior to arrival in London, that we were being brought to Britain in February by the Commonwealth Institute. You will appreciate that this belief allowed us a certain amount of trust that we would be well taken care of.
- b) we did not agree, verbally or otherwise, to have Paul Lanipekun and/or his company represent us.
- c) we deny categorically, any accusation of unprofessionalism, dishonest or difficult behaviour, and indeed, as the Black Dance Circuit staff will attest, all things considered, we operated on an extremely accomodating and co-operative manner, and provided a top quality performance at the Theater.

It is hoped that this letter will sharpen the eyes of those involved in the various arts organisations in Britain in order that a similar situation does not arise with yet another young, inexperienced, naive and trusting group from overseas. In particular, the Institute should ensure that its position is not compromised in any way.

Finally, I would be grateful if you would advise us of the situation vis-a-vis the Caribbean Focus 1986, our invitation to participate and our initial acceptance. Clearly, if we are required to work with or through Paul Lanipekun for this festival, we will not be able to do so.

Please accept my very best regards,

Yours sincerely,
L'ACADCO


Glynne Ewart
Artistic Co-Ordinator

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This letter/report has been circulated to the following:

cc: Paul Lanipekun
Anita Breveld - Black Dance Circuit
Dennis Alexander - Black Dance Circuit
Janet Mignot - Attorney-at-Law
Colann Limited - Management Company
British High Commission - Kingston