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The Culture, Media and Sport Committee

The Culture, Media and Sport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and its associated public bodies.

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Taken before the Culture, Media and Sport Committee

on Tuesday 14 October 2003

Members present:

Mr Gerald Kaufman, in the Chair

Mr Chris Bryant
Mr Frank Doran
Michael Fabricant

Mr Adrian Flook
Alan Keen
John Thurso

Memorandum submitted by the Bridewell Theatre

ISSUES

- Does the UK need non-commercial development of musical theatre?
- Is there sufficient emphasis on the development of musical theatre as a genre within the UK Arts funding process?

SUMMARY

- Musical Theatre as an art form makes a significant contribution to the UK economy.
- Development of new musical theatre work is however at best sporadic and there is no specific public funding available for the genre.
- We believe development is necessary if musical theatre is to continue to make a contribution to the artistic and financial life of the UK.
- The Bridewell Theatre, unique in the UK for its focus on the presentation and production of high quality new musical theatre writing, is under threat of closure.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSICAL THEATRE TO THE UK?

Musical theatre is the most popular live art form in the world and in the UK it earns for the Treasury at least £50 million each year from the VAT on theatre tickets and the national insurance contributions of people working in the mainstream musical theatre industry alone. Theatre is one of the main reasons why tourists visit this country and musical theatre has a particular appeal for tourists as it transcends language barriers. It is likely that the country earns at least as much again from the money spent by these theatre-goers on hotel accommodation, transport, food and shopping.

Musical theatre is a form with a long and glorious history because of its powerful emotional appeal to a diverse audience; from Greek drama to pop videos, the conjunction of music and drama has proved a potent combination as a means of self-expression and artistic communication. Musical theatre has therefore the potential to be one of the most inclusive genres available to us and one that, in our multi-cultural society, should be capable of producing significant and powerful theatre.

OUR PERCEPTION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF MUSICAL THEATRE IN THE UK

As a way of highlighting the key issues faced, we have taken a look at what is running in the West End as we write this piece. Currently 50% of the drama work being presented is new writing, whereas the equivalent figure for musical theatre is less than 20% (and this includes *The Lion King* as “new writing”!). This contrast would be made yet greater if we were to include the many off West End and fringe venues in London. It is also worth noting the situation on Broadway where 50% of the musical theatre work on offer is new writing, a percentage that would be greatly increased if off-Broadway venues were to be included in that calculation.

Is this a problem? We believe that it is and that it is representative of a wider issue for the UK as a whole. The amount of new work on offer in any art form is surely a reflection of the health of that art form. It is therefore ironic that the genre that delivers the most, in financial terms, to the UK economy and has proven potential to communicate with a diversity of people, is the one that appears to be in the worst state of health.

There are a variety of reasons for this. Undoubtedly West End producers will say that the financial risks involved in producing new musical theatre work are considerable—and they are. However, we believe that a significant factor is the lack of exciting new work being written. This contrasts sharply with the situation in drama where there are many publicly-funded programmes that support new writing initiatives. These programmes have two benefits: not only do they produce a substantial amount of new writing, a proportion of which will be of sufficient quality to be developed into drama capable of commercial production but also they encourage succeeding generations of writers to feel that writing for theatre is an exciting and artistically fulfilling option.

No such virtuous pyramid exists for musical theatre. At present the development of musical theatre in the UK is limited to isolated initiatives by commercial producers, small privately supported organisations and some limited activity from funded organisations.

WHY DOES MUSICAL THEATRE NEED NON-COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT?

Commercial development of an art form is led by what is perceived to be saleable at any given moment but generally takes little account of the artist's wish to express their experiences or to communicate the changing dynamic of society. Without new writing or development, an art form will become moribund, cease to reflect contemporary society and will ultimately die out. This is of course the key reason for supporting the development of any art form and it is to avoid such a fate overtaking musical theatre that we would contend that specific non-commercial funding of musical theatre needs to be undertaken.

With very little truly innovative work being produced, the genre is already perceived in certain quarters as a medium solely of escapism with little to say that has any contemporary resonance. As audiences in the West End dwindle, commercial producers will increasingly seek to take fewer risks with their productions. Elements that are perceived to be needed for commercial success (eg celebrities rather than actors, technical gimmicks and retro-music) will all be employed, which inevitably narrows the creative possibilities. This may work in the short-term but in the longer term there is a significant risk that the talent and skills required to produce new musical theatre work will disappear or be applied elsewhere. There is already evidence that this is happening. Few young and talented composers, lyricist or playwrights consider musical theatre as a medium for creative expression because the shows currently being produced appear irrelevant to their concerns and experiences.

Support for the arts consistently recognises that the nurturing of talent is essential if the future life of any art form is to be secured. This is particularly necessary for musical theatre where the financial risks involved in major productions are so high. It therefore becomes imperative that opportunities be created in which artistic risks can be taken and creative talent nurtured.

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR MUSICAL THEATRE DEVELOPMENT

At present the Arts Council does not define musical theatre as being in a separate category from theatre in general. This results in musical theatre, unlike other forms (eg physical theatre, performance art, opera, ballet) having no dedicated funds available to it, nor even having the advice and assistance of a dedicated arts officer. This may be because musical theatre has been seen as a commercial form and therefore it has been felt that development work could be left to that sector. Perhaps it has been a matter of priorities. Whatever the reason, unfortunately this has tended to trap the genre in the past, or at best in the present for, as we have already noted, the commercial producer has little incentive to explore the experimental.

As things are currently organised, applications for musical theatre must compete with drama for the limited resources of the theatre department, which we believe is disadvantageous for the genre. Musical theatre is a significantly more expensive art form than most drama; cast sizes tend to be larger, a band is often required, generally a larger creative team is necessary and the technical requirements can often be more complex. Musical theatre projects do not therefore appear to deliver the same value for money as drama projects and in an environment of limited resources, such projects are consequently less likely to be funded.

It must be said that the new Arts Council structure and grant-making process does appear to go some way to help the situation. However, this is a very recent change and it remains to be seen what impact it will have. Whilst a small amount of musical theatre development does get funded through the more general funding programmes available, there are still, we understand, no funds specifically earmarked for musical theatre development or any officers specifically focused on it. We believe this is necessary if the issues outlined above are to be overcome and the required step change in the quantity and quality of development work is to be achieved. At the moment, starved of resources, non-commercial musical theatre development is at a minimal level. A number of small organisations have attempted to address this problem with programmes and workshops for new writers but with little resources available to produce the resultant work, these initiatives have had limited results.

THE ROLE OF THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE

The Bridewell Theatre is among this small group of organisations trying to address this problem and within this group has a unique position as the only theatre that has the presentation and production of new musical theatre as one of its prime aims. Over two-thirds of the Bridewell's annual evening programme is musical theatre, which for us includes contemporary opera, operetta, classical musical revivals and new writing. Of the musical theatre shows presented, over 50% is new writing.

The Bridewell Theatre was founded with the intention of creating a venue where musical theatre in its many forms could be developed. From the start musical theatre was the focal point of our programme and within three months of opening we produced our first musical, *Pacific Overtures*, a show whose innovative subject matter and structure was indicative of the direction in which we wished to proceed.

Although at first, as we built an audience for a new venue, we concentrated on producing revivals of classics from the music theatre repertoire, as soon as we felt able to take the financial risk involved we began producing new work. In nine years we have produced nine new musicals ourselves and hosted productions of eight others. We also have hosted and initiated workshops of work in progress and show-cased new work from all over the world.

The choice of the actual shows we have produced has at all times been governed by a wish to present the best and most innovative work available. This has meant that the majority of these shows have been American, hardly surprising when one considers the extent of development work undertaken there compared to the almost negligible amount happening in the UK. Musicals such as *Floyd Collins*, *Hello Again* and *The Ballad of Little Jo* have taken musical theatre forward through the originality of their structure and themes. We now have the proven production and dramaturgical skills to help us offer writers and composers a variety of developmental opportunities ranging from workshops and readings in which skills can be honed and ideas tested, to a full-scale production with a view to assessment, or a first production leading to a tour or West End run.

It is not only writers who value such opportunities. We have constant proof that actors, designers and other creative theatre professionals highly value the unique opportunity provided by the Bridewell to be involved in cutting-edge work. The Bridewell is almost unique in offering talented actors the opportunity to gain experience and be seen in challenging leading musical roles. Many such opportunities exist for actors in drama but besides the work done here, almost none in musical theatre, where actors typically find themselves playing the umpteenth unreviewed manifestation of a character in a long running blockbuster.

A VISION FOR OUR FUTURE

There is much exciting work that we are impatient to do. At the most basic level the definition of what constitutes musical theatre needs to be reassessed to include work that takes its inspiration from a much wider variety of musical and dramatic sources. New writers need to be encouraged to create works that push at the old frontiers. The Bridewell has initiated some of these developments and we plan to continue in the vanguard of this work.

Our ultimate aim is to be able to present a varied programme of work inspired by a diversity of sources which would illustrate the range, power, exuberance and sheer joy of musical theatre. By producing work in-house we would hope to maintain the high standard of production essential to give new work the best chance.

PARTNERSHIPS

Of recent years we have begun to build important artistic partnerships with many companies whose work fits with our artistic aims. Our future plans include establishing structured development opportunities for new writers and artists in which some of these companies as well as potential new partners would join us. We are particularly focused on opening up musical theatre to those groups within our community who have to date not seen this genre as relevant to them. Our current work includes providing developmental opportunities for writers and practitioners, providing free workshop space and in selected cases, mounting a presentation workshop to attract the support of producers. In 2002 the Bridewell was awarded a "Composer in Residence" grant by the PRS Foundation to allow a young writer to spend a year working with us and also an Arts Council grant to produce a programme of new work by young writers.

DEVELOPMENT WORK

If we can achieve the necessary funding we would wish to initiate a network and forum for experienced writers and composers who at present do not have their work represented within what is currently defined as "musical theatre". We have already approached a group of writers and composers from a wide variety of cultural and social backgrounds, currently not writing for the genre, who have expressed enthusiasm for doing so in the context of a more adventurous definition of what might constitute musical theatre. We should

also want to provide specifically skills based workshops for new writers who have not previously had access to such an opportunity. We would wish to ensure that a good proportion of those taking part were from groups who are currently under-represented in musical theatre.

At all stages it would be important to set standards for work to be publicly shown. While this may sound prescriptive, musical theatre in Britain has suffered badly from mediocrity being presented as major achievement!

WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Our aim through a development programme would be to find and help develop the next generation of musical theatre writers, actors and audiences. We would hope their experience at the Bridewell would encourage them to widen their view of what constitutes musical theatre and that they would thus be inspired to create, participate in or attend musicals whose structure and subject matter reflects fully the diversity of European society and brings a much needed excitement to the genre. Eventually we would hope that work would be created which would indeed be the next generation of musical theatre and could find its place in the West End and other major theatres at home or abroad.

Musical Theatre should be a rich and constantly surprising medium that can encompass work from many musical and dramatic sources. Our hope is that we can continue to offer a lead in this, pointing the way to a vibrant, innovative future. Such an ambitious programme could only ever be accomplished in the setting of a place, a venue, where the artistic vision allowed the requisite time, space and resources to be focused on it. This is our vision, we hope that the Bridewell Theatre will survive to be that place.

WHAT THE PRESS HAVE SAID ABOUT THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE

Here are just a few comments that have been made by the press about the work of the Bridewell Theatre. All of the comments below were made about shows that have been both presented and produced by the Bridewell Theatre.

"The Bridewell looks to be our best hope for new musical stagings into the new century" (The Spectator—Floyd Collins—July 1999)

"What other place in London is really imaginative about music theatre? The Bridewell consistently goes out on a limb with its musicals. It's amazing really. If you took away the tiny Bridewell—London Music theatre would be hugely diminished." (The Observer—November 1999)

"You can bet that where the Bridewell dares, the West End will eventually follow" (The Guardian—On A Clear Day—January 2000)

"The ever-enterprising Bridewell—a theatre that is almost single-handedly keeping British music theatre on beat . . . a triumph" (The Guardian—Hello Again—March 2001)

"The Bridewell continues its magnificent mission to introduce diverse styles, performers and especially writers of musical theatre with this eclectic show . . . exhilarating" (The Stage—Agent Provocateur—August 2001)

"If we are serious in this country about music theatre then the Bridewell is not a venue we can do without." (The Guardian—The Ballad of Little Jo—July 2003)

Annex A

WHAT THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE FACES TODAY

THE ST BRIDE FOUNDATION

Since the inception of the Bridewell, we have received very generous support from the St Bride Foundation, the owners of the building in which we are located. This has come in form of an annual subvention of £40,000, rent-free status as well as many one-off grants supporting individual projects, in particular our in-house productions. Today their funding represents some 60% of our total contributed income and 25% of our total income.

However, we have recently been given notice by the St Bride Foundation, that not only will their annual subvention cease on 31 March 2004, but also, from 1 April 2004, we will be required to pay a full rent of £75,000 pa. We understand that this notice has been given as a direct result of the Foundation's loss of support from the Corporation of London for the St Bride Printing Library, which is currently housed upstairs in the St Bride Institute. As a result of receiving this notice, the theatre's trustees felt that we had no option but to give one years notice on our lease so that we would not have an obligation to pay rent with no firm funding in place to pay it.

Furthermore, we understand that the St Bride Foundation is in discussions with the Corporation of London in order to transfer the ownership of the St Bride Printing Library collection from the Corporation to the Foundation back to the St Bride Foundation (was originally transferred to the Corporation of

London in 1966). The expected result of a successful conclusion of these discussions is that the St Bride Foundation will seek to redevelop the site so that appropriate disabled access can be made available for the building. The St Bride Foundation believe that they will need a commercial element to this redevelopment to provide capital funds and ongoing annual income and as a result they do not expect to be able to provide sufficient space for the Bridewell's operation to continue at the St Bride Institute.

CURRENT POSITION

The Bridewell Theatre is therefore in the position that:

- In the short-term we will lose our venue from 1 April 2004 unless we are able to raise approximately an additional £100,000 per annum.
- In the medium to long term, even if the short-term issue is resolved, we must either find alternate premises for our work or raise sufficient capital to persuade the St Bride Foundation that there is no need for the commercial element to their redevelopment and therefore space can be made available for the theatre.

Annex B

A HISTORY OF THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE

The Bridewell Theatre was founded in 1994 in the derelict swimming pool hall of the St Bride Foundation Institute by theatre director, Carol Metcalfe, who chanced on the space while searching for a show venue for her newly formed theatre company, Breach of the Piece. Although she had no plans to start a theatre, Carol saw such potential in the beautiful swimming pool hall with its wrought iron staircases, sweeping balconies and pitched glass roof that she set about persuading the Foundation to assist her in starting a theatre there.

The Institute itself was built in 1894 to provide "social and educational facilities for the workers of Fleet Street". In the nineteenth century the workers of Fleet Street were the printers who set the print and turned the presses to produce the nation's top newspapers; these days the workers of Fleet Street are the employees of companies like Goldman Sachs, KPMG, Reuters and Unilever but although the jobs have changed, the need for recreation remains. The Foundation saw that a theatre would assist in fulfilling their charitable mandate and therefore agreed to support the conversion of the Victorian swimming pool into a theatre.

From its earliest days the Bridewell Theatre was hailed as one of the most exciting and atmospheric theatre spaces in the capital. The theatre is a flexible space in which shows can be presented in a variety of stage formats: thrust, traverse, in-the-round, as well as several variations on the end-on set up. The old pool still exists under the stage floor and can be used to provide an orchestra pit, trap doors and different stage levels and although the seating capacity is limited to a maximum of approximately 175, the stage area can be comparable with that available at some West End theatres. In 1999 the adjacent Laundry Room, complete with Victorian washing machine and spin drier, was converted into the theatre bar with the aid of an Arts Council Lottery grant.

Amidst all this history the Bridewell set about creating its own. Inspired by the ideas of two of Breach of the Piece's founder members, Clive Paget and Tim Sawers, who had long wished to experiment with producing musicals on an intimate scale, the Bridewell took the first step towards filling that "gap in the market" and becoming the specialist theatre it now is. Just three months after its opening it presented the second London production of Stephen Sondheim's groundbreaking musical, *Pacific Overtures*. This achieved our aim of being a theatre specialising in that sector of theatre where drama and music come together ie musical theatre, contemporary opera, and drama with music. Becoming a centre for development and experimentation in the genre, took a little longer!

During the first two years the focus had to be on establishing the Theatre's existence by keeping the doors open. A wide variety of work was presented: Shakespeare to capture a schools audience, experimental drama, an anarchic literary and arts festival hosted by writer Ian Sinclair, jazz nights with Jacqui Dankworth, the Royal Shakespeare Company's annual fringe festival, Alex Kingston starring in an acclaimed production of *The Lady from The Sea*, touring opera and cabaret performances. To provide a specific link to our uniquely City based audience Lunchbox Theatre was established in 1995 and has continued ever since, as much part of City life at Ludgate Circus as the local Prêt A Manger. Lunchbox Theatre serves up a bite-sized piece, no longer than 50 minutes, of drama, comedy, or musical theatre Tuesday to Friday at 1pm. Over the years it has developed a loyal audience who enjoy the diversity of our programme of which more than 50% is new writing.

By the theatre's second birthday in January 1996, it was time to put another marker in the sand and the first of the Bridewell's classic revivals, *Damn Yankees*, was presented. Such was the scale of the critical acclaim for this production that its composer, Richard Adler, flew in from the USA to see what all the fuss was about: fortunately he declared himself delighted! To build on this success that summer a three show season of American Musicals was presented: Burt Bacharach and Hal David's *Promises, Promises*, *On The Twentieth Century* by Coleman, Comden and Green and *Romance*, *Romance* by Keith Herrman and Barry Harman. The season was a tremendous success in putting the Bridewell on the capital's theatrical map and

the in-house production *On The Twentieth Century* achieved rave reviews even surpassing those received for *Damn Yankees*. To complete the success the London premiere show, *Romance Romance*, made it into the West End for a run at the Gielgud Theatre the following spring. At the end of 1996 the Bridewell won a Peter Brook Award for its outstanding contribution to Musical Theatre and Carol Metcalfe was named by *The Times* newspaper as the “up and coming” theatrical personality of the year.

1997 began with the starting of the Bridewell Youth Theatre. We regarded, and still regard, this work as part of our artistic output and from the start the emphasis for participants was on inspiration, self-expression and acquiring the skills to make that expression as effective as possible. Several of the members of our Youth Theatre have gone on to successful careers in theatre but of equal value are the achievements of those who tell us that the inspiration of their time at the Bridewell has led them into a happier place in their lives. Over the years BYT has produced some extraordinary work which has been an important inspiration to the grown-ups!

As a result of the success of its production of *Pacific Overtures* the Bridewell had made contact with Stephen Sondheim who had visited the theatre and become its Patron. In 1997 the theatre was privileged to be given by the composer the rights to present his first ever, as yet unseen, musical *Saturday Night*. This world premiere production attracted enormous attention, received excellent reviews and the Bridewell Theatre Company went on to make the original cast recording. On the back of all these successes it was clearly time to initiate the next step in making the Bridewell a place where musicals could be developed and experimentation occur. In 1998 therefore we produced our first new musical, *Eyam* by Andrew Peggie and Stephen Clark. This interesting piece told the story of the coming of the plague to Derbyshire in 1620, it was a thoughtful show tackling a subject very different from those generally then associated with musicals and indicated the Bridewell’s wish to produce the best cutting edge work available. The summer season that year also included *The Best of Times* a compilation of the work of Jerry Herman that transferred to the Vaudeville Theatre for a short season.

Undertaking the production of new work however involves considerably more financial risk than producing the more immediately popular revivals, our reputation had grown at a prodigious rate but the theatre’s administrative structure was still that of a fringe theatre. With Carol as Artistic Director and Jacqui Coghlan, Administrator, the Bridewell had run with a very small staff but it was clear that the theatre’s artistic aims now required a more sophisticated administrative structure. Carol therefore asked her two long-time collaborators, Clive Paget and Tim Sawers, to join the staff of the theatre. Clive, who had been following his acting and directing career, had already been Associate Director for over a year, while Tim had been pursuing his “alternative career” as a business consultant within the gas industry. Leaving behind a nought from his annual salary, Tim took over as the Executive Director of the Bridewell and set about restructuring the organisation to help support the theatre’s artistic ambitions.

With the support of this organisational development, the year that followed was one of the most productive in the Bridewell’s history and we were able to produce work representing the full range of the theatre and music we wished to promote. We ventured into small scale opera with a double-bill of Michael Nyman’s opera: *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* paired with Tom Stoppard’s *After Magritte*, presented two outstanding new plays *Higher Than Babel* by local Q.C. Andrew Caldecott and the European premiere of *Nixon’s Nixon*, the UK premiere production of *On A Clear Day You Can see Forever*, a production of Gershwin’s *Of Thee I Sing* that broke our box office records and, representing new musical theatre writing, the European premiere of *Floyd Collins* by Adam Guettel and Tina Landau. Each of these shows received excellent reviews and *Nixon’s Nixon* went off on a world tour eventually coming into the Comedy Theatre for a successful run in 2001. It was *Floyd Collins* however that showed most clearly where we were going. The production, directed by Clive Paget, of this groundbreaking piece was chosen by the Observer as one of the top ten productions of the year and the theatre won a second Peter Brook Award.

2000 brought a wonderful promenade production of Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd* and David Kernan (the inspiration behind *Side by Side by Sondheim*) devised a new Sondheim celebration, *Moving On* to mark the composer’s 70th birthday. A concert series, *The Cutting Edge*, *The Best of British* and *All the Way from America*, was devised to showcase the best new writing from both sides of the Atlantic. One of these, *The Cutting Edge*, proved such a powerful work that it transferred to the Donmar Theatre for two performances in early September and was again revived at the first International Festival of Musical Theatre in Cardiff in the autumn of 2002.

During the following year we produced the European premieres of Michael John LaChiusa’s *Hello Again* and of Jason Robert Brown’s *Songs for a New World*. We were proud that these productions, together with the production of *Floyd Collins*, meant that we had been responsible for bringing to London the work of three of the most creative composers currently working in musical theatre. It was also satisfying that our work continued to receive outstanding plaudits for its quality. This did not mean that life at the Bridewell was trouble free, producing new work always requires financial support and especially so when producing musical theatre with its demand for orchestrations, band players and large casts. The following year we decided we must husband our finances and therefore limited our in-house productions to two devised pieces celebrating different aspects of the work of Sondheim, *There’s Always A Woman* and *The Road You Didn’t Take*. Both these shows were great critical successes and tours of them are already lined up.

2003 began with the box office success of *Anyone Can Whistle* and with the award from London Arts of a grant for a development production. Perhaps unsurprisingly, public funders have been hard to convince that anyone producing musical theatre could be short of money: they have regarded this area of theatre as solely commercial. The funded project which involves three very different types of musical theatre writing, is the work of young writers from both sides of the Atlantic, it will be premiered in the autumn of 2003. Before this we have produced a show *The Ballad of Little Jo* with which we have been involved several years. Finding sufficient financial support has been a long business so it is satisfying that after all the effort the production has been greeted with outstanding reviews and hailed by many as the best new musical to be seen in London for several years.

The Bridewell is one of only three theatres in the City area of London, the other two being in the Barbican Centre, and is the only City theatre with a resident producing company. In London the Bridewell is unique in being the only London theatre whose artistic focus is on the development of musical theatre. In its relatively short life we have become a flourishing part of the capital's theatre scene. Our artistic aims are as clear today as they were ten years ago. We aim to continue to fulfil them.

26 September 2003

Witnesses: **Mr Robert Cogo-Fawcett**, Chair, **Ms Carol Metcalfe**, Artistic Director, **Mr Tim Sawers**, Executive Director and **Ms Janie Dee**, Artiste, the Bridewell Theatre, examined.

Q1 Chairman: Thank you very much indeed for coming. I ought to explain that people will be coming in and out because, when we decided to hold this inquiry on this date (which was the only day we had for it), we did not take due account of the fact that this is the first day back from the recess; that this is a day when the House meets at 2.30 and, therefore, people are travelling down and, in addition to that, colleagues have meetings. May I assure you that the Committee as a whole takes this inquiry very seriously and we welcome the correspondence we had which led to it. I believe Mr Cogo-Fawcett would like to make an introductory statement and we would like to hear that.

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: Thank you very much, and thank you for inviting us here. What makes the Bridewell unique in London's theatrical index is the fact that it alone is dedicated to the development of musical theatre and musical artistes of all kinds: composers, directors, choreographers, dancers, singers and actors. London has a number of theatres dedicated to new drama—the Bush, Hampstead Theatre Club, the Soho Theatre and so on. There are also a large number of subsidised theatres around the country which, like the Royal National Theatre, occasionally produce musicals. The motives for doing so, however, are often pecuniary. Because the genre is generally considered populist, subsidised production values can often produce substantial box office income in times of need. Moreover, the transfer rate of musicals is good and they often provide an ongoing income stream for the originating house; but new musicals are also comparatively expensive to produce. Their development process can be long, highly experimental and therefore costly; and the quality of risk involved in their presentation incompatible with the potential rewards. The subsidised playhouse may also not have readily available the skills needed to develop musical work until it is stage-worthy. These factors make new musicals a comparative rarity in the country's subsidised theatrical environment. The Bridewell Theatre has been in existence for ten years and in the last five has produced and presented over 71 productions—27 of these have been new musicals

and six new operas. It has also presented 18 musical and opera revivals, as well as 12 new dramas and eight drama revivals. These productions have been a mixture of its own work and that of other producers and presenters. It has developed a reputation on both sides of the Atlantic as a nursery for the musical as an art form. We have occupied the refurbished swimming pool on the ground level of St Bride's Institute free of charge for the last ten years; but the Corporation of London's annual revenue support for the St Bride's Printing Library, housed within the Institute, is to cease in March of next year. The rent paid by the Corporation for the space the library occupies has allowed the Institute to provide free premises and £40,000 subvention to the Theatre annually. The cessation of the subsidy together with the demands of the Disability Discrimination Act on an elderly building have effectively caused the Institute to need to charge us £72,000 rent and to stop the subsidy altogether. Our formal tenure will therefore come to an end in March, although were we to make good the shortfall of rent and subsidy the Institute could continue to afford us temporary accommodation in the building until their redevelopment of the premises takes place. There is a long-term straw of comfort for us in that we have the opportunity to become a beneficiary of the planning gain from the Mermaid redevelopment. That money—and £2 million is the sum which has been mentioned—could secure us new premises; but the timing of the development of that site is subject to matters beyond our control and it is possible we might not exist by the time it comes to fruition. The Arts Council is sympathetic to our plight yet despite past attempts we have never been accepted as a regular annual revenue client with core funding. Despite a number of recent project awards from the Arts Council our failure to have an ongoing relationship has hugely weakened our case with our stakeholders. Yet musical theatre has been a Cinderella of our principal arts funding body throughout its history. Their definition of music theatre being the theatrical presentation of music with classical roots rarely encompasses the form we would call musical theatre, and therefore we have

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been unable to benefit from this highly focused funding. The very success of musicals, the fact that their commercial success when it does occur is so conspicuous, substantially weakens the case for the subvention of its development. I am not suggesting for a moment that musicals should be supported once they have arrived in a commercial context; but I would argue that without the application of adequate financial resources in the early stages of creative development one risks stunting growth or denying it altogether. This cannot be right for a section of the British theatre industry which is so vital to tourism and has attracted a wealth of sub-industries around it like a honeypot. If theatres such as the Bridewell do not exist as key strategic components in the national development of musical theatre to provide the artistic leadership and mentoring, as well as the environments for challenge, training and learning, musical form will continue to lag behind that of Broadway. Of 22 Broadway theatres currently open ten are occupied by new musicals without music and script created specifically for them. In the West End's 41 theatres there are two such musicals that are less than ten years' old which began their life in the United Kingdom. I would suggest that the writing is on the wall. The opportunities to experiment both at the workshop and the presentational stage can only sensibly exist in fringe theatres with small seating capacities like our own, where the scale of risk is so diminished that the financial consequences of failure are temporary and less meaningful. It is its very scale which makes us useful but which hampers our financial viability. In the meantime the Bridewell has a very immediate crisis to face and £112,000 per year to find if it is stay in its current premises albeit temporarily. I hope the result of today's inquiry may give us grounds for hoping for a future.

Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. I will ask Mr Fabricant to start the questioning.

Q2 Michael Fabricant: First of all, how many seats do you have?

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: 180 seats.

Q3 Michael Fabricant: Do you think there is a future, short of subsidy, for any theatre with just 180 seats? Or do you think you are being a little purist in the sort of programming you are doing and maybe, between the redevelopment of the Mermaid and you not receiving subsidy, you should perhaps adapt your programming to be more populist or at least attract more support?

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: We are not short of support, but I know of no other 180-seat theatre which exists without subsidy. We attract sponsorship. We attract houses which I do not think any subsidised theatre would be ashamed of. We play to above 60% average per year. Musicals are populist, simply because of the form. Musical theatre is popular theatre and attracts a level of attendance that we would expect; but the fact that we have to be experimental (because the very policy of the company is to encourage new

work) it is that which suggests—on 180 seats even were we to fill all of them every day of the week—we would still not make money.

Q4 Michael Fabricant: Certainly I would not wish to see the Bridewell Theatre close, but you have painted rather a gloomy picture as to its future. I am just wondering whether you are being flexible enough in the sort of performances you put on not only to attract an audience but also to attract additional funding from the Arts Council. You have pointed out yourself the difficulty of attracting funding given the sort of repertoire you have?

Mr Sawers: What you are saying pulls in two directions. If one were to be more populist in our programming then we would be less likely to attract support from the Arts Council. I think the two things go in opposite directions. Like all of these things, one has to try and achieve a balance. We have always felt it is desperately important for musical theatre writing in this country and the art form as a whole to present the best of new writing that is around. Inevitably new writing means more risk; means that you can struggle with audiences more than you would do otherwise; but that is surely the process of support structures that exist within the UK arts funding, a system to support just that kind of endeavour.

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: We have seen ourselves, and continue to see ourselves, very much as a training ground, not just as a training ground for young artists but because of the structure of the profession in which we live, and because musical theatre is almost entirely commercially based, it is very difficult for artists who have been in the business for 10 or 15 years to get the kind of practice they need to get, and to get the refreshment they need. I wonder if Janie Dee would like to talk a little bit about that for us.

Ms Dee: I met Carol about ten years ago when she opened the Bridewell. By chance I came upon her and saw the space in its pure form before she changed it into a theatre, and it was already a beautiful space. In the last ten years I have seen that develop into a theatre that has so much versatility as a space and yet you are asking what the Bridewell Theatre is. Its impression and image, for us as artistes particularly, is that it is a place where you go to do new musical theatre work. Also it has a huge audience following. It is very clear in their minds, "We can go to the Bridewell to see something we won't see anywhere else". It is not populist in that way; it is not commercial theatre. I have been paid huge amounts of money to do commercial theatre, and it is very, very nice to be paid a lot, but every now and again I will do something for no money because it is exciting to me as an artiste and I will get some sort of inspiration out of this. It was true recently. I did something last Christmas at the Bridewell and we had such a very artistic time and a good time—it was full as well and everybody came to see it. It was lovely to play to full houses, albeit only 180 seats. It was a fantastic atmosphere, of a type I have never experienced in London. It is unique.

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Q5 Michael Fabricant: Part of the depressing aspect of it all is the point which Mr Cogo-Fawcett made that no theatre with just 180 seats is viable without subsidy. I note the Arts Council says that one of the requirements of core funding is that there has got to be a payment of minimum union rates. I just wonder whether you are being too purist in your repertoire, and if only you could adapt your programme—albeit temporarily until you find new premises or get this additional funding through the sale of the Mermaid—you could at least attract some funding from sources that you do not get at present. Have you looked at these alternatives?

Mr Sawers: I think we look at these alternatives all the time. To give you a clue, as Robert mentioned earlier, regional theatres will often say, “We need a bit of money, let’s do a musical”. We do not take that approach by saying, “Okay, let’s do a populist musical because we know we’ll make some money to subsidise our future”. Because of the economics of 180 seats, even if we sold every single seat we would still lose—

Q6 Michael Fabricant: Even if you attracted Arts Council funding?

Mr Sawers: I am talking about without the subsidy. Even if we sold every single seat we would still lose between £5,000-£10,000. It is not the right route for a theatre of that size. What we exist to do is to provide those experiences Janie was talking about, and to develop new work itself and present that and show that work available and look at the quality of it.

Ms Metcalfe: Obviously I completely take your point about what appears to be a narrowness to what we do. What I want to say is, yes, when I started that theatre you had to get the thing off the ground and had to move the rock. When we started we did all sorts of things. The reason why we had this vision about wanting to develop music theatre was that we looked around and it just was not happening. My inspiration for doing this came from working with young people and seeing the effect of the collision of drama and music on them and the empowerment it gave them—children who would sit around going, “Yeah, Miss”, and suddenly you say, “Make some music, make theatre and put it together”. The whole dynamic that happens—the National Youth Music Theatre, whom you will hear from later, another great organisation inspired by the same thing. Coming from a purely theatrical background doing lots and lots of drama you think, “Here is this wonderful medium which is so exciting and empowering to people”. If you are in the drama field, as I have been, there are so many opportunities to develop new work to get those new ideas across. It is the newness which is important to all of us. If you all think theatre exists and is important it is because it is about explaining humanity to itself. If that has any relevance it is explaining *now* to us and not just the past. You always have to take any art form forward, I would contend. When I came into theatre I was thinking if I wanted to develop new drama there were so many opportunities, so many small companies, writing companies and theatres where I could do that, and suddenly I find this

enthusiasm for musical theatre through working with young people and I think, “Right, let’s take this forward because it is such a wonderful medium”, but where do you do it? There is nothing. Nothing is happening. When I started the Bridewell I had this idea of developing theatre and I was thinking, “Here is the space. My goodness, am I going to be in competition with a whole lot of other people? No. Nobody else is doing it”. It had two prongs to it and one of them was thinking about wanting to develop the art form, and the other was thinking that nobody else was doing it. Yes, we have tried lots of other ways. Yes, perhaps if we had just concentrated on developing new drama, not populist drama but new drama, by now the Arts Council would be funding us—that is indeed possible. If those of us who feel passionately about it leave the medium to founder and say, “Tough, we can’t get money and we won’t do it” then it will die.

Chairman: I think it would be useful to put this situation in its context. If you look at the National Theatre, the National Theatre only operates on a subsidy; and it operates on a level of subsidy which would have the Bridewell swooning in delirium if it got it; but the National Theatre takes far fewer risks than the Bridewell. If you want to go and see musicals which practically any amateur operatic company is performing at any given time, like *Oklahoma* and *Carousel* and even *Anything Goes*, okay, you can go there and they make money and they transfer them. In my view that is not what a national theatre is about. When they do something like *Democracy* which is, let us face it, not all that experimental because it is by a famous and successful playwright, they stow it away in the Cottesloe anyhow in case there is too much risk. My own view, and I am a paying customer at the Bridewell, is that their value is in not doing things that the amateur operatic companies do. They put on the world premiere of Sondheim’s first musical *Saturday Night*, and I had the pleasure of seeing Janie Dee in it. They put on *Anyone Can Whistle* and I thought it was worth staging even though you could see why it closed very quickly.

Mr Bryant: Please do not take that personally!

Q7 Chairman: It is very important people get opportunities to see things like that. What I would put to Michael, as well as to our witnesses, is if you want the extremely facile stuff then there are lots of places in London, including the heavily subsidised National, where you can go and see it. It seems to me what is important about the Bridewell, and in a different way about the Donmar and the Almeida, is that they do things you cannot get to see elsewhere but can turn out to be wonderful experiences. Would you like to answer that?

Ms Dee: I would love to add to that if I may. At the National Theatre Studio I have done a lot of workshops there; the subsidy is substantial and they make good use of their subsidy. They look into all sorts of wonderful projects. Over the ten years I have been involved with the National Theatre I have done two new musical projects. One was initiated by myself and the other one was initiated by some

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friends of mine who write music. It did get a professional production for a couple of days, but that was it. It was not commercial enough evidently, or it did not get the backing. That is just to add to the Chairman's point about heavily subsidised theatres as opposed to completely unsubsidised theatre. The amount of risk-taking is really minimal. Also, I would like to tell you a story about a gig I got at the Barbican last year which was funded by the Corporation of London. It was a wonderful gig. It was to interest people in the huge theatre being made into a cabaret venue where you could go and have dinner and watch an artiste, in this case it was me, doing a cabaret for you. The man who runs it (Gary England a friend of mine) is absolutely brilliant and said, "I think we'll start with acrobats falling from the ceiling; we'll have this amazing music; then the curtain will go up slowly; then the chandeliers will come down; the dinner will be brought to them; and then we will say, "Ladies and gentlemen, come up". They did this and it was fantastic. When I got back to my dressing room I had a huge bottle of champagne, glasses, roses and everything. I thought, "This is how you dream of it being". At the Bridewell somebody had given some lights which had gone wrong somewhere else and they had said, "You can use them at the Bridewell", but actually they were brilliant and they worked, for no money. We got back to our dressing rooms and we all had a little flower each to say "Good Luck". This moves me because there is no money but the achievement is just as magical. I know these people have been struggling for ten years with nothing and no subsidy.

Mr Fabricant: I am on your side but I have to ask these questions. One thing Robert Cogo-Fawcett said, you talked about the comparison between development of musical theatre in the United Kingdom and that in New York city and it is particularly tough at the moment. I have got very strong connections in the US and it is particularly tough at the moment with this Republican administration—although I am very pro the Republicans in every other aspect, especially as I am off to Lichfield, Connecticut on Thursday, but that is another story.

Chairman: It most certainly is!

Q8 Mr Fabricant: Why does it work in New York city but it does not work here? I cannot imagine there is a lot of subsidy there either. What should we be doing here?

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: There is subsidy.

Q9 Mr Fabricant: From whom?

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: From the National Endowment for the Arts. It does in fact have a bursary fund. I cannot put a figure on it, but it does offer substantial sums towards the development of musical theatre. Also the commercial infrastructure is different. We are dependent upon a handful of producers in this country for the existence of our commercial musical theatre. I do not need to name them, they are well known names and you know who they are as well as I do, I am sure. Indeed, some of those producers do spend some money on the development of musical

theatre—we have benefited from it at the Bridewell—but there are only a handful of them. In New York I could spend a month going round spending two hours with every musical producer and there would still be more to go to. They spend a long time and a lot of money developing things, because the whole structure there is very different. The size of the vehicle they create on each occasion is an enormous vehicle—a vehicle costing \$10-15 million. Here, yes, there are occasional vehicles that cost that sum, but generally we try to put musicals on for £1-1.2 million. In the commercial economy of theatre that represents for us a tidy amount, which is the reason why so much old work is revived. The new work, the work that costs \$10-15 million which is done over there, will have a substantial development period behind it, almost certainly; because people recognise the need to grow artistes and to grow the work. It takes a long time with musicals because it is such a collaborative process, in the way that all theatre is collaborative, drama is collaborative but it is not nearly as collaborative as musical theatre which involves so many different ingredients that need bringing together; some unfortunately get dropped along the way and others get brought in, and all of that takes a long time and a lot of development. It is recognised in the States. Perhaps it is to do with the tradition there; they have a longer musical tradition than we do. Here it is also because there are not the people to turn to. We have turned to most of them and had help from most of the five or six over the years. Finally, despite the fact that they create foundations, those foundations are not that wealthy and they spread it around, and often the foundations are there to help themselves for wholly legitimate reasons. For example, Cameron Mackintosh's Foundation has helped work to go on at the National Theatre, which has then been brought back into the West End. It is wholly proper that it should be used in that way, but actually it has not been used for the development of new work, by and large.

Mr Bryant: I am going to play Devil's advocate. Having played the Duke of Austria in *Blondel* at university I think my commitment to alternative musicals is quite high! Chairman, I should point out that *Sunday in the Park* was also done at the National which would not have found a commercial house anywhere.

Chairman: I saw it there.

Q10 Mr Bryant: Indeed, I saw *Promises Promises* at the Bridewell which I enjoyed enormously; although why Burt Bacharach needs a non-commercial avenue for getting his work into musical theatre, I do not quite understand. The ordinary person looking at the London theatres at the moment would see *Mama Mia!*, *We Will Rock You*, *The Rod Stewart Musical*, *Blood Brothers*, *Anything Goes*, *The Lion King*, *Les Miserables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Chicago*, *Sunset Boulevard* and *Bombay Dreams*. In all of that there is quite a lot of musical going on. The Chairman refers to these kinds of musicals as "facile", but the truth is that they are extremely popular, good value and highly entertaining. Many

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of my constituents will do the journey from South Wales up to London for two musicals spread over two evenings. Why on earth should any of this be subsidised?

Mr Sawers: The best way to see it is to make a comparison with how new drama writing appears to us to develop in the West End. If you consider that in the West End each year there are perhaps 10 new plays that appear on the West End stage, you need to think of a pyramid of development, if you like. For those 10 plays to arrive in the West End (or those 10 musicals, but we will come to that comparison later) there are a number of subsidised houses in London and elsewhere in the UK that are developing work, the best of which will go into the West End. There are 10 or 12 theatres doing this kind of thing, all subsidised, and they are producing 30, 40 or 50 new plays a year for those 10 to arrive in the West End. For those 10 or 12 theatres to produce 50 or 60 plays a year they are receiving writing of 300, 400 or 500—a significant number—because that is a development process of the work, that is a development process of the skills involved, and it is the inevitable, almost statistical process of writing. Some will be great, and for each great play a playwright will write three or four average plays, that is the way things are.

Ms Dee: You are talking about subsidising that part of the pyramid. You are not talking about the end product, which is *Chicago*. *Chicago* started as a concert performance with Ann Reinking saying, “Can we just try this, it might be good”. It was subsidised at that moment, and then it became very commercial because it worked. The Bridewell is trying to produce new stuff all the time which is brand new and has not been thought of before and will end up one day, hopefully, being produced as those other commercial ventures.

Mr Sawers: That is the point I am getting to. There is a pyramidal structure of development within drama work and that does not exist for musical theatre in any way, shape or form.

Q11 Mr Bryant: I understand the economics are different for musicals because it is much more expensive to put on the first night, especially to do it in such a way that you all get a big enough audience to last you six or nine months, which is the only way you can make it stack up. I understand that. The market seems pretty good at chucking out *Which Witch* and all the other rubbish musicals we forget about five minutes after we first saw them.

Mr Sawers: I would turn the argument around and say, do you want the musical theatre that is populist in the West End to be these (somebody else’s quote) facile things that currently exist? Why is it that over the last 10 years there has not been in the UK (apart from *Bombay Dreams*, and it is yet to be seen whether that will be seen as successful in the longer term) a new British musical theatre piece arriving on the West End that has done the likes of *Phantom*, *Les Mis* and *Miss Saigon* of 20 years ago.

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: It is a very difficult argument to counteract when all the musicals you quote are extremely popular. I did say at the beginning, only

one of these which you have quoted has got music specially written for it. Only one of those *Bombay Dreams* is a new musical. The rest of them are entirely compilation musicals or they have music taken from previous eras.

Q12 Mr Bryant: I suppose you are including *Les Mis* as having started in France originally?

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: No, I did say of over 10 years old.

Q13 Mr Bryant: Is that not one of the other problems, which is that we now have a lot of West End theatres clogged up with musicals that have been so successful, and successful at keeping people coming three or four times over the course of 20 years, that there is no great appetite for people to find new great big musicals. Is that fair or unfair?

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: I think there is no great appetite for producers to take the risk to put new musicals on. It is easier to keep a commercial vehicle going; to keep pumping more money into the advertising and the marketing on this fixed cost, which invariably goes down over time. Musical is very interesting, because when you start them they cost so much, and they actually go up in cost when you get towards the first re-cast; but beyond the first re-cast they generally come down in cost as the musical goes on in time because you get cheaper and cheaper personnel in them, as we know, over a period of years. It is very comforting to have that kind of musical at the back of you, rather than to think, “I’m going to develop something new”.

Q14 Mr Bryant: That is one part of the question, which is about why have subsidy. The other question is: why you; why not another theatre; why not the Lyric, Hammersmith; why not Hobson Hall?

Ms Dee: We have the reputation already. We have already established a reputation.

Ms Metcalfe: Of course, they do occasionally do something that is musical theatre or has a musical content. Indeed, we really are the only place where the prime aim of our programming is to develop new work. I think it is this whole thing about new work. In a sense, you do make yourself honourable and ‘twas ever thus with art in any form; the minute you start up with something new at first it is just not populist. People think, “That’s a bit peculiar. Why are we doing that?” When Cezanne painted his first picture I am sure people said, “What was all that about? I wouldn’t want that hanging on my wall, would I”. That is what it is about, but that is what keeps the art vibrant.

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: There is also an infrastructural issue. There are places that have people like Tim and Carol who are musical managers/artistes, whereas the Lyric Hammersmith does not have those kind of people in it. When they do musicals they generally need to bring people in specifically to supervise the process.

Chairman: The only musical I can remember seeing at the Lyric Hammersmith was a musical version of Ruth Rendall’s *A Judgment in Stone*.

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Q15 Mr Bryant: I am not particularly arguing for the Lyric Hammersmith, I am just saying why should the Almeida not or wherever—

Ms Dee: Because they do not have the reputation the Bridewell has. If you want to go somewhere to see something which is brand new which you would not be able to see anywhere else that is musical theatre you would go to the Bridewell, without question, if you know about it. If you do not know about it and you ask somebody they will say, “Go to the Bridewell”.

Q16 Mr Bryant: My memory from some ten years ago was that the old fire station in Oxford had a relationship with Cameron McIntosh and with Stephen Sondheim to do with the Professorship of Musical Theatre at Oxford, is that right?

Ms Dee: Yes.

Q17 Mr Bryant: Is that still part of the equation?

Ms Dee: It closed.

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: It has fallen by the wayside. It opens occasionally when it is rented out by people.

Ms Dee: I was a performer in that Oxford deal; the writers who were part of that are still going strong, albeit going strong against all odds.

Mr Bryant: I think there was a musical called *Galileo Galileo*. I saw that. The scars are on my back!

Q18 Mr Doran: One of the problems of coming last is that most of the questions you want to ask have already been asked. I am not an expert on musicals like my colleagues here but I would like to pick up some of the threads of what has been raised. From the outside it strikes me that you have got a serious structural problem. At the top you have got these apparently very successful and very rich musicals running in the West End with very successful producers, with two or three millionaires at the head of it obviously doing very, very well, I will not say at the bottom there is a Bridewell, but somewhere underneath there is a Bridewell and organisations like the Bridewell. When my colleague, Michael Fabricant, asked about the situation in America you explained very well why that was different. Why have we got the structural problem you have outlined? What efforts can be made to plug the gaps? It strikes me that the work you are doing is extremely valuable but, at the same time, is unrecognised?

Ms Metcalfe: I can give you a personal answer which is, when we started and said we were going to do musical theatre, it was said to me, “Is there any? What are you going to do if you are going to do new musical theatre?” As your colleague has alluded to, we started off by doing revivals of shows which had been somewhat neglected and looking at the classics. Part of what I was trying to say to people was that you can do musicals on a small scale. One of the things people felt was that musical theatre could only happen in a huge theatre. Of course, if that is the case then it is very difficult to develop it. One of our starting points was, let us show people that you can do musical theatre in a small space. Going back to your question, certainly there was the question, “What are you going to do?” Then there was that

sense of people feeling, as has been clear here, “If you are doing musicals that must be commercial, you cannot possibly need any assistance with it”. I have to say, it has taken ten years, but because we produced work that was very clearly new, that was dealing with real issues and the emotions and the tribulations of the characters communicating, that was enhanced by the use of music (and most of these shows have been American), because we actually produced these shows and people were able to come and see them I think people’s perception has shifted. Some of the people were saying, “Music theatre—that’s just big, jolly shows in the West End”, but they have now seen there is a much richer vein there which can be tapped. With people’s attitude and thinking, the Arts Council are a very good example of that. Recently they have been very supportive of us, because they have seen that what we have been doing has got a value—the kind of value to which they subscribe—about accessibility, about developing multiculturalism and diversity in the community. I think that is happening and is beginning to change.

Q19 Mr Doran: But not supportive enough?

Ms Metcalfe: You must ask them. At the moment they would possibly say their funds have been very prescribed and that has made it difficult for them.

Q20 Mr Doran: You make the point in your written evidence because of the structural changes in the Arts Council you are seeing some improvements. From what you are saying it seems that is not going to be enough to save you from the crisis you face next year.

Mr Sawers: I think the issue there is one of timing with the structural issues Carol alludes to. As I understand the Arts Council position, the problem we have got is that we have got a core funding annual revenue problem, as they might expect from a small theatre. The funds within the Arts Council that support those kinds of expenditures are tied up until March 2006.

Mr Cogo-Fawcett: We should not just be alluding to the Arts Council here. We are unfortunate in that we have no relationship with the Corporation of London and we sit in the middle of London. We have no relationship with them because our relationship has always been at secondhand via the St Brides Institute who have hypothecated £40,000 of the funding from the Corporation to us. The Corporation has not been easy to contact and is not easy to deal with. In fact “dealing” with them is not the right word to use at all. We are occasionally dealt with. For something which is called the Corporation of London and to be at the centre of a city with a gigantic tourist industry that is dependent partly on musical theatre for it to be so attractive, not to be able to continue, at the very least, a £40,000 subvention to us is penny-pinching and mean from an organisation which gives to the Barbican Centre £22 million a year. We are the only other theatre in the City of London.

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Mr Sawers: We do get a small amount of money from the Corporation of London for our education work and for our Lunch Box work.

Q21 Mr Doran: Moving away from the specific problems for the Bridewell, and going back to the structural problems of your section of the industry—a point you make in your written submission is the fact that the Arts Council has no specialist adviser working in your area, and you are lumped in with theatre. Are you working with any other people in your field to change that? If you are, what response have you had from the Arts Council?

Ms Metcalfe: As I think you will hear from others, this is something all of us working in this field have found to be a real difficulty. I think the Arts Council are now recognising this. Previously they have had this rather odd delineation that there is something called “music theatre” and the funds from that come from the music “pot” as it were; but when we approach them and say, “We have this very interesting piece of music theatre with a very modern score”, and it is sung through, “and perhaps we should be asking you for the funds”, they say, “No, you are in theatre. It’s a musical”. When we have gone to the theatre department in the past they have tended to look (as we have said in the paper) but what we are offering can look bad value because it is

so much more expensive. That has gone. I think many people who are in this room now will be glad as we are that that has gone. There is a much greater overview now. People are looking at the project and instead of trying to put it into a box, into which it does not fit, they are actually looking at the project and the value of the project.

Mr Sawers: I do think it is worth saying I think it is a great improvement, and we have seen an improvement. It is very early days with it. I personally do believe if strategically it is important to try and fix this issue with respect to development of musical theatre as a whole into the future, and if the Arts Council, with the direction from the department, think that is something that needs to be dealt with then I do think having a specialist within the Arts Council is the only way that will happen.

Chairman: Thank you very much. It seems to me if you want to see a new production of smash hit Rogers and Hammerstein musicals like *South Pacific*, *Oklahoma* or *Carousel* sooner or later you see them at the National Theatre, with *The King and I* no doubt to come at some stage; but if you actually want to see something like *Me and Juliet* you are never going to see it at the National Theatre so you must hope to see it somewhere else. Thank you very much indeed. We much appreciate your coming here.

Memorandum submitted by Mercury Musical Developments

WHAT IS MERCURY MUSICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

Mercury Musical Developments (MMD) was launched on 30 April 2002 and was formed by merging two existing organisations, The Mercury Workshop and New Musicals Alliance (NMA). It is a registered charity. It is funded entirely by the subscription fees from writers who join MMD, donations from companies in the musical theatre industry and private individuals. The Mercury Workshop and NMA were both formed in 1992. MMD is continuing the important work which these two organisations started 11 years ago.

MMD exists to support, encourage and promote writers (composers, lyricists and bookwriters) of musical theatre. Its primary focus is to provide a support network for British writers but it also embraces musical theatre writers worldwide.

Writers apply to join MMD as either Writer Associates or Provisional Writer Associates. To qualify for the former, a writer has to meet certain specific criteria, for example, their work must have had a professional production; they must have been published; they must have reached the final stages of a recognised competition or festival of writing etc. Writers who cannot meet these criteria but who aspire to do so can join as Provisional Writer Associates. All writers pay an annual subscription fee to join MMD depending on which category they join under.

MMD offers its Associates a unique programme of opportunities and events. A regular e-newsletter is circulated offering writing opportunities and advertising events featuring Associates’ work; a website provides invaluable information and resources for writers; regular “Salons” are organised giving writers the chance to meet each other, exchange ideas, initiate new collaborative partnerships and network generally; practical and technical seminars with leading theatre practitioners are provided on a regular basis; a “dating service” evening to match writers with directors was recently organised; and workshop programmes with music colleges have been established where writers can work with the students on their piece thereby giving them the chance to hone their work and experiment with new ideas.

MMD has also established strong links with similar organisations in America and as a result, Associates have access to writing opportunities in the US. In the past, the Mercury Workshop and NMA have had collaborative partnerships with the Royal Academy Of Music, the National Theatre Studio, the Drill Hall, Central School Of Speech And Drama, the Liverpool Institute For The Performing Arts (LIPA) and Greenwich Theatre.

MMD's latest and most important project to-date is *The Works*. This is a showcase of five new musicals which will be presented at The Arts Theatre in the West End on 21 and 22 October. These musicals were selected from nearly 100 submissions, principally from Britain and America. MMD has only been able to stage this event thanks to generous sponsorship from Clear Channel Entertainment, the international theatre production company, and the Arts Theatre. It is an industry event and the objective is to present these five works, which are still in development, to an audience of producers, directors, agents etc and, thereby, promote *The Works* and their writers. MMD hopes to be able to present *The Works* on an annual or bi-annual basis.

MMD'S FUTURE AIMS

Moving forward, MMD aims to re-establish the Development Programme which was such a key part of the Mercury Workshop's activities. This will provide its Associates with the opportunity to develop a piece with a professional creative team, ie a director, musical director etc, through a series of readings and workshops. MMD also plans to initiate a reading service for any writer who would like their work professionally assessed. Further salons, seminars and music college workshops will continue to be part of MMD's activities and it is currently setting up a writer's lab in conjunction with Queen's University, Belfast. MMD has already been able to offer commissioning opportunities to its Associates. These have come through its contacts within the musical theatre industry and MMD hopes to be able to encourage and offer more such opportunities in the future.

HOW THE BRIDEWELL RELATES TO MMD

MMD can encourage and advise writers but the only way for writers to really develop and progress their work is to put it on the stage and get it seen. This doesn't have to be a huge commercial presentation—a simple reading or workshop can provide invaluable assistance to a writer as they develop their work. It is essential that a writer finds out if the piece actually works in front of an audience. This can't be done by one person reading a script and listening to a demonstration CD. The show has to be experienced by an audience. Owing to the Bridewell Theatre's reputation for developing and producing new musical theatre work, it is currently the first stop for any writer of musical theatre who wants to get their work seen. The Bridewell offers a unique home for new musical theatre writing. The team there understands completely what is required to present new work and they have a passion and dedication for what they do which is unsurpassed in the musical theatre industry. The Bridewell can provide both the workshop/reading opportunities and, in due course, the full-scale production opportunity. If the Bridewell ceased to exist, writers would be stripped of an invaluable outlet for their work and a hole would be created that would not be filled by any other existing organisation.

In order for MMD to fulfil its objectives, it needs the Bridewell to provide the "home" for its Associates' work. Without the expertise and facilities found at the Bridewell, MMD would be in danger of operating in a vacuum and its job of promoting writers would be made all the more difficult.

An example of how the Bridewell and MMD are currently working together is the Bridewell's current search for material for its forthcoming Lunchbox series. MMD has circulated details to all its Associates and asked them to forward submissions to the Bridewell. In this way, MMD is able to offer its Associates an invaluable opportunity for their work to be seen and the Bridewell is able to tap into an immediate resource of 100 or so writers of quality who can provide good material for their programme.

HOW THE BRIDEWELL FITS INTO THE MUSICAL THEATRE SCENE GENERALLY

The Bridewell doesn't just provide an outlet for brand new British musical theatre work but it also offers audiences a chance to experience, often for the first time in this country, new American work by the latest, cutting-edge US writers, work which has generally been produced either on Broadway or off-Broadway. It is unlikely that these shows would be produced by any other theatre in this country simply because the work is not out-and-out "commercial". It is, however, often tackling difficult subjects in a serious way and it is work which is, without a doubt, pushing forward the boundaries of musical theatre writing and advancing the art form. Examples of such work include *Floyd Collins*, *Hello Again*, *Songs for a New World* and *The Ballad of Little Jo*. It is vital that British writers can experience this work and benefit from it. The musical theatre industry should be encouraging a similar flow of new material from the UK to the US but this will only happen when we can create more opportunities for new work to be presented in this country. We should also be encouraging more UK/USA writer collaborations as this could result in exciting work for international musical theatre audiences to enjoy and benefit from.

The Bridewell is a hot-house for the development of new musical theatre writers. The West End commercial theatre has to make money to survive. The major producers cannot afford to take a risk on an untried new musical (unless that show comes with either significant private investment or with a huge television or film name attached). It is, therefore, vital that an alternative network of theatres finds the new writers, develops the new work and presents the initial production, and then works with the commercial producers to take it to the next stage, thereby reducing the risk to the West End, or international, producer.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BRIDEWELL TO MUSIC PUBLISHERS AND STAGE RIGHTS HOLDERS

The Bridewell is also vital to music publishers and stage rights holders. Firstly, it provides a place for publishers and rights holders to view possible new acquisitions. Although a show can be assessed by reading a script and listening to a demonstration CD, it is essential to see it on stage to know if what is conveyed in the script actually works. Therefore, in order for writers to be able to “sell” their work to publishers and rights holders, they have to get it seen. Not only does the Bridewell provide excellent showcasing facilities and expertise to present new work at various stages in its development—showcases to which publishers and rights holders are invited—but it is one of the only theatres to take such work to production stage and, therefore, get it seen by people who can assist the writers further in their careers. Speaking for Warner/Chappell, we will not take on a new show unless it has received, or is going to receive, some kind of professional production. The Bridewell, therefore, is vital as it provides one of the best ways in which we can see new work with which we may want to get involved. This is an invaluable service for us and it would deprive us of a source for future acquisitions if it wasn’t there.

Once a publisher takes on a show, they will exploit the individual songs for recordings by recording artists, they will consider the possibility of printing the individual songs in a vocal selection and, if they have also acquired the stage rights, they will promote and licence the show to amateur organisations across the world. All of these activities generate income streams for the writer and the publisher/rights holder and, therefore, for the Treasury.

Secondly, the Bridewell presents existing shows which are unlikely to be presented at any other British theatres. Warner/Chappell not only publishes a great deal of classic British and American musical show repertoire but we also publish and represent a number of the contemporary, cutting-edge American writers, for example, Michael John LaChiusa. It is unlikely that LaChiusa’s *Hello Again* would have received a professional UK production were it not for the Bridewell. It is crucial to publishers that these shows are staged in order for the writers to be exposed to audiences which, in turn, leads to greater familiarity with their work and the possible subsequent purchase of cast albums, vocal selections etc. The Sondheim show *Saturday Night* is another example. As a result of the Bridewell’s production, a vocal selection was published and a cast album recorded. These all generate additional revenue. And each time this material is put in front of people, there is a possibility that it might lead to further exploitation—perhaps a singer might attend a show, hear one of the songs and record it for their next album; perhaps a radio presenter will be made aware of a song and play it on their radio programme; a regional producer may see it and decide to stage it at their theatre; or an amateur society may decide it’s just what they want for their next production. The knock-on effects of a musical theatre production in terms of the exploitation both of the songs in the show and the show as a whole should not be underestimated. But none of this additional exploitation can happen unless the show is produced in the first place. This is why the Bridewell is so important to publishers and rights holders.

THE NATIONAL PICTURE, OUTSIDE OF LONDON

Regional theatres have a very important role to play in the development of new musical theatre writing in this country. At present, a number of regional theatres programme new musicals but on a very irregular basis due to the cost of staging them. A lot more musical theatre development work could be done in the regions if there was sufficient funding to support this kind of writing and production. There have been some success stories—for example, *Spend, Spend, Spend* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in 1998 which transferred to the West End and subsequently toured—but these are few and far between.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, it is easy to look at the musical as it is currently presented in the West End and see many shows which are generating significant income for those involved in their creation. However, one needs to look at what these musicals actually are—most of them are not new but revivals of existing shows, or “pop” musicals reliant on back catalogue, or long-running giants. We should be asking ourselves why there are so few brand new musicals by British writers in the West End and, to answer that question, one has to look behind the successful gloss of West End musical theatre at the structure that lies behind it, or, rather, the lack of any kind of funded structure. It is easy to conclude that, because of the success of certain West End musicals, plenty of money is floating around the industry. Unfortunately, however, this income is returned to private investors (“angels”) and to the producers as profit (once costs are recouped) and is not being fed back into the grass roots level of development, to the very area where it is most needed. West End producers can and will happily continue to stage revivals and pop shows but these shows say little about the world we live in and are doing little to advance an art form which is the most popular live art form in the world. We need to create a proper structure for new musicals to be developed and flourish. The expertise in, dedication to and passion for the genre is there in organisations such as the Bridewell and MMD and there is no shortage of writing talent to be developed and encouraged. They just need the financial assistance to start realising the enormous artistic and economic potential that is waiting to be drawn upon.

Witnesses: Ms Caroline Underwood, Chairman and *Ms Georgina Bexon*, Chief Executive, Mercury Musical Developments, examined.

Chairman: Thank you very much for coming in today. Michael, would you like to start?

Q22 Michael Fabricant: You were here for the earlier session and I was just curious to know whether you have any observations to make about the environment here in the United Kingdom compared with that in the United States?

Ms Bexon: Yes, definitely. The situation in the US is incredibly different from here. What we have not talked about so far, which seems to me essential to the whole debate, is the umbrella, the overview from the writer to the smallest fringe producer feeding new musical work through to your first platform, which could be an off Broadway or which could be a studio or a repertory theatre in England or a fringe theatre through to a medium scale or large scale theatre. In America the economic situation is historically and fundamentally different, basically because of the trickle-down nature from their regional theatres. They sell their tickets by subscription schemes. Individual ticket sales in a regional theatre across America is a very small part of their overall income and therefore a very small part of their overall economic structure. They will sell five or six or even ten tickets for their whole season so (a) they have the money in the bank before they open on the first night of their new season but it also allows them to take far greater risk because they have already sold something like 70%—I am generalising here—of their capacity of their theatre before they put on that high risk, expensive musical. They are not cost centring but they are covering their costs across the season, which enables every regional theatre in America to take occasional risks, I am not saying there is no risk involved, but it minimises the risk. Of course that is a huge contrast to the situation here where, by and large, every individual production is cost centred and everyone stands alone in terms of its profit or loss and that has an effect as it trickles down the system. The small producer or the independent producer is feeding work up to that middle structure and further down the line there is writer training, which does not exist in this country at all apart from the very small amount that Mercury Musical Developments does, there is much more development opportunity, ie workshops in getting musicals over that year 18 month to two year process from the written page on to something that a producer might recognise as something that he might want to put on stage. That is the key reason. There are other reasons in terms of funding, in terms of audience expectation, in terms of audience history and the fact that the perception in America is that musical history is viewed as the American art form. The economic factor is a principal factor.

Ms Underwood: In New York the size of the theatre is crucial. There are so many more small-scale theatres off Broadway the size of the Bridewell, of which we have so few in London, and that is the perfect venue for developing new musical theatre work. You do not want to do it in a 1,000 seater venue, you have to do it in a 200 or 300 seater venue

and there are so many more of those off Broadway that there are outlets for writers to get their work seen, much more than there are in London.

Q23 Michael Fabricant: I remember going to see a very avant-garde play just off Broadway in a very small theatre and being recognised, much to my acute embarrassment. Do you think that you make sufficient use of regional theatre? We have a new theatre in my own constituency which has just opened, it has two spaces, one is about 450 seats and then there is a small studio which is I think about 100—I may be wrong on that figure—and that is subsidised by the district council. Do you think that we are using regional theatre enough? I understand what you have to say about subsidy and it rings a bell with me because my background was in broadcasting before I became an MP and I am familiar with the operation of national public radio in the US, it seems a very similar system. We have a different methodology in the United Kingdom of subsidy, but it is an alternative form of subsidy which is from government and local government which they do not have in the US. I just wonder whether we are using that opportunity enough in the regions?

Ms Underwood: We are not using it enough in the regions. There are a number of regional theatres which we can name, the West Yorkshire Playhouse, the Watermill at Newbury and Plymouth, there are various theatres who are putting on musicals but we are back to the risk factor again, they do want to take the risk of spending their budgets on new, untried work because often it is not hugely commercial, it is difficult to get your audiences in and they risk having funding taken away because they seem to have a deficit at the end of the year because they tried to do new work. I am certain there are theatres who would love to be putting on more new work but need to feel secure in order to do so that they are not going to be penalised by doing so.

Q24 Michael Fabricant: Given that we do not have quite the ethos of self-help, which is the ethos in the United States, the form of subscription that you talked about, do you think that the Arts Council, given their limited resources, should be doing more, and how?

Ms Underwood: That is probably something that you should ask the Arts Council.

Ms Bexon: That is a huge issue with many fragmented parts. Yes, I think they should be doing more. I would like to come on and talk about how writing is created and developed, because that is what our organisation does. I speak to a lot of regional theatre directors and producers and their answer is they do not have the funding for it because, as we just said, there is a risk and an expense factor there. As I understand it there are no specific musical theatres funds available for any organisation from the smallest organisation, such as Mercury Musical Developments, which is a writer based organisation, all the way up through this pyramid. My experience, and I think others' experience of trying to apply for

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funds, is that we fall between too many stools. We are trying to shoe-horn ourselves into other prescriptive policies for grant making. Looking through some of these documents for instance, looking out for new musical theatre, new writing you will see, I do not have time to work out the ratios, at a guess 80% to 90% for youth projects, for access projects, for minority projects, I do not doubt all incredibly worthy causes but everybody else is falling outside that particular focus. I know that is the case when we are applying for new writing funds and I see it all of the way through the system. That is a historic situation and one which has not been addressed so far.

Michael Fabricant: Thank you.

Q25 Mr Bryant: As I understand it from what you have just said one of the differences between New York and London is that New York has a network of theatres of a certain size, you were talking about 200 to 400 seaters.

Ms Underwood: They have a number of theatres which are defined as off Broadway theatres, which are 200 to 400 seater venues.

Q26 Mr Bryant: Do we not have quite a few?

Ms Underwood: We have some but they are playhouses, they are dedicated playhouses and they are not necessarily used for musical theatre work. We are back to where the reputation of the theatre lies. I do not know how big the Lyric at Hammersmith is but there is the Bush, there is Hammersmith, Hampstead there are a number of venues, the Almeida but they are all very much focused on play work.

Ms Bexon: The Soho Theatre does not have musical theatre in its policy at all. The Almeida has never done a musical, they have huge space restrictions there of course but they do opera, the Donmar Warehouse has done a handful of new musicals but it is high risk in terms of finances. We could get on to British writers, they have never done a musical by a new British writer, ever.

Q27 Mr Bryant: Jeanetta Cochrane?

Ms Bexon: Jeanetta Cochrane is used by fringe producers for small try-outs occasionally. I would say that is on the lower level.

Q28 Mr Bryant: You were talking about 200 up seaters, the Bridewell has 180 seats. One of the things that the Arts Council says in its report to us is that one of the problems with the Bridewell is it is just too small to make enough money out of seats.

Ms Underwood: That is the problem that the Bridewell have already highlighted. We come back to the argument that on the whole you cannot do new work in a huge venue. The King's Head and Jermyn Street have less seats than the Bridewell but it is a perfect place to see new work but they are not as dedicated to musical theatre work as the Bridewell is. You will see the odd musical at the King's Head and the Jermyn Street Theatre but it is not anywhere near the kind of level of work, and experimental work, that the Bridewell do.

Q29 Mr Bryant: You are saying it is vital to keep the Bridewell but in addition we have to do other things if we are going to make sure that new musicals are built in. We may be rather complacent because we have had so many big musicals from 20 to 25 years ago now that have done so well and we think of as having been great successes but actually we cannot rest on those laurels. Is that right?

Ms Underwood: That is absolutely right. Also what people tend to be a bit blinkered about is that you see *Mama Mia!* and *We Will Rock You* and you think the industry is awash with money, because that is what people see up there in front of them, and that is not the case because that money is not getting fed back into the grassroots development, it is going back into the investors' pockets, which is fair enough, they have put the money in and invested the risk in the first place but the money is not being reinvested back to find those writers and those works which are eventually, hopefully, one day going to replace *We Will Rock You* and *Mama Mia!*

Q30 Mr Bryant: However wonderful *Mama Mia!* may be it is not new music, is it?

Ms Underwood: It is not a new musical. You cannot knock it because it is bringing people into London and into the West End and people are enjoying themselves but that is just one aspect, we talked about this pyramid, it is just the very tip of the pyramid.

Q31 Chairman: Can I just ask a factual question, if you happen to have the information, that is with regard to the Donmar, which is the only other place in London that I know of that puts on musicals which are, as it were, big popular successes and run of the mill. It has different configurations for different productions, how many seats does it have on average?

Ms Underwood: 254.

Ms Bexon: As a slight postscript to that I think an important contrast to draw between the Bridewell and the Jermyn Street or the Bush or the King's Head is that those theatres are all run principally as receiving venues, which means they do not have a policy and produce their own work, they rent out their theatre space, so they have no creative or artistic control and they are not pursuing any particular aim in terms of encouraging or developing or providing platform space to new musicals, which is exactly what the Bridewell does and is exactly why the Bridewell is unique, it is the only theatre that does that.

Q32 Chairman: I remember going to the first night of *Les Miserables* at the Barbican, which points out that it also came in via subsidised theatre, and I remember the set making a dramatic impact of its own and it seemed to be the first time that a set had become a player in its own right in such a dramatic way, has that provided real problems for future musical productions because people expect these enormous production values and otherwise it is not a musical?

Ms Underwood: It is a re-education process and this is why the Bridewell is so crucial because you cannot get a helicopter into the Bridewell.

Q33 Mr Bryant: That was the worst moment in *Miss Saigon*, you could see them climbing out the back!

Ms Underwood: You are absolutely right, people have got so used to these epic musicals that you have to re-train audiences that they can have a very good evening and a very fulfilling evening in the theatre with basically very little on stage, just a very good set of performers and a very good quality piece of writing, you do not have to surround it with all of the paraphernalia that can sometimes come with musicals. That is why the smaller venues like the Bridewell and the Donmar are so crucial because it gives the audience a completely different theatrical experience.

Q34 Mr Bryant: The blocking up of theatres, when *Les Miserables* went into the Palace they took out all the Victorian runnels, it was the last Victorian stage floor to go, but it is stuck there, is it not, for ever?

Ms Underwood: No, I think you will find that *Les Miserables* will eventually move on and they will put the theatre back and put something else in. It will not be stuck there for ever but it is a real problem that these warhorses are in these theatres, great it is making money for the economy, I do not think we should be knocking it. As I said before those theatres are made for big shows, you cannot do or I think it would be a mistake to do something like *Anyone Can Whistle*, at the Palace because there are certain shows that will not work on certain stages. That is why when Cameron Mackintosh is looking for which theatre to put his next show into he talks about shopping for a theatre. The musical you are putting on has to be very much suited to the venue it is going into.

Q35 Mr Bryant: Quite a lot of our Victorian and Edwardian London theatres are not brilliant because their sight lines are poor. For instance in the Shaftesbury the balcony comes down over half the audience.

Ms Underwood: What is in the Shaftesbury now is *Thorougly Modern Milly*, it is a big dance show and that is the kind of show that would go into the Shaftesbury, not a small, more intimate musical, which is the kind that the Bridewell and other theatres are putting on.

Mr Bryant: How dreadful to be all alone in the world!

Q36 Mr Doran: Looking at your Report and the conclusion you make the point that there is a lack of any funding structure. The question I want to ask is, is it only about funds, is it only about subsidy?

Ms Bexon: From Mercury Musical Developments viewpoint it is pretty much because we do work right at the grassroots because we work with writers. We have over 100 writers and our absolute conviction is there is no shortage of writing talent in Britain. What we are particularly preoccupied

and exercised by is the fact that so little British product goes on in musical theatre stages across the country, from the smallest producer right up to the National Theatre. As Mr Kaufman so rightly said the National Theatre, I think I am right in saying, has only done two musicals by British writers. They have done very few new musicals of course but they have done many revivals. They did a musical by two of our writers *Honk*, which won the Olivier award two or three years ago and I think that slotted into the schedule at the very last minute because something else cancelled and because the budget shrunk and it was a small-scale show and they did *Jerry Springer*, which was hardly a risk exercise for them because it had been on at the BAC and in Edinburgh and I know three commercial producers that were negotiating to try and get it into a commercial house and it ended up at the National Theatre. Those were both high quality works and it was marvellous that they achieved an audience but if the National Theatre is not setting an example by encouraging British writers it is hardly surprising that the repertory theatres and the smaller theatres in London, off West End theatres and smaller fringe theatres are doing the same thing. There is a sore lack of opportunity for British writers, again in huge contrast to what happens in the States. As Bridewell said in their report they do a good percentage ratio of new musicals but it is principally American writers. In the States there is a new generation of musical theatre writers in Adam Guettel, Jason Robert Brown, Michael John LaChiusa, Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, there are no names we can mention in there apart from George Stiles and Anthony Drewe who have had a modicum of success, highly talented writers. We can name you 98 others who do not get an opportunity. There is no training and there is no development and all of that is down to funding. There is no structure because there is no funding.

Q37 Mr Doran: Just getting back to my original question, is it just about funding, if the money were available would it work? How would it work? What structures would you put in place to make it work?

Ms Bexon: I believe so, From the writing upwards we are the only organisation in the country that provides writers with training and we do very little of that because of our small budgets. There should be training, there should be development opportunities which can actually be quite low cost, it can be one-off workshops, it can be mentoring by other writers or producers or directors, it is lengthy but it does not have to be a high cost exercise. I know of theatre owners and theatre managers who have very small spaces that would provide a first platform, the off West End theatres, the studio spaces in the regional theatres, if there was funding diverted into there that would be the first outing for a small musical. Obviously funding is needed at the regional theatre level to minimise the risk for them to produce new musicals. The final structure of that pyramid is the West End and

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the commercial theatre which does not need funding, the top ends exists, it is all of the structure in the pyramid below it—

Ms Underwood: As Georgina said you need very little money to be able to get a show looked at. The thing we get from the writers that we are dealing with all the time is they say to us, “this is great, you provide us with salons, we get to meet people, we network with each other but what we really want at the end of the day is to see if the show works on stage”. With £500 to £1,000 you can put on a showcase or a workshop in somewhere like the Bridewell or another venue, because the other thing that the Bridewell do apart from their work open to the public is they provide a venue and a space for work to be looked at by people in the industry before it gets to the production stage. That developmental process which is also what is seriously lacking and which is another reason why we have so little British work in the West End because it needs to go through that evolution is actually quite a cheap thing to do but you still need that pot of money to be able to help a writer to put on that first showcase and that first workshop and get him or her involved with a team of people who can then advise them, work with them and help them restructure, recreate, add, take out and build that piece of work into something which can then start to become attractive to a commercial producer.

Q38 Mr Doran: One of the difficulties I have in the way you are presenting it and the way that the Bridewell and everyone else who has given us evidence is that everything concentrates on subsidy and I understand that is necessary when you are talking about risk-taking in the sort of theatre you are talking about, but it seems to me no matter what you do, no matter what structures we put in the place the public’s perception will always be that musical is a place where lots of people make money, it is the big commercial operations and no matter how much support the Bridewell has it will still be limited in the number of people who have access to what it produces. From my own point of view some of the best theatrical experiences I have had have been at the Edinburgh Festival, where lots of the people go through the hands of the Bridewell, but they will perform on the fringe and it is still a limited audience. Nobody has said anything to us about widening the audience by putting pressures on the television companies. I cannot remember the last time there was a musical on television which was not a Hollywood film. It seems to me that everyone is in a box and is not looking outside the box.

Ms Bexon: We are doing a showcase of five new musicals at the Arts Theatre next week and we have television and film producers coming along, we have made a special PR marketing initiative to get them along. I suspect this is a very, long, weary road to travel. There are mindsets and historical situations and it will be an education process, I think you are entirely right.

Ms Underwood: I would agree. I hope we will get to the position where you are starting to see musical theatre work on television, it happens in the States, they are now doing and recording television versions of *Annie*, classic musicals, which are then broadcast on the American networks. We are not in that position yet and we have to persuade the television companies it is worth investing that kind of money, that it is not going to be a one-off showing on BBC 1, that they will be able to sell that product round the world, because otherwise it is not worth their investment. It is going to be a long haul. I think we are now at the time we can start to do that with the success of film musicals coming back in thanks to *Chicago* and the ones which are in production now I think television and film people are beginning to open their eyes to those possibilities, but I think we are at the very beginning of that. It is going to take quite a long time and quite a lot of lobbying on the part of the theatre industry to start bringing them round. One of the producers in the *Jerry Springer* is Avalon, which is a television production company, it is there and it does happen. Tiger Aspect invested in *Our House*, it is creeping in but it is going to take a while.

Q39 John Thurso: Before I ask the question I want to ask can I follow up on the point that Frank Doran made, you said that the top end exists happily, and one might say even fairly lucratively, and the problems therefore are at the beginning and in the middle, could the top end not do more to assist the bottom or the middle, is there something that should be looked at?

Ms Bexon: I have to say they could do far more. Mercury Musical Developments only exist and it has only achieved what it has in the last 12 years because of support from the top end. Our sponsors and supporters have included every major theatre producer in the West End I think at various times but I have to say with extremely modest amounts but they do see and recognise the need for support of our organisation and other similar organisations. It is absolute a drop in the ocean even though our budgets are small and our needs are very small. I come back to the fact that we are harking on about funding, the sort of funding levels we are talking about for our organisation are very small and I would compare the musical theatre situation to the funding available for new drama. We work on them the whole time.

Q40 John Thurso: They recognise they ought to be doing it but they do not like to put their hands too far into their pockets.

Ms Bexon: Yes, there is quite a lot of that.

Q41 John Thurso: We are going to have evidence shortly from the National Youth Music Theatre and I have a particular interest because my PA’s son performs with them and she has briefed me on it, I would very much like to get an understanding of how organisations in musical theatre feel towards the National Youth Music Theatre and how important you feel it is in helping to develop it?

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Ms Underwood: It is crucial. There is an absolute overlap between what we do and the writers we are working with and the work that the NYMT is doing, writers that are part of Mercury are writers who have written for the NYMT. We have had opportunities earlier this year presented to us by the NYMT for the writers that have come under our umbrella, where the NYMT are looking for new work and are saying to us, “have you got writers who can submit some works for us to consider?” We feed into each other. We are at the grassroots level who are producing the writers who are writing the work that the NYMT are putting on. The NYMT are catering for a very specific market. They are also training and bringing up the generations of tomorrow. It is absolutely crucial as far as we are concerned.

Ms Bexon: I could not agree more. They work regionally so they are spreading the word about new music writing across the country, they are creating and developing new audiences from their performer base and their audience base.

Q42 John Thurso: Leading on from that, from all that I have heard this morning it seems that everybody is struggling quite hard, how do you feel that you relate to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport? Do you feel that the Department understands the problems and is being helpful or that you are not get through to them? Is there anything that the DCMS could be doing to help?

Ms Bexon: The answer to that question is in our small environment the DCMS is very remote.

John Thurso: I think you have answered the question.

Chairman: Thank you very much indeed, we are most grateful to you.

Witness: Dr Maggie Semple, Chairman, The National Youth Music Theatre, examined.

Chairman: Welcome Dr Semple, we are very pleased to see you.

Q43 Alan Keen: I have had a little bit to do with the National Youth Music Theatre, I think I hosted an event when you were first Chair. I just got back in the early hours of this morning from a week’s holiday so I do not really know the worst that has happened, could you start off by telling us?

Dr Semple: Thank you for the opportunity. I apologise for not having a cast with me, we are a late witness and I apologise for the limited information you have in front of you. To answer your question directly, to say first of all I am a volunteer as the Chairman of the organisation and my background has been working with young people, I was head of the arts in a large comprehensive school not very far away from here. Why I am involved and why the board is involved and why we do this is because we believe that opportunities for young people in musical theatre is what they indeed enjoy doing and it helps the whole of the industry. What has happened to NYMT? Since 1976 when we were formed we began in a small way and we have developed over the last 25 years. We received funding from Andrew Lloyd Webber of about £200,000 a year for six years. In 1999 the funding ceased and at that time we had a turnover of about £750,000. We had grown, we were working predominantly in large scale productions but we had also undertaken an audit of our work and we had begun a programme of regional activity. The education audit that we undertook told us several things, one was that there was a market of young people out there who indeed wanted to experience musical theatre and these were young people that extended the base from which NYMT first grew, namely a boys public school in the south of England. We began a programme of talent spotting, of engaging with all young people, all sets of society all over the United Kingdom in getting involved. If I tell

you that in 2001 we provided 7,000 room nights in forty plus towns across the United Kingdom that will give you the scale of what we have done. The issue for us is at some point with funding being increasingly difficult to attract a decision had to be made. Unfortunately we took that decision on 22 September. We took the decision because when we looked to the future—our financial year ends December—we found that our deficit would be in the region of £70,000. With all honesty we could no longer sit there, because each summer we do sit as a board and bite our finger nails and go, “I know we will make it through, we will get there”. This year we thought it would be more difficult to raise funds, so we have paused, we have undertaken the CVA, a Company Voluntary Arrangement, we have written to all our creditors and with that we are going to spend I would say until Christmas in our offices at the Palace Theatre—that Andrew Lloyd Webber has given us free, we used to pay rent but we now have it for free for the next three months—trying to stabilise ourselves. What we have done is contact Alumni. As Alumni can and do they called and pledged £40,000 and another US \$5,000, which we have, so there is a will to keep us going. I cannot talk about our future because that would jeopardise the CVA route but I can say that we are determined (and the company has not closed) to ensure this activity continues in some way or another for the thousands of young people out in the United Kingdom.

Q44 Alan Keen: Can I say for other people’s benefit I have seen a number of productions—and I had the thrill of entertaining Celeste Holmes here during the summer, she was the first person to sing *I am just a girl that cannot say no* in the first production on Broadway of *Oklahoma*—and the NYMT’s production of *Oklahoma* was magnificent and what was even more outstanding was to go backstage at the end and realise these were not adults who were singing and acting in it, it was just outstanding. I

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know that you go round the country and you go into areas where kids have never had the opportunity to find out what was possible. I cannot believe that the Government did not come up with the funding to continue that. Considering the number of people who have put something into NYMT over the last couple of years, it is just heartbreaking that the money could not have been found to give you that future for the benefit of kids. Most of us were at Paisley when Renfrewshire Youth presented 20 minutes of *Our Town* for the Dome and it was brilliant. What was more outstanding was that when we had a buffet lunch with them afterwards you could not get a word in edgeways, they just talked all the time and it was because of the confidence they had gained from being involved in this. You are getting funding from one of the trade unions or has that stopped, or is it just that you did not have enough coming in from elsewhere?

Dr Semple: If you will not hold it against me I will just tell you about the Dome because I was Director of the Millennium Experience and you met Alison, one of my directors for Scotland, we produced the *Our Town* story and every day, as you know, we had hundreds of children at the Dome hearing that story. We are one of the NASUWT's flagship projects and we apply to them each year for specific pieces of work. We have had their grant and we have used it and I am sure if we apply again, if we are able to, they will look at us favourably. The Department for Education and Science is very keen to work with us, but the regional opportunities have been for local authorities and other grants. Youth Music has been very helpful and very encouraging and supportive of our work and what we want to do in the future. This is an area where we have not had the time to pause because we are running all the time to keep these activities going, but I think we are going to be able to do so now. I imagine the future scenario for young people and youth music and musical theatre might look like this certainly for NYMT but there might be others, although there are not many organisations like us in this field. There is the National Youth Theatre who we talk to, but I imagine that we could develop our regional programme even more and that would not only mean going along with local authorities and arts councils of each region and so on but also working with theatres who have good relations with us. Newcastle Theatre, for example, is very keen to work with us. We would certainly—and this might sound crude—contract our services out to theatres for those who do not have the capacity or who are just emerging in this area of working with young people. There are lots of regional theatres that do have an excellent regional programme in musical theatre. I think we could develop the regional programme, but also what we specialise in, as you know, are what I call the large scale, major projects where you get Alan Ayckbourn writing *Orvin* for you and if you get into that as a kid it is a fantastic experience. What young people say to me about NYMT is it is wonderful having the regional programmes, absolutely perfect and it is on a wonderful scale, but if we brought people in from all over the country to do the large scale stuff with other

sorts of writers, it could be new writers, it does not have to be somebody who has made their mark, that is an experience that very few young people have and it is that excellence as well that we are endorsing. So attracting sponsorship and funding for the large scale project has been the most challenging and that is what Andrew Lloyd Weber has funded for us in the past and that is what we need to think about in terms of carrying on there. That is the model I see there.

Q45 Alan Keen: Do you think the Department for Education does not understand the value that this can give to children? We all want our kids to be able to read and write and be good at maths, that is essential, but do you really think the Department for Education has an understanding of what it can give kids if they have the opportunity? I started to play the guitar when I was 40 because I did not get a chance to before then, I had an aversion to music because of the way I was taught at school, I just did not want to know. Last year's music theatre-type of productions and the training gives kids the opportunity and lets them see that it does not have to be serious music, it is part of the enjoyment of life. Does the Department and the DCMS not understand the value of this? There is a vast education budget there. Why can we not get more of it for this aspect of life?

Dr Semple: I know the DfES fairly well and DCMS fairly well. I would say there is an interest in knowing more. My issue is to find the right place to go to have that conversation, that is my own personal difficulty. I do not sense resistance, certainly not, but I used to work at the Arts Council many years ago and it would help if those of us outside of that structure understood the conversations that were taking place on musical theatre for young people with the DfES and DCMS. I know they have brought together a lot of their thinking on arts education and I think it would be very helpful if we could progress that to youth musical theatre. I think there is still some work to do and I would love to be able to sit here and say I am totally confident that both those departments have and understand the issues. I have yet to have that detailed conversation, but I do not think I meet resistance.

Alan Keen: Thank you.

Q46 John Thurso: Dr Semple, we are very grateful you are here. I know you are a late witness and I also know you are a volunteer, but please do not take these questions as being aggressive, they are not meant to be, they are just to find out something about what is going on. Is there any research that anybody has done on the relationship between kids who have theatre experience not becoming vandals or whatever and those who do not have the theatre experience becoming vandals? Is there any way of proving to Government that if you invest in this you get better young people?

Dr Semple: If there is not then I will do it! This is longitudinal work we are talking about here and I would think the best place to look for that would be the National Foundation for Education Research

(NFER), they might have a comment on it and they will have examples of that sort of justification, of people engaged at a certain age in arts activity having their lives transformed which means they have not gone down an undesirable route. I am sure there is some work there.

Q47 John Thurso: It does seem to me that if, when putting your case to Government, you could actually point to a cause and effect it would help considerably. I know, because of the announcement you have made, you cannot talk about what may happen in the future, but can I ask a little bit about the past. You have mentioned your turnover of £750,000 and I also know that a certain amount of the funding comes from parents and you have a very good funding pack that goes to the parents of kids that are involved and so on. Can you give us some idea of the break down of funding and broadly where your funds have come from in the past so that we can get an idea of the sort of scale of the problem?

Dr Semple: I will give you an example here. I have here a report on activities in 2002, as we are completing our audit now. We wanted to attract from external sources, that is not parents, around about £250,000 and corporate sponsorship makes up £100,000 of that. Then we have donations, trusts and foundations, friends and individual donations, corporate entertainment and musical theatre industry. We also know from the costs of our productions that the breakdown between what parents contribute to our funders, Youth Music, would be £150,000 and I will say Youth Music would contribute another £150,000 and the box office would contribute around about the rest. That is broadly what it is. The thing about parents contributing is that of course they pay a subsidised rate for the course or the event. As I said earlier, our biggest cost is residential costs for our young people. What we are looking at, in order to have a viable way to go forward, is whether we should change the age group for whom we are catering. The National Youth Theatre work with older young people and do not have that issue to do with chaperones and beds and all those other things. It is a phenomenal part of our budget goes on residential costs.

Q48 John Thurso: You might like to look for a hotel group to sponsor you.

Dr Semple: I was actually going to say what you could do for us. I mentioned 7,000 beds and again it is only because we are in this situation that we have had time to pause and to say NYMT cannot go, that is the first thing. In previous walks of life I have not been shy of saying we have got to take a decision here, which is what we have done with NYMT. If we had carried on we could have said we will have £70,000 of debt at the end of the year, somebody will have to come in and we will start the new year and carry on. We had to take the decision. I am not saying it should continue because it is NYMT but it is actually filling a huge gap there. I would say it was 7,000 room nights in 2001. There must be a deal that we can do with a major hotel chain and I had

thought of the Youth Hostel Association but it may be something quite different from that, but we need help in how to go about that.

John Thurso: I had better declare my interest, Chairman, as I am deputy chairman of a listed plc of a hotel company.

Q49 Mr Bryant: I should declare an interest because I am an associate of the National Youth Theatre which means that if it folds I have to fork out £1, so it is not a big financial interest. I wanted to ask a bit about the relationship with the National Youth Theatre because the National Youth Theatre has done quite a lot of musicals over the last couple of years, it did *Maggie May*, *Blitz* and another one which I cannot remember the name of. It seems to me there is some overlapping here. I just wonder whether there is more work that you could do together.

Dr Semple: Absolutely, and I have already met the National Youth Theatre's chairman. What I want to be able to go to him with is a proposition—when we are out of this particular situation as we are not attractive to anyone at the moment in terms of talking about the future—for how we might look at our organisations and benefit from our joint expertise. An example is office space, that is just a simple thing and there are things we can be doing together without diluting the brands. Those conversations have begun, but I do not want to frighten the world out there by having them think we will be merging or something like that. That has not been discussed but we have given it thought.

Q50 Mr Bryant: Why would it be frightening for the world to say you were merging?

Dr Semple: Because of the state we are in at the moment. It might be that we will say, after we have got through this particular period, it seems sensible that the future looks like this in that we know National Youth Theatre have not got such a great regional presence as we do so should we pick that up? We know that they have wonderful premises and we do not. It is those sorts of things. When you talk of a merge people just hear the word and think both are going to get subsumed within something new. I want to qualify the merger with specifics. That is why I think outside people might be a bit frightened.

Q51 Mr Bryant: One of the historic problems has always been the Arts Council has only wanted to look in a very minor way at youth drama or theatre in any way at all and you have said today that you are never quite sure who to go to in DfES. I had understood that this area was meant to be with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It seems that there is no fixed point anywhere in Government to take this forward. Many of the arguments that have been advanced in terms of why youth musical theatre is so important are to do with the fact that young people who maybe are not all that interested in the academic route understand how to express themselves and can find theatre and drama or music very enlightening and helpful, and exposing people to the professionalism that the NYMT and NYT

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puts on them is a wholly different experience from just doing a play at school. How important do you think it is to try and get Government to focus its aim?

Dr Semple: Very much so, and it will only enhance the infrastructure and the sector and the form by doing so. Perhaps they already meet and they talk but I am not aware of the outcomes of that, other than Youth Music, who I see as the particular programme we benefit from, where there has been a successful relationship between the Department for Education and Skills and the Arts Council. If that is as a result of those two departments working together then I would say that is excellent and there might be other things that we could do to inform those departments of how else they might look at things. It is difficult for me to know exactly who to go to to have the conversation.

Mr Bryant: I suspect there is not anybody.

Q52 Mr Flook: I was interested to hear you say that the DfES were interested in knowing more about your plight and coming to help you. I presume I heard that right.

Dr Semple: Did you say the DfES or Youth Music?

Q53 Mr Flook: DfES.

Dr Semple: No, Youth Music is what I said.

Q54 Mr Flook: Sorry, I must have misheard you. What I want to look at is how the Government is involved in helping you through the Arts Council. On October 6 you put out a press release, but in the months running up to that internally you must have known that things were looking a little bit ropery. Did you approach them or were you approached by the Arts Council? Can you just take us through that more accurately?

Dr Semple: Every summer we sit biting our nails about the rest of the year and so in the summer, when it is our busiest season, we know that not only are we going to have cashflow problems but there will also be creditors mounting up and the promises and the pledges we hope would come in. Before the summer this year we looked at our programme and the board took the decision that we would run it because we had sufficient pledges to enable us to believe that we could pay what are now our creditors. At that time we worked very closely with Youth Music and continue to do so and they have been incredibly supportive. What we will be putting to our creditors as part of the success of this dreadful state that we are in is that those creditors that took part in the August programme we hope will be able to receive their fee because we hope that Youth Music is going to help us meet that cost.

Q55 Mr Flook: We probably misunderstand each other. I am not looking at whether you have done the right thing, I was looking at how active involvement funders have tried to help you. You have looked at it from your angle and said we can move forward, we are going to be solvent and that is very important as a

charity, etcetera and I do not deny for a moment that it would appear that you look as though you have done things absolutely correctly, you knew you were going forward. Did you put any calls in to the Arts Council and what was their response? Did they rush round and offer to help or did they say they would help you in November?

Dr Semple: No, they would not say that because I would carry on calling them. Youth Music is our point of contact, not the Arts Council. We have called and we have good relationships with Youth Music about our situation and they have been supportive, they have helped us through the thinking and they have provided resources to us in terms of their own staff expertise. There has not been an obstructive comment or view or lack of interest in our particular situation from Youth Music. I did not approach the DfES because they fund us for specific projects. Youth Music was the major player for me to go to.

Q56 Mr Flook: But you are nationally important. Did it not occur to the people that you were a point of contact for to think outside their own silo mentality and to say, if there is a shortage of money, where can we get the money from, where can we get our contacts to go to the Arts Council, to think outside the box? Did that happen?

Dr Semple: I suspect it did, but if I am honest, we have now been to ask for emergency funding at least on one occasion if not two and so we have had to draw on their resources again and their goodwill to help us and they have done so. I can only say this because I received phone calls from people to let them know the situation we are in. They really have helped.

Q57 Mr Flook: So Youth Music is funded by?

Dr Semple: The fund I am talking about that Youth Music holds has come about, as I understand it, from collaboration with the Arts Council of England and the DfES. I am sure DCMS is in there somewhere, but from my perspective that is how that fund is made up.

Q58 Mr Flook: I understand that DCMS funds the Arts Council. The reason for asking all these questions is that somewhere along the line the Arts Council, which is in charge of Youth Music, which is funded by the DCMS, which we scrutinise, does not seem to have gone up. Has a response from the DCMS to your plight been commensurate—and you may or may not be aware of this—with its first strategic priority which is to increase the access of children and young people to culture?

Dr Semple: Not yet.

Chairman: Dr Semple, thank you very much indeed. We are most grateful to you. I have got to say this and I am not saying it in anticipation of any decline in standards when we get the Arts Council, but I believe that these are some of the most outstanding witnesses that this Committee has heard for a very long time. Thank you.

Memorandum submitted by Arts Council England

BRIDEWELL THEATRE

ROLE

Arts Council England values the work of the Bridewell Theatre and considers that it contributes to the infrastructure for developing Music Theatre in three ways:

- Development, production and presentation of new Musical Theatre
- Skills development in Musical Theatre for professionals and young people
- Provision of a London showcase for touring music theatre companies to stage their work, often following development at a venue such as BAC, and prior to national touring.

Currently the Bridewell's contribution in these strategic areas is emergent but it has potential to further develop its role.

FUNDING HISTORY

The Bridewell has received significant project funding in the past for capital development, organisational development, youth programmes and the production of musicals. This includes four grants totalling £64,000 since December last year and a total since 1997 of £171,691. A full list is attached—see Annex 1.

In 2001, following the Theatre Review, Arts Council London, then London Arts, held a competitive tender for organisations requiring two-year venue development funding to support the costs of artistic programming (£30,000 per annum from 2002–03). The Bridewell was one of a limited number of venues invited to apply but was not successful. The Theatre was given clear feedback on the weaknesses in its proposal.

Arts Council London recently began an evaluation of the two-year funding programme with a view to running a similar programme for 2004–05 to 2005–06. Tenders to the new programme are due to be invited at the beginning of December 2003, with funding decisions confirmed by the end of February 2004. Arts Council London anticipates that the Bridewell will be asked to tender a proposal for the new programme.

In general, the Arts Council's London office notes a strengthening relationship with and increased investment in the theatre over recent years.

CURRENT SITUATION AT BRIDEWELL

The Bridewell has provided regular briefings to Arts Council London about its current premises and future options. Following discussion at a meeting in May 2003 the Bridewell successfully applied to the new Grants for the Arts programme for £16,600 to support consultancy work and to buy management time to focus on securing the theatre's future. Arts Council London has also offered support, advice and access to key contacts if required.

The Bridewell Theatre does have the potential to develop its contribution to music theatre, particularly in the field of musicals. However, a question mark hangs over both the long-term home of the Bridewell and the viability of the theatre's revenue operation.

In considering the possibility of future core revenue support for the Bridewell, the Arts Council needs to take account of the following:

- The increase in rental and the loss of the Institute's grant represents an immediate revenue shortfall for the theatre of around £110,000 per year. However, the funding requirement is not limited to this figure.
- The Arts Council actively encourages local partnership funding for the arts organisations it supports. In almost no circumstance would the Arts Council replace local funding.
- Without a corresponding enhancement in the artistic activity and strategic role of the theatre, subsidy could offer poor value for money. Substantial organisational growth would require still further investment in the theatre's infrastructure.
- The Bridewell does not currently pay union minimum rates to all staff and artistic personnel for all projects and this is a condition of core revenue funding from the Arts Council. Although it might be possible to negotiate a staged introduction of union rates with Equity a minimum starting point would be 50% and increased revenue for subsequent years would need to be identified.

The economy of the Bridewell Theatre is problematic because:

- musicals as a form are relatively expensive to produce
- the development of new work is costly

- the Bridewell’s scale and intimacy—though ideal for its development role—means that its box office potential is necessarily limited
- there is a ceiling to prices that can be charged for developmental or unproven new work
- the Bridewell lacks the commercial partnerships and associated income streams one might expect to find in US models
- The Arts Council has already committed its resources available for revenue funding for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

Consequently, the Arts Council is of the view that core revenue funding at a sufficient level to meet the above needs is currently beyond our resources.

The Arts Council is considering the Bridewell’s potential for entry to the Recovery programme. However Recovery can only provide a bridge to a sustainable future. Such a future is not yet clear.

The Arts Council remains keen to work with the Bridewell to further develop its artistic and strategic contribution to Musical Theatre over the next few years with a view to considering core revenue funding in future if funds permit.

Annex 1

PROJECT GRANTS TO THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE

1996 (to St Brides Institute)	N/A	To refurbish café
October 1997	£90,000	To convert building into theatre and purchase of equipment
January 1998	£12,000	Towards costs of collected works of <i>Billy the Kid</i> in July/Aug 1998
June 1998	£5,000	Towards audience development strategy for lunchtime theatre and new writing at the Bridewell
July 2000	£550	To visit Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago to view <i>Ballard of Little Jo</i> for a possible presentation in London
December 2002	£30,000	Towards production costs of Notes across a small pond in Autumn 2003 (perf is 29 Oct—15 Nov)
June 2003	£11,561	Youth Theatre—Towards the costs of a series of Musical Theatre workshops for up to 60 young people aged 13–26 taking place between September 2003 and July 2004 and leading to small scale theatre performances at the end of each term.
June 2003	£5,980	Disabled Access—Purchase and installation of a replacement stair lift to enhance disabled access to the theatre
September 2003	£16,600	Consultancy for options appraisal on future home for Bridewell

MUSICAL THEATRE

INTRODUCTION

Musical Theatre remains one of the most popular forms of entertainment in England and is an area that employs a considerable number of performers and musicians. 24% of the population have attended a piece of Musical Theatre in the last twelve months (*Arts in England*, Skelton *et al*, Arts Council England, London, 2002). Evidence suggests that the audience for musicals has increased by a higher rate than for other performing art forms over the last 10 years and that people who attend Musicals are broadly ranged across socio-economic groups.

Musical Theatre refers to a body of work where the text (or “book”) is the primary theatrical force alongside the musical score. Sometimes a production is entirely sung, sometimes interspersed with dialogue. Musical Theatre embraces the classic American Musical tradition alongside the European Operetta tradition. Dance is often a key component of the staging. Musical Theatre is a hybrid art form where a number of genres come together.

Within a wider context, Musical Theatre is part of a wider range of theatrical work referred to as Music Theatre, which includes Opera at one end of the spectrum and Musical Theatre at the other. Music Theatre represents a very broad range of work defined as a partnership between Music and Drama where the combination of the two elements form a theatrical presentation in which the whole is more powerful than its constituent parts.

Musical Theatre is a significant genre, not simply because of its wide appeal but as an area where new experimental work is being developed. It is also noteworthy that new Musicals have been championed by Black and minority ethnic artists and companies. In the commercial sector both *Bombay Dreams* and *The Lion King* are significant, while in the subsidised sector NITRO and Theatre Royal Stratford East have both contributed towards the development of the form and widening audiences for Musical Theatre.

Arts Council England engages with Musical Theatre in a number of ways, which we describe further in this paper.

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND'S POLICY IN RELATION TO MUSICAL THEATRE

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed not only an explosion in the popularity of commercial musicals in the West End but also tours of these musicals around the country. This included new musicals. At that time the Arts Council believed that the commercial sector would provide sufficient investment in new musicals to ensure the development of the art-form. The Arts Council, in the context of the restricted funding levels of the period, therefore chose not to support the development of new Musical Theatre.

However, it was recognised that middle scale touring companies needed support to enable access, and the Arts Council funded some activity, notably The New Shakespeare Company based at the Regent's Park Theatre. Many regularly funded theatres staged musicals in that period, but these tended to be classic musicals rather than new musicals.

The advent of Lottery funds allowed a reassessment of this policy and in 1999, the Arts Council developed a partnership with the Cameron Mackintosh Foundation to offer a one-off opportunity to organisations in receipt of A4E (Lottery) awards towards commissioning costs of new work for production. The Cameron Mackintosh Foundation devoted £350,000 to this initiative and several of the beneficiaries developed Music or Musical Theatre projects, including a newly commissioned pub opera in the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival; 60 young people creating a new piece of musical theatre in Millfield; Musical Theatre writing workshops at Theatre Royal Stratford East and the use of new technology in West Yorkshire Playhouse's *Singin' In the Rain*, which eventually moved to the National Theatre and then the West End.

In 2000–01 the Arts Council partnered the Theatre Investment Fund, contributing £85,000 since that time to new producer bursaries. These are not exclusive to producers of Musicals but several of the recipients are working in this field.

The 2001 Theatre Review also enabled an increase in resources for Musical Theatre, both through a limited number of specialist companies (see below) and through the core funding of regional organisations such as Leicester Haymarket, Sheffield Theatres, Plymouth Theatre Royal, the Watermill, Theatre Royal Stratford East who were notable producers of musicals. (See Annex A.)

CURRENT SUPPORT FOR MUSICAL THEATRE FROM ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Through the regularly funded portfolio of arts organisations

Each of the four large-scale regularly funded Opera companies embrace Musical Theatre within their core programme of Music Theatre. They have produced a range of work at the Musical Theatre end of the spectrum. A list of recent projects is given at Annex B.

The Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre both have a strong tradition of producing high quality Musicals and Music Theatre. Some productions including *Les Misérables* (RSC) and *Anything Goes* (NT) have subsequently transferred to London's West End under commercial management. Such transfers have contributed towards the overall economy of both companies.

Eighteen per cent of Arts Council regularly funded theatre companies produced a modern musical (post-1960) in 2001–02. Some, such as Sheffield Theatres have replaced the Christmas pantomime with a musical production. Annex A includes a list of Arts Council funded theatres that are producing Musical theatre as part of their programme.

Grants for national touring

Between 1996 and 2002, the Arts Council has supported a number of touring productions of Musical Theatre works. Funds in this area have been allocated from two main sources—the Arts Council's National Touring Programme and the Barclays Stage Partners Scheme. Total funds in excess of £500k have been invested in this area. A table showing the detail of this investment is shown at Annex C.

Through funding for the development of new work

In March 2003, the Arts Council launched a new suite of funding programmes under the broad heading of *Grants for the Arts*. This replaces all previous project funding streams for the Arts Council and Regional Arts Boards. The programme has three key strands:

- Grants for Individual Artists;
- Grants for organisations, and;
- Grants for National Touring.

This funding stream allows recipients to develop work and experiment, for instance through workshops, without being committed to produce a piece of work. For new projects that involve collaborations between artists this development process is essential.

Musical Theatre has equal access to project funds alongside the full range of other art-forms. This is a major step forward in the Arts Council's relationship with the sector. In the first six months of this programme, the majority of applications to the *Grants for the Arts* scheme for the development of new Musical Theatre, were sent to the London office. A total of five awards have been made receiving total investment of over £50,000. The detail of these awards is listed at Annex D.

It is important to emphasise the situation of Musical Theatre within the wider family of Music Theatre. ACE has made substantial investment in the development, commissioning, creation and touring of new Music Theatre (including new Chamber Opera, and a range of new work involving music and theatre).

KEY ISSUES RELATING TO SUBSIDISED MUSICAL THEATRE FOR THE FUTURE

It is clear that there are several key issues for the Arts Council to consider in the development of the Musical Theatre sector:

- Developing new musicals.
- The relationship between the subsidised and commercial sector.
- The infrastructure for promoters of new musicals.
- Skills development and networking opportunities for practitioners in this sector.

Developing new musicals

Art-form risk and experiment tends to occur on the small to middle scale in all theatrical forms. There are a number of organisations which have identified Musical Theatre as a specific area for development. In the last three years we have increased our investment into these significantly. These are:

<i>Arts Council funding</i>	<i>2000–01</i>	<i>2003–04</i>	<i>% change</i>
Battersea Arts Centre*	126,600	425,064	236%
The Bridewell Theatre	550	30,000	project awards
Greenwich Theatre	0	60,000	—
NITRO	144,165	220,000	53%
Theatre Royal Stratford East*	431,461	749,749	74%*

*Increased investment not exclusively for Musical Theatre development.

Other agencies that have a role in developing musical theatre include: Dance UK, International Festival of Musical Theatre in Cardiff, Mercury Musical Development, The Performing Rights Society Foundation (PRSF) and The Theatre Investment Fund (TIF). A very brief snapshot of the work of each of these organisations is given at Annex E.

Black and minority ethnic practitioners are having success in attracting new audiences to the theatre as they develop new musicals. For instance a musical such as *Da Boyz* (Theatre Royal Stratford East) uses the influence of black street culture, such as hip hop, is popular with young, black audiences. Nitrobeat brought a young, predominantly black, audience to the South Bank.

Alongside core funding, Grants for the Arts will remain a key mechanism to enable small organisations to access support for developing work.

Partnerships between the commercial and subsidised sectors

Partnerships between the two sectors are one of the main strengths of Musical Theatre. Collaborations can take various forms, ranging from seed-funding a new project, co-producing, and commercial exploitation of a show produced in the subsidised sector. Much of this work focuses on large-scale musicals rather than with smaller scale projects.

Five of the 17 musicals currently running in London's West-End (*source: Time Out, Sept 24–October 1st 2003*) have origins in the subsidised sector. Successful productions can generate lucrative returns and the most notable example of this is the RSC's production of *Les Miserables*, which at its height in the mid 1990s generated approximately £1 million per year to the RSC in exploitation income. This is not typical of the levels of return that most transfers can expect.

The National Theatre benefited from a £1 million trust established by Cameron Mackintosh to enable it to produce musicals. Many of these have enjoyed commercial success in the West End and abroad. The National Theatre continues to place a proportion of profits from commercial exploitation of its musicals into its Musicals fund.

The 1990's witnessed the development of the Musicals Alliance between Plymouth Theatre Royal, The Mayflower in Southampton and the New Victoria, Woking. The concept was to generate large-scale musicals to tour, allowing subsidised producers to share the risk of these with commercial producers. Two musicals (*A Chorus Line* and *Smokey Joe's Café*) were produced through this partnership.

Commercial producers will occasionally put seed-funding into the development of new musicals by a subsidised producer. For instance *Jerry Springer—The Opera* received a small investment from commercial producers at its outset, which alongside Arts Council funding, allowed the first workshop to take place at Battersea Arts Centre.

Arts Council England has recently launched an initiative to strengthen and support relationships between the two theatre sectors. This does not exclusively relate to musicals but it is anticipated that significant partnerships between the two sectors will continue. The initiative includes the commission and publication of *Relationships between subsidised and commercial theatre* by Robert Cogo-Fawcett and a partnership with the Theatre Investment Fund to run seminars, a helpline and a mentoring programme for subsidised producers considering working with commercial partners. The aim is to strengthen confidence and skills of subsidised theatre producers for developing and negotiating these partnerships.

Strengthening the infrastructure for:

- promoters of new musicals.
- skills development and networking opportunities for practitioners in the Musical Theatre sector. Arts Council England believes that these areas would benefit from further strengthening. The last 10 years have seen a growing number of Higher Education institutions offering professional training, specifically within Musical Theatre, listed as Annex F.

However once practitioners have embarked on a career in musical theatre there is little infrastructure to help them develop their business or creative skills further.

Arts Council England is convinced of the artistic value of Musical Theatre and is committed to its development, particularly in the areas of new writing and partnerships with the commercial sector. Over recent years, in a small way, the Arts Council has enabled the sector to develop—both in terms of innovation and infrastructure as described above. We will continue to actively seek ways in which we can develop partnerships with others to help further develop the sector.

FOOTNOTE ON FUNDING

Arts Council England announced its budgets for 2003–06 in March 2003. In 2004–06, the only new source of funding for the musical theatre sector is through our open application programme, Grants for the Arts.

We are currently evaluating the impact of the £25 million invested in theatre through the Theatre Review. We believe that this has had a profoundly beneficial effect on theatre in this country. However, we were clear at the time of the settlement that it could not address all areas of theatre.

We are about to go into the next Government Spending Review in a tough economic climate. We expect to hear the outcome in Summer 2004. We will then know the resources available to the arts in 2005–06 and 2007–08 and be in a position to determine the areas in which we can expand our support.

Annex A

KEY THEATRE ORGANISATIONS, REGULARLY FUNDED
BY ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND, THAT PRODUCE MUSICAL THEATRE

Battersea Arts Centre
 Belgrade Theatre Coventry
 Bristol Old Vic
 Bolton Octagon
 Chichester Festival Theatre
 Contact Theatre, Manchester
 The Courtyard Theatre, Hereford
 Derby Playhouse
 Donmar Warehouse
 Harrogate Theatre
 Lawrence Batley Theatre
 Leicester Haymarket Theatre
 London Bubble
 New Victoria Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme
 New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich
 NITRO
 Nottingham Playhouse
 Nuffield Theatre, Southampton
 Plymouth Theatre Royal
 Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch
 Royal National Theatre
 Royal Shakespeare Company
 Sheffield Theatres Trust
 Tamasha
 Theatre Royal Stratford East
 Watermill, Newbury
 West Yorkshire Playhouse
 Young Vic, London

Annex B

THE LARGE SCALE OPERA COMPANIES PRODUCING MUSICAL THEATRE

- The Royal Opera will present Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* in December of this year.
- English National Opera has a long history of presenting Musical Theatre from *The Mikado* to Weill's *Street Scene* and Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures*. *In its future plans it intends to include explore classic Broadway Musicals within its core programme.*
- Opera North has a track record of producing Musicals including *Showboat* (in collaboration with the commercial sector) and *Of Thee I Sing* (Gershwin) and more recently Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*.
- Welsh National Opera has included Viennese Operetta and Gilbert and Sullivan within its core programme.
- Glyndebourne has developed a number of new works for young people, in partnership with the BBC—*Zoe* and *Misper* being recent examples.

Annex C

ACE FUNDED* TOURING OF MUSICAL THEATRE

<i>Company</i>	<i>Production</i>	<i>Subsidy</i>
Michael Rose	Marlene	£56,060
Cultural Industry	Shockheaded Peter	£86,594
New Shakespeare Co.	Gentlemen Prefer Blondes	£90,290
KH Wax	Honk	£176,276
UK Arts Intl/Fifth Amendment	Inner City Jam	£108,250
Total Subsidy		£517,470

*Includes partnership with Barclays Stage Partners.

Annex D

ARTS COUNCIL, LONDON: GRANTS AWARDED THROUGH GRANTS FOR THE ARTS FOR MUSIC THEATRE ACTIVITY SINCE MAY 2003

<i>Company</i>	<i>Project/Activity</i>	<i>Subsidy</i>
City of London Sinfonia	Amadeus	£20,000
Bridewell Theatre	Strategic Planning for the Future	£16,600
Joseph Trehy	The Nothing (The Musical)	£5,000
Ben Glasstone	Developing Aesop	£4,989
Tête à Tête Productions	Phase One—Family Matters	£4,908
Total Subsidy		£51,497

Annex E

COMPANIES AND AGENCIES THAT HAVE IDENTIFIED MUSICAL THEATRE AS A SPECIFIC AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT

BATTERSEA ARTS CENTRE (BAC)

- Mount an annual season of new Music Theatre work.
- BAC functions as a laboratory for the creation and development of new forms of Music Theatre, including Opera and Musicals.
- Key strands include “scratch” nights—initial development and work—shopping ideas and the main stage showcasing of finished pieces of work, prior to national touring or transfers to other London venues?
- Has actively fostered the work of a number of key companies; Tête à Tête productions, The Gogmagogs and The Shout?
- Provided time, space and funds for the creation and development of *Jerry Springer: the Opera*.

THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE

- Mounts productions of new (normally American) Musical Theatre: *The Ballad of Little Jo*, *On A Clear Day You Can see Forever*, *Hello Again*, *Song for a New World*, *Floyd Collins* and world premieres of *Saturday Night* and *Eyam*.
- Last year the venue received London Arts development funding for work on a production of *Notes across a Small Pond*—a collaboration of work from young writers in the USK and US to create three one act new musicals in Autumn 2003.
- Bridewell Theatre also provide “lunchbox” productions—50 minutes of lunchtime plays, comedy and musicals, for local/commuter audiences—this has a 50% new writing element.

- Has played a key role as a London showcase venue for a range of finished work, often originally developed by BAC. Recent examples include Tête à Tête's *Six Pack* and their forthcoming production of *Family Matters*.

DANCE UK

- Dance UK is a professional development organisation, working to support healthier dance practice and career development for the dance profession.
- It is regularly funded by Arts Council England (£140,694 in 2003–04).
- Dance UK's *Healthier Dancer* programmes include musicals. In the case of the dancers in *Cats* the programme resulted in a significant reduction in dancer injury levels. This practice has been adopted by the *Lion King*.
- Research carried out in 2001 showed that 55% of choreographers work in musicals on an occasional basis.
- Dance UK—with partnership funding from the Gulbenkian Foundation—organises a programme of development work for choreographers, predominantly working in non-dance led organisations (such as musicals). This includes: *Choreoforum*, an annual meeting for choreographers, to network and exchange good practice; observerships where choreographers are given opportunities to observe each other in different professional settings; and assistant choreographer placements.

GREENWICH THEATRE

- In May 2000, the venue launched *Musical Futures*: a showcase of the early stages of Musical development. This has led to a number of successful project applicants to support the future development of these works.
- In partnership with Trinity College of Music and Negus Sixth Form Centre, the venue has recently launched a new course in Musical Theatre—*Greenwich Musical Theatre Academy*. This is funded by Learning and Skills Council and Greenwich Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. It aims to provide a foundation course in singing, dancing and acting skills for young people prior to their applying to drama schools.
- The venue also runs Professional and Junior Artists' Networks—for local area participants.

THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MUSICAL THEATRE IN CARDIFF

- Inaugurated in October 2002 in partnership with the BBC and Cardiff City Council? An international event to celebrate Musical Theatre, comprising existing and new work on the large, middle and small scales.
- The second Festival is expected to take place in the Spring of 2005 to coincide with the centenary of the City of Cardiff and the opening of the new Wales Millennium Centre.

MERCURY MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT (MMD)

- Founded in 2001, MMD exists to support writers and composers of musical theatre. It is a new charitable organisation, which evolved from the merger of Mercury Workshop (a writer based organisation dedicated to the development and presentation of new Musical Theatre) and New Musicals Alliance (formed from UK Festival of Musicals and the worldwide Quest for New Musicals).
- It receives no government funding—operating and project costs are from earned income, sponsorship, grants from trusts and foundations, support from organisations and companies and gifts from individuals.
- It has developed a number of partnerships with the commercial sector and supporters include Nicholas Hytner, Sir Cameron Mackintosh, Julia McKenzie, Stephen Sondheim, George Stiles, Anthony Drewe, Ambassadors Theatre Group, Trevor Nunn, Jerwood Space, The Really Useful Group, and EMI Music Publishing.
- A new work development programme was started three years ago supporting new writers to work with directors, choreographers and performers.

NITRO

- Formerly Black Theatre Co-operative, NITRO is a black-led Musical Theatre company performing new Musical Theatre work by a number of black writers and composers.
- NITRO undertakes an extensive programme of middle scale national touring.
- NITRO has devised a new work development programme called NITROBEAT—this has included a festival examining the impact of culturally diverse music genres on new Musical Theatre.
- NITRO co-produces work with regional theatres such as the new Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich; the Sheffield Crucible and the Manchester Contact.
- NITRO is a partner company with the Royal Opera House's ROH2 programme. In November they will mount *Nitro at the Opera (NATO)*—a one day festival of new work showcasing the work of black composers in Opera.

THE PERFORMING RIGHTS SOCIETY FOUNDATION (PRSF)

- PRSF is the largest independent funder of new music of any genre and a major advocate of music activities including Musical Theatre.
- The Music Theatre projects it currently supports include Absolute Theatre, Half Moon Theatre, Music Theatre Wales, National Youth Theatre, Opera Circus and Wilson Wilson Company.

THE THEATRES INVESTMENT FUND (TIF)

- TIF is a registered charity offering financial assistance to commercial ventures—new productions and new producers—generally at the more experienced end of the scale and at the later stage of production development.
- It offers bursary schemes, courses and advice for new Producers and offers up to 10% of funds or a maximum of £15,000, depending of the budget requested, for productions. The Arts Council has contributed £85,000 to this programme.
- TIF has recently launched a partnership with the Arts Council, to support theatre managers from the subsidised sector who are considering working in the commercial sector.

THE THEATRE ROYAL, STRATFORD EAST (TRSE)

- TRSE created the first British professional black and Asian director's course in the late 1990s and currently run one of the only training courses for writers, composers and lyricists to create new musical theatre, championing the work of black and asian actors and writers, and attracting ethnically diverse audiences.
- They have an Annual Musical Theatre showcase which aims to involve and encourage musicians and writers new to musical theatre. Emphasis is on Hip-Hop, rap and sca, although not to the exclusion of other forms and fusions in music.
- Past productions include, *Five Guys named Mo*, *Ragamuffin*, *Baju Bawra*, *Aeroplane Man* and *Da Boyz* (drawn from *The Boys of Syracuse*).
- TRSE are hoping their next production will be *The Big Life* by Paul Sirett (drawn from *Loves Labours Lost*) with ska music.

Annex F

LIST OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OFFERING ACCREDITED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN MUSICAL THEATRE

Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts

The Royal Academy of Music

The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama

Trinity College of Music

Guildford School of Acting (also known as The Guildford Conservatoire for Acting & Musical Theatre)

Mountview Theatre School

The Arts Educational Schools of London

13 October 2003

Witnesses: Ms Sarah Weir, Executive Director, Arts Council London, *Ms Nicola Thorold*, Arts Council England, examined.

Q59 Chairman: Thank you very much indeed for coming to see us and although I ought not to say this, I find it extremely satisfying that seven out of our nine witnesses today have been women. Sometimes the balance is far too much the other way and that is no reflection on the male witnesses we have had this morning.

Ms Weir: Chairman, may I make an introductory statement?

Q60 Chairman: Yes, of course.

Ms Weir: Thank you very much. Firstly, Arts Council England very much welcomes the opportunity to talk to the Committee and I would like particularly to say that Nicola and I welcome this opportunity because this is the first time that you see us in the guise of the new Arts Council England with me as Executive Director of London and Nicola as the Director of Theatre looking at the policy for the whole of England. Musical theatre is part of the much bigger genre of Music Theatre, including opera. Having said that, musicals are the most popular form of live performance that we subsidise. We know that the impact of West End Theatre as a whole is significant. In 1997 the economic impact on the UK economy was approximately £1 billion with 41,000 jobs depending on West End Theatre. As the Committee will know and has been discussed this morning, musicals are a major component of that. It is easy to be dazzled by the big musicals and the huge successes of productions such as *Les Miserables*, *Phantom of the Opera* and the *Lion King*, all of which were new pieces of work when they first appeared, but quite rightly, we believe, you have chosen to focus on the artistic development of musical theatre and the smaller scale production. Our engagement with musical theatre covers all scales and both new music and classical musicals. We want it to be put clearly on record that we value this genre, not just for its popularity or its economic importance but also for its potential to develop artists and as a medium for artistic experimentation. The briefing paper we have provided for you covers the history of our interaction with musicals but in summary I would like to say that, in recent years, with the recent growth of our funds, we have adopted a more proactive and developmental approach to music theatre. It is true that in the 1980s and 1990s we chose not to prioritise this area given our restricted funds and the involvement of private investment in musical theatre. The Arts Council also supports musicals whether through the repertoire of our regularly funded clients, the Royal Opera House, the National Theatre or the Plymouth Theatre Royal. We do know that these musicals tend not to be new musicals. The most fertile area for the development of new musicals is undoubtedly the smaller organisations such as the Bridewell, Battersea Arts Centre and NITRO. The economic risk for larger organisations is a factor that mitigates against them developing the work but just as importantly, the process of developing the work is often more appropriate for the smaller developmental

organisations. We offer core funding to some companies that develop new musical work, as we outlined in our paper, and importantly too, we have restructured our project funds to ensure equal access to them from all art forms and that includes practitioners in the field of musical theatre. This is the programme called Grants for the Arts and over the next few years it has a budget of £28 million for individual artists and £123 million for organisations. This is a major step and in the first six months of the new programme we are starting to see a large number of companies and individuals coming forward and taking advantage of this new programme. For example, we have offered two grants to individuals to develop their ideas for musicals at a very early stage which would not have been possible before. The Arts Council no longer holds earmarked funds for particular sub-sectors of an art form. For example, we have rolled our previously ring-fenced fund for theatre writers into the new Grants for the Arts scheme. It is worth noting that the development of new musical work encourages collaborations not only between artists but in terms of backers for ventures. Our experience is that some commercial producers have been willing to seed-fund new work but not on the considerably larger scale that happens in the US. The Arts Council has had a partnership with the Cameron Mackintosh Foundation to encourage new work and we are also aware of other partnerships such as Barclays that have benefited the development of work or artists. We recently launched an initiative to strengthen the relationships between the commercial and subsidised theatre sectors which Mr Cogofawcett spoke at and we described that in our paper, and we hope that is going to be a useful contribution to the infrastructure for producers of musicals whether big or small. We are convinced of the artistic value of musical theatre and committed to its development. We feel we have enabled the sector to develop both in terms of innovation and infrastructure, but we also recognise that there is much more to do. However, to build on the existing successes further would require significant additional resources which we do not have at the moment. Thank you very much, Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you.

Q61 Mr Doran: That is a very helpful opening statement as it adds a little bit to what you have said in your written submission. I am still concerned as it appears to me as a novice in this area from the evidence that I have heard that there is a lack of structure. You have obviously changed strategy in the fairly recent past and that was acknowledged by the Bridewell witnesses we heard earlier and you have been open about the fact that there are not the funds to devote that perhaps you would like to devote. In terms of the structural change which would see organisations like the Bridewell see their fortunes improve a little, what changes do you see that would be appropriate over the next few years to

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try and close that gap between the financially successful musicals at the top of the tree and those like the Bridewell?

Ms Weir: I am going to ask my colleague Nicola Thorold to answer that.

Ms Thorold: It is a very complex issue because it is not solely about the development of work. If we are going to talk about the pyramid that has been discussed which at the moment is inverted, you are not just talking about the training and development of artists and practitioners and the new writing of both musical and book in this context, you are also talking about the promoter network which does not really exist, you are talking about an infrastructure where you would have probably an agency that could help with some of the issues you have been touching on which is not just about the work itself but about the partners and the range of partners that can come into this sector. That is where we say this is important. We can see that there are things that need to be done but it would not be cheap and we do not have the resources at this time to be the initiator.

Q62 Mr Doran: There must be an issue about the way you allocate resources at the moment. Just looking at your own paper, page 5, we heard earlier that Bridewell is the theatre dedicated to new musical works whereas Battersea may have one every now and again, but the disparity between the amount of grants which each receives seems to be quite significant.

Ms Thorold: I would argue that Battersea has more than a one-off relationship with musicals.

Q63 Mr Doran: I did not say one-off but every now and again.

Ms Thorold: They do develop work.

Q64 Mr Doran: It is not their main focus.

Ms Thorold: It is one of their main focuses. They developed *Jerry Springer the Opera*, they are a player. Greenwich Theatre is also a player in this area and then Stratford East or NITRO. The Bridewell is a key player, undoubtedly, but it is not unique.

Q65 Mr Doran: But they do not seem to have any core funding. According to your paper on the grants which they receive, it is £30,000 by way of project awards as opposed to core funding.

Ms Weir: You are quite correct, they do not receive core funding. We cannot core fund every single organisation, I think that is the truth of it and we have been working closely with the Bridewell to develop a relationship with them and we asked them to put themselves forward for project funding a couple of years ago. Although that was not successful, we are going to ask them to do the same this December and we are working with them to help them make that grant possible.

Q66 Mr Doran: So there is the possibility of core funding in the future?

Ms Weir: It would not be core funding, it would be a specific grant for genre development and it would be a two-year grant, it would be £30,000 a year for the next two years.

Q67 Mr Doran: The other issue which was raised by the Bridewell in their submission was the fact that they are lumped together with theatre and that is obvious from the way that you set out your grant awards. Musical theatre is not really a separate speciality. Is there likely to be any change to that in the future?

Ms Weir: I was interested to hear that point, but we do not have specialists in every single area. As I think you will be very aware, with the restructuring of the Arts Council one of the things we wanted to achieve was to cut our costs so that as much money as possible can go to the arts and we are there to enable the arts to flourish, we do not want that money to be spent on the administration in the middle. We do not have specialists, for example, in classical theatre. Nicola would expect her teams to know about theatre across the spectrum. Our theatre teams and our music teams work extremely closely together. With the change that we have made, with people being able to apply for grants for the arts right across the genre, I do not think that is a problem.

Q68 Mr Doran: They think it is a problem because it means there is not a proper focus within the Arts Council.

Ms Thorold: I do not believe that is the case. I think that the focus is there for musical theatre just as it is for theatre or as it is for music.

Q69 Mr Doran: But you have advisers for physical theatre, for performance and for art, opera and ballet.

Ms Thorold: We do not. That was perhaps a misunderstanding on the part of the Bridewell who made that claim.

Q70 Mr Doran: What do you have then?

Ms Thorold: We have theatre officers.

Q71 Mr Doran: And you cannot dedicate one of these to be a specialist in musical theatre?

Ms Thorold: Not without creating a new post.

Q72 Alan Keen: You have not got enough money as far as I am concerned and you are concerned. Let me just take the NYMT as an example. I can understand the big productions they put on. I would accept and I would be confident that funding could be acquired for that sort of thing and I think Maggie Semple confirmed that. What concerns me more than anything is the lack of opportunity for young people to know what is possible. This question is not directed at the Arts Council but generally speaking. Those of us who care about the theatres and realise the value of musical theatre know you are restricted through a lack of funds. How can we get the Department for Education to understand the value of it as part of the education of our young people?

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Ms Weir: I think the example Maggie Semple was talking about is a very good example of us working closely together because in that partnership we delegate £10 million to youth music. That partnership was with the DfES and it is out of that £10 million that funds then go to the National Youth Music Theatre, so we are working in that particular area. She also in her statement, or I think you in your question asked about new research that was done to show whether these opportunities do make a difference and the answer is they do and research has been done by the Arts Council not just with the DfES, but also with the Youth Justice Board. There was a programme called Splash* which we ran last year which was run again this summer which showed exactly that, that when young people have other things to do in the holidays than just being out on the streets, then yes, the crime in that area goes down, they feel more confident about themselves and there is quite a direct correlation between the two.

Q73 Alan Keen: Do you, as the experts in the field, get involved in the discussions on the general education curriculum or do the educationalists decide what they want to do, where they want to spend the mass of the money and then they give you a little bit and you do your best? Are you involved with the discussions on the curriculum and how can we, as politicians, really help to redress that balance and focus?

Ms Thorold: We do have discussions with the DfES and indeed with the DCMS on a reasonably regular basis about issues like that and I think it is probably worth noting, because of the way your conversations were going earlier, that we have with the last increase in award from government significantly increased the amount of money we have made available to youth organisations. The National Youth Theatre was on £15,000 a year last year, it is on £100,000 this year and by 2005–06 it will be on £200,000. That came out of discussions with the DfES and the DCMS about the value and indeed about the new Arts Council and its priorities, but you are right, there is always more that can be done in terms of the conversation and the importance that is attributed to it.

Q74 Alan Keen: Going back to the research, and John asked about research, what else can you do to make sure that this research is taken notice of or am I wrong and it is not of such wonderful value to children to be involved in musical productions and just in music itself? What has the research produced? I know there is a lot of research now about obesity and that sort of thing and how a healthier lifestyle can put that right and the Sports Minister actually involved the All-Party Athletics Group and we were told by the Sports Minister to concentrate on a healthy lifestyle because that is where the biggest budget is in the Exchequer, so concentrate on that. In our case we are talking today about musical theatre, so what has that research shown and can we not go further in that? Is that something the Arts Council can do?

Ms Weir: That research does show that it has an effect and we make sure that we talk to both the DCMS and the DfES, but in one sense the strongest example, and I wish I could transport all of you to where I was last Friday, is a composer called Jonathan Dove, of whom some of you might have heard, and he has been commissioned by the Spitalfields Festival to do a community cantata. He is working in a school in Tower Hamlets and he let some of us into a very early workshop where he was developing his ideas with those children, they were 10-year-olds, and we actually then had to become involved and do a song-and-dance routine, but when you saw the way he worked with the children, who do not in a way think they are getting culture, it is just a part of their day, it was completely extraordinary, so it helped him do his work and the children who started at the beginning of the session, particularly the boys, not being very engaged, probably thought it was not really their thing, by the end were completely entranced with what they had produced, so you just have to actually see it and it is always the strongest message of anything.

Q75 Alan Keen: It seems to me that people look at the arts and they say, “It’s a good thing and we should give some money to that”, but it does not seem to play an important part in the actual education curriculum and that to me is where the mass of money is available and it should be part of education. I am speaking, as I mentioned earlier, from my own experience where it was rammed down my throat as culture and I rejected it because I would rather play football and it was not until later in life that I realised the tremendous value of it. That is what I am worried about. How do we get the people with the large budgets at their fingertips to understand the enormous value in this? How do we do it?

Ms Thorold: The Arts Council agrees with you and we do try and advocate this whenever possible. I think when it comes to the curriculum we have a particular issue which I feel strongly about which is that theatre is not part of the curriculum and music is. That has been made possible for all sorts of opportunities for music in schools which are not available for theatre in schools, so there are all sorts of issues that we, as the Arts Council, would love to be able to address. Musicals, crossing music and theatre, one could perhaps see coming through the music curriculum, but theatre at the moment is not in the curriculum and this is an issue for us. We would welcome any support to raise the profile of those issues. I seem to remember a few years ago that there was some American research which suggested that people’s mathematical ability was improved by their music skills. At the time it got some attention back from the press, but, as ever with these things, they are one-day wonders and they go away and it is only people like us who actually remember that that is the case.

Ms Weir: Could I just make one other point to add to that which is that we have a programme which actually comes directly from the DCMS called Creative Partnerships, which some of you might have heard of, and that is a partnership where artists work with schools to develop, across all areas of creativity,

* Please see supplementary memorandum on page Ev 38

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opportunities for children to develop themselves, so it is not just theatre, it is not just music, but it actually goes across science and many other subjects, but that is something that is running and there are two areas in London and in the south and the east where that is already in place, but it is all over the country.

Q76 John Thurso: Can I just get a bit of clarification on your footnote on funding which was in your paper, page 8, to understand where you are now. From now on there is effectively only one programme that is available which is Grants for the Arts and it covers absolutely everything. Is that correct?

Ms Weir: For organisations that are not regularly funded by us?

Q77 John Thurso: Yes.

Ms Weir: Yes, that is correct.

Q78 John Thurso: And you are currently evaluating the impact of the £25 million invested in theatre. Are Grants for the Arts and the £25 million related or are those two separate?

Ms Weir: They are completely separate. The £25 million came from the Theatre Review in 2001.

Q79 John Thurso: Is it then £25 million there or thereabouts that goes into theatre? What I am driving at is how much goes into theatre?

Ms Thorold: In this year it is £100 million, including the National Theatre and the RSC.

Q80 John Thurso: That is all theatre, and how much would Grants for the Arts be of that £100 million?

Ms Thorold: That is for the regularly funded organisations.

Q81 John Thurso: So it is £100 million for the, as it were, regularly funded organisations. Are any of them statutorily funded? The £25 million is on top of that and that is for?

Ms Thorold: The £100 million includes the £25 million. This is the first year in which that £25 million has been available in full which has brought the funding level for theatre up to that.

Q82 John Thurso: So of the £100 million, £75 million is the regular, what-you-do-every-year programmes and £25 million is available—

Ms Thorold: The £25 million was almost entirely rolled into core funding.

Ms Weir: In 2001.

Q83 John Thurso: I am not sure I am any the wiser after this.

Ms Thorold: Perhaps it would be easier for me just to explain. Three or four years ago when we were looking at a theatre sector in crisis, the core funding for theatre, which excluded the national theatres, was around £40 million. We then successfully made the case to Government and received the extra £25 million to roll into the core funding of theatre in order to revitalise the sector. That, therefore, brings us up to a £70 million baseline of core funding to theatre and then the national companies had a bit which brings

you to the total of £100 million, so the Grants for the Arts money is entirely separate and theatre competes for that on the same basis as any other art form.

Q84 John Thurso: So looking at, for example, the National Youth Music Theatre, it would be competing, if it wished to, within Grants for the Arts?

Ms Thorold: Yes, although we have specifically with the DfES set up this fund through Youth Music so that they do not have to go through that kind of process.

Q85 John Thurso: Looking more broadly at what you do in music, you wrote some interesting appendices and opera was brought out. Can you tell me broadly how much is spent on what one might call 'classic opera' as opposed to how much you spend on what might be termed 'musicals'?

Ms Weir: The figure for music theatre is £41.6 million* in the year 2003–04. Within that £41.6 million, £38 million is for large-scale opera houses which would be the Royal Opera House, ENO, WNO and Opera North.

Q86 John Thurso: Which leaves £3.6 million for musicals.

Ms Weir: But of course do not forget that some of those opera houses also do musicals.

Q87 John Thurso: Do you think that is a fair balance given how much the cities are having to pay for opera?

Ms Weir: Yes, I think this takes us right back to where we started which is that we cannot fund everything and probably every art form could come to us, indeed does come to us, and say that their art form should have more money.

Q88 John Thurso: Yes, but you make the judgment, do you not, within the Arts Council? Everybody can come to you, but you decide where it goes, so I am interested as a nation really, as an Arts Council, as a government, as to why we think that opera is worth £38 million and musical is worth £3.6 million. Why not make it £37 million for opera and £4.6 million for musical?

Ms Weir: On top of the money for opera which is the core funding, there are of course project grants and many, many people who would be coming forward in the musical theatre area or the musical area could also apply for project grants. I think there probably is not an easy answer to that question. I said in the earlier submission that during the 1980s and 1990s we made a decision not to specifically fund the growth of that area due to restrictions on our own funding and also due to the possibility of more commercial funding to come in. The example of the US was made on several occasions earlier, but there is substantial commercial funding there, substantial, and we do not have the same situation in this country.

Q89 John Thurso: I was fascinated to read that five of the 17 musicals currently running in London's West End have origins in the subsidised sector.

* Please see supplementary memorandum on page Ev 38

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Ms Weir: Yes.

Q90 John Thurso: Given some of the amazing productions now that one thinks of as long-running, highly lucrative and all the rest of it in the West End, is there any way in which if productions have started through the subsidised sector that when they become lucrative, there can be a pay-back from that investment which can then be redirected into the next generation of musical?

Ms Weir: There is already. That is exactly what happens.

Q91 John Thurso: Can you tell me how that happens?

Ms Weir: For example, Battersea Arts Centre with *Jerry Springer* started at the Battersea Arts Centre, then went to the National Theatre and it has now just transferred into the West End and Battersea will get a proportion of the monies that are made as it goes on through its West End run.

Q92 John Thurso: It goes back to Battersea, it does not come back to you?

Ms Weir: You mean come back to us?

Q93 John Thurso: Yes.

Ms Weir: No, it would go back to the originating theatre because I think our job is as enablers of the art to happen, it is not to manage that. Therefore, I think it is right that the money should go back to the theatre and not to us.

Q94 Chairman: This inquiry was originally called after we heard about the difficulties that have affected the Bridewell and we have conjoined it, it is a wider inquiry, with the National Youth Music Theatre because of the problems which have afflicted that and of which we heard earlier this month. Now, I know that you have a very wide remit, I know that you have guidelines, I know that you have limited amounts of money and it would be very good if you got more. Nevertheless, what we are doing here in this inquiry is facing predicaments. Of course nobody is challenging that you have obligations to all kinds of other institutions ranging from the Royal National Theatre right through. Nevertheless, whatever happens, the Royal National Theatre is going to survive, and a good thing too, and it is doing very well under its new director. It has got a whole collection of things which are great successes, including commercial successes. We are not in danger of losing the RNT and it would be a tragedy if we were in danger of losing it. Nevertheless, we are dealing here in particular with two institutions which are in very serious trouble indeed and that has been shown by the notice put out on October 6th by the National Youth Music Theatre and by the fact that unless something is done, we are in danger of losing the Bridewell. Now, I think you will have heard from the range of questioning you have heard from different members of the Committee that although it is our job to ask searching questions about any institution or organisation that comes to us, there is a very strong feeling among members that it would be very sad

indeed if these institutions were to be lost. It is perfectly clear that the National Youth Music Theatre is in very serious trouble and has declared redundancies. It is equally clear that unless something urgent is done with regard to the Bridewell, we could lose that and we could lose it permanently. Now, that being so, one of the reasons we hold inquiries like this, as we do and as we did, for example, with the last World War II Destroyer, which was not the most glamorous of subjects, but was an important subject and which, without our inquiry, would have been sent to the scrapyard and is now an important historical relic and also a major visitor attraction on the Medway, one of the reasons we called this inquiry was to see what could be done to save the Bridewell and now the National Youth Music Theatre. Why do you not sit down with these two organisations, separately of course, and without in any way abnegating your obligation to take care of the money allotted to you through the public purse, why do you not sit down with each of them and see if you can for each of them work out a rescue package which will not be profligate on your part, but will help to maintain the existence of two institutions without which the cultural scene in this country would be the poorer?

Ms Weir: Well, I am glad to say that we have partly read your mind because we have sat down with the Bridewell, in fact we did it in May, and went through with them because we knew that this situation was going to be occurring, one of the major reasons being, as you heard earlier, that their grant which was given to the St Bride's Institute by the Corporation of London is no longer possible, therefore, their onward grant of £45,000 disappears and they have to pay rent. So we sat down with them and they applied to Grants for the Arts because what we felt they really needed most, and they agreed, was somebody who could provide very direct technical experience to look at different avenues of what they might do because there is never one answer to these things, there is usually a range of things, so we did that straightaway. They applied for the money, they got it, they will be appointing somebody very shortly and we will be working extremely closely with them to see the outcome of that.

Q95 Chairman: That is promising and encouraging, but I would like to press you a little further. Can I make clear that in my view, and I think it is probably the view of my colleagues as well, this is one of the situations in which there are no villains, there are no bad people. Bridewell would not exist without the Corporation of London and they have been very good about it. Nobody is saying that they are behaving badly—

Ms Weir: No, absolutely.

Q96 Chairman:—as one can sometimes say about organisations who come before us, and I will name none of them, not now anyhow. I would like to go a little bit farther. What you have said is encouraging. We have got about five weeks because of our other programme before we compile the report which we will issue on the subject of this inquiry. Will you

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undertake that, say, by the second week of November you will come back to us, though we will not hold another public session, but that you will come back to us and let us know what progress you have made in the initiatives you have embarked on?

Ms Weir: I believe we can certainly tell you that we will come back to you and let you know the progress that the consultant who we believe will provide the right support for them has made by that time. Yes, I see no problem with that.

Q97 Chairman: Well, that is all I want to ask you because I do not believe there is any sense in probing your policies further as you have explained them with great clarity to other questioners from the Committee. I believe that one of the roles of this Committee is to serve the cultural and artistic community as well as the heritage community, as we did with the Destroyer, and I believe that it would be an achievement of yours and ours if the outcome of this inquiry could be to bring hope to these two organisations and I hope we can agree on that.

Ms Weir: I think we can agree on that, Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you very much.

Supplementary memorandum submitted by Arts Council England

Corrections to transcript of oral evidence by Arts Council witnesses: 14 October 2003.

There are a couple of points of clarification that we feel would be useful to the Committee:

Q72:

In Summer 2002, the Arts Council helped to deliver the Youth Justice Board's Splash Extra Programme, which targeted young people between the ages of nine and 17 at risk of crime. An evaluation of the initiative showed that the areas in which it ran were associated with a 5.2% decrease in crime, compared with areas without a Splash Extra scheme. Artists delivering the Arts Council England programme took part in 215 (73%) of the 296 Splash Extra schemes (*Addressing youth offending: Arts Council England's contribution to the Splash Extra Programme 2002*).

Q85:

The figure of £41.6 million requires further explanation. In 2003–04, the Arts Council's expenditure on Opera is approximately £41.6 million, which includes large and small-scale opera, new work and training. Musical Theatre activity also takes place across the Theatre sector, which receives £100 million in 2003–04 by the Arts Council.

As a consequence, we feel that to distil funding for musical theatre down to a figure of £3.6 million may be misleading, as many of our funded organisations, amongst others the Royal Opera House, BAC and Theatre Royal Stratford East produce a range of work that includes musicals.

23 October 2003

Further supplementary memorandum submitted by Arts Council England

ARTS DEVELOPMENT AND MUSICAL THEATRE

UPDATE ON THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE, NOVEMBER 2003

Short-term future of the Bridewell

The Arts Council is keen to secure the short-term future of Bridewell Theatre while further work is undertaken to explore its medium and long-term viability.

The Bridewell has been able to negotiate a potential lease extension for one year until 31 March 2005. There is a break clause every quarter and notice can be given at the end of February, May, August and November.

By hiring space to commercial producers, the Bridewell has achieved sufficient security to commit to the first quarter but needs to secure a further £100,000 towards overheads for the remainder of the year. It would be preferable to settle the full funding package now in order to free the theatre to concentrate on the medium/longer-term and to ensure that the theatre is able to strike an appropriate balance between commercial and developmental work.

Sarah Weir, Executive Director of Arts Council London has held discussions with key individuals at the Corporation of London with a view to identifying a partnership approach to securing the Bridewell's future. These discussions are ongoing.

The Arts Council could provide a potential £30,000, two-year grant for artistic programming for 2004–05 to 2005–06. The Bridewell will shortly submit an application as part of the limited competitive tender and a final decision is due in February 2004.

Medium/Long-term future of the Bridewell

The Arts Council awarded the Bridewell £16,600 in September 2003 to explore options to secure the medium/long-term future of the theatre. This work is to include consideration of both capital and revenue funding needs and opportunities. There are two elements to the project:

- costs of a consultant to explore and develop options
- costs of a fixed-term general manager post to free up the Executive Director's time to focus on this issue.

The Arts Council has since been advising the theatre on developing the detailed brief for the work and on sourcing a suitable consultant.

We understand that:

- A general manager has been appointed from 24 November for six months
- Consultants have been asked to tender and are due to be interviewed in December

The Bridewell's steering group for the project will consider an initial options paper in February and a final report by 31 March 2004. Work will then commence to implement the favoured options.

The Arts Council will continue to work closely with the Bridewell over the coming months and considers that a detailed review of the situation will be required in February 2004.

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND AND NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR YOUTH MUSIC

The Arts Council delegates funds to the National Foundation for Youth Music to enable it to operate a programme of advocacy and funding schemes designed to develop musical opportunities for young people in England.

In 1999, the Arts Council committed £10 million of National Lottery funds to the National Foundation for Youth Music for three years between 1999 and 2002. That commitment of £10 million was renewed for each of the four years ending 31 March 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Additional, grant-in-aid funding of £100,000 is provided by the Arts Council to contribute towards revenue funding for national youth music flagship organisations. The Arts Council is only a part contributor to the funds for these organisations—the total fund in 2003–04 for NYMO activities was £875,000 (along with Youth Music and DfES's Music and Dance Scheme).

Currently these organisations are: Music for Youth, National Children's Orchestra, National Youth Brass Band of GB, National Youth Choirs of GB, National Youth Jazz Association, National Youth Music Theatre, National Youth Orchestra, National Youth Wind Orchestra and SamYo.

Alan James, Head of Contemporary Music, National Office, regularly attends NFYM Board meetings as the Arts Council representative. Quarterly meetings are attended by Hilary Boulding, Director, Music, National Office as the lead officer for NFYM in respect of both the Lottery funding and the funding for Youth Music Flagships. Also, there is an annual meeting of the Chief Executives; Peter Hewitt and Christina Coker.

The two organisations are in regular contact concerning major initiatives, partnerships and policies, eg Youth Music Action Zones. The Arts Council also works closely with NFYM in collaboration on research and data.

A major four-year review of Youth Music took place on 13 and 14 October 2003, lead by the Director, Music. The review was chaired by an eminent arts consultant who will present a detailed report.

Additionally, the Arts Council set up a meeting with National Youth Music Theatre to discuss current difficulties and explore possible options to move forward. Now that NYMT have agreed a Company Voluntary Arrangement with their outstanding creditors, we are keen to continue this dialogue and to work closely with both NYMT and their main funders, the National Foundation of Youth Music.

November 2003

Written evidence

Taken before the Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Memorandum submitted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

The Department welcomes the Select Committee's interest in musical theatre and in particular the difficulties facing the Bridewell Theatre.

As the Committee will know, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not fund the arts directly. It is however directly answerable to the Treasury and Parliament, including the Select Committee, for the way in which Arts Council England disperses grant-in-aid and lottery funds to artists, arts organisations and art forms. We have therefore a direct interest in the Council's activities insofar as they provide value for money and contribute to the Department's wider strategic priorities as determined by the Secretary of State.

Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts. Between 2003 and 2006 they will invest £1.6 billion of public funds in the arts in England, including funding from the National Lottery. The relationship between the Arts Council and DCMS is governed by the arm's length principle, that is, the Council operates at arm's length from Government.

As a Non Departmental Public Body, the Arts Council operates within the guidance DCMS sets through a range of control documents, including a Funding Agreement and Lottery directions. In the context of these documents the Council has autonomy in the way it exercises artistic, financial and managerial judgement in the distribution of funding for the arts, and in the development and implementation of its arts strategies.

We are aware that, in addition to its oral evidence, Arts Council England also submitted written papers on its support for musical theatre generally and the particular issues raised by the Bridewell Theatre (these are attached for ease of reference). We also understand that a number of other organisations may be submitting written evidence to the Committee. We look forward to receiving a copy of the Committee's report in due course.

21 November 2003

Memorandum submitted jointly by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills

ARTS DEVELOPMENT—MUSICAL THEATRE

The Committee has invited submissions tackling the issues raised by the Committee on the 14 October 2003. DCMS and DfES can contribute the following information on their relationship with the National Youth Music Theatre and Youth Music. *The significance of the National Youth Music Theatre within musical theatre—as well as the wider educational scene particularly in enthusing and developing pre-professional musical theatre performers; the contribution of other organisations to these goals;*

The National Youth Music Theatre (NYMT) over many years has enabled very talented young performers to have their first taste of participating in high quality musical productions. Its programmes have given young people invaluable experience of working alongside professional artists and crew, and have provided an important stepping stone into the profession. NYMT has become recognised as an important progression route within the professional musical theatre sector.

NYMT is one of a number of “flagship” national youth music organisations (NYMOs)¹ that receive funding through Youth Music. Historically, these organisations had tended to fall in the gaps between the arts and education funding systems until, in 2001–02, DCMS officials worked with colleagues from Arts Council England, DfES and Youth Music to broker a joint solution to this problem. This resulted in an agreement between DfES, the Arts Council and Youth Music to designate a pot of funding to support the NYMOs. Details of the fund, which is managed by Youth Music, are attached at Annex 1.

The aim of the new fund was first to enable the NYMOs to expand, develop and increase access to their excellent artistic, education and training programmes. While NYMT has experienced severe financial difficulties in the past few months, the fund has succeeded in helping to place the other NYMOs on a more secure financial footing.

The performance of NYMT in meeting its own objectives, contributing to the objectives of its public funders and as a steward of public money.

¹ These include the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, National Youth Wind Orchestra of Great Britain, National Association of Youth Orchestras, National Children's Orchestra, National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, National Youth Jazz Association, Music for Youth and the South Asian Music Youth Organisation.

Right up until the scale of its present difficulties became apparent, NYMT has continued to produce work of the highest quality and has delivered its objectives agreed with Youth Music. NYMT met all its objectives and satisfied all the conditions of grant for the financial year 2002–03, the last year in which Youth Music funding was provided. Youth Music has assured the Department that no public funds have been mis-spent.

Youth Music has worked closely with NYMT to help it gain a clear understanding of its financial difficulties, whilst ensuring that their grants have been used in line with the NYMO objectives.

The problem originated when a significant private funding stream came to an end in 1999 and NYMT did not take action to balance expenditure to reduced income.

NYMT had also received a grant of £210,000 over three years (1998–2000) from the Lottery-funded Arts 4 Everyone programme towards the costs of a regional development programme. They needed to secure alternative funding to subsidise continuation of this activity.

In 2001–02 and 2002–03 Youth Music allocated NYMT £20,000 and £136,000 respectively alongside two emergency grants of £35,000 and £70,000 to enable NYMT to continue delivering work towards the objectives.

Youth Music advised NYMT to make plans for managing their cash flow and deficit, however NYMT seemed reluctant to down scale their activity. In spite of the significant increase in their grant from Youth Music to help towards their deficit, NYMT has not been able to secure the amount of funding needed to continue with their work at previous levels and so have closed the offices to avoid trading insolvently. NYMT is seeking a Company Voluntary Arrangement to deal with its outstanding creditors.

Youth Music is continuing to work closely with the board of NYMT to agree the best way forward. NYMT may also consider an application to the ACE Recovery Programme.

Annex 1

BREAKDOWN OF FUNDING FOR NYMO's AND NYMT's ALLOCATION

<i>Available funds for NYMO's</i>	<i>2001–02</i>	<i>2002–03</i>	<i>2003–04</i>
Unallocated funds b/fwd	0	69,345	44,980
Youth Music	250,000	400,000	400,000
ACE	0	73,735	45,947
DfES	50,000	300,000	400,000
<i>Total Available funds for NYMOs</i>	<i>300,000</i>	<i>843,080</i>	<i>890,927</i>
<i>NYMT Allocations</i>			
Nat. Youth Music Theatre	20,000	136,000	
Nat. Youth Music Theatre emergency grant	35,000	70,000	

21 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by the St Bride Foundation Institute

BRIDEWELL THEATRE

With reference to the Bridewell Theatre submission to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee the Governors of the St Bride Foundation support the case for greater government funding for innovative music theatre and for the Bridewell Theatre in particular.

As part of its wider charitable objectives the Foundation has provided funding and other support to the Bridewell Theatre since its inception 10 years ago. However, due to changes beyond the control of the Foundation it will not have the financial capacity to continue the support beyond March 2004.

9 October 2003

Memorandum submitted by Theatre Royal Stratford East

Stratford East is working on the development of new musicals in a completely different vein to that of the Bridewell and Mercury Musical Developments. We have been working on research and development for six years to create contemporary musicals, in particular using rap and hip-hop, which are the most commercially successful forms of music in the world today, but hardly feature in established musical theatre.

I attach an article in *Time Out* (*not reproduced here*) which illustrates our situation and the comparative lack of support from the Arts Council for the whole idea. We had a tremendous success with the first fruits of the idea with a show called *Da Boyz* and I attach a copy too of the whole page we got in *Variety* and the *New York Times* (*not reproduced here*). The major idea behind developing such work is to bring young

people into theatre who wouldn't normally come, and this show certainly achieved that, apart from receiving international acclaim as a breakthrough in musical theatre. We were particularly successful in involving disaffected youth, which is of course seen as a priority of so many government departments.

All this opens up a very different aspect to musical theatre from what you might hear on 14 October.

13 October 2003

Supplementary memorandum submitted by Theatre Royal Stratford East

POINT OF VIEW

This submission deals with the questions raised by the CMS Committee from the point of view of an East End theatre, the Theatre Royal Stratford East, which has a famous but sporadic history in musical theatre since 1953. Since 1997 it has been carrying out an intensive research-and-development project into the creation of new musicals with an emphasis on contemporary Urban Music. The main aim of the project has been the development of musical artists new to the theatre in order to create shows, which will in turn attract new, principally young, audiences.

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INTRODUCTION

The recent crisis at the Bridewell Theatre and the National Youth Music Theatre are the tips of an iceberg. The iceberg is the deep-seated underlying problems of the lack of development since the 80s of new British musicals, ie ones with original music, specially written for the show.

This problem has artistic, educational, social and financial ramifications and therefore the solution lies in an imaginative and determined effort to achieve joined-up thinking between artistic quangos, subsidised arts organisations, both the commercial theatre and music industries, several voluntary umbrella agencies and several government departments, some of whom may not realise they play a part indirectly in this issue.

That is a grand claim; let me justify it as briefly as I am able. To do so I need to start at Stratford East's grass roots.

1. Theatre Royal Stratford East's Musical Theatre Background

I am in my 25th year as artistic director of the Theatre Royal Stratford East, where Joan Littlewood's company Theatre Workshop arrived 50 years ago and caused a revolution in British theatre, alongside the Royal Court Theatre, principally by giving opportunities to many talented working class writers and actors of the kind previously excluded from theatre.

Among her wide-ranging theatre work there were a handful of musicals which were hailed as the start of a British musical revival. For example in 1963 Joan created *Oh, What A Lovely War!* which was a view of the First World War from the trenches, and which hugely influenced documentary theatre and inspired the internationally admired Theatre In Education movement, in which Britain lead the world for the next 30 years.

Another example which is significant in what I wish to demonstrate was Lionel Bart's *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be*. Lionel was a raw talent who couldn't write music down. When the show went to the West End there had to be a two-page glossary in the programme of cockney slang to explain it to the typical West End theatre-goer.

In my own time at Theatre Royal the West End has cherry-picked our safer compilation shows which used already popular music, such as *Five Guys Named Moe*, a tribute to Louis Jordan's music, or *Unforgettable*, a tribute to Nat King Cole, or *A Star Is Torn*, a tribute to eight famous women singers.

It must be mentioned here that Cameron Mackintosh who transferred *Five Guys Named Moe* to the West End, behaved in an exemplary fashion and offered Stratford East a deal of unheard-of generosity. We received one-third of his own earnings on the show. He simply said we had taken the original risk and so deserved it. Would it was ever thus!

The world-wide profits kept Stratford East going as a lively, risk-taking producing theatre in the early nineties at a time when regional theatres were hard pushed to keep open let alone take risks. Unfortunately it was only after the *Moe* money had been spent on sheer survival that the Theatre Royal developed its own “Big Idea” for the development of new musical theatre in 1997.

The idea was to develop new musicals out of the contemporary music, known as Urban Music, which had been popular by 1997 for at least 20 years. The Theatre Royal Stratford East, with its famous history in musical theatre and its deep roots in its own urban community was well placed to achieve this. Allow me to amplify this point.

The central plank of Stratford East’s success in the past 50 years has been its inter-relationship with its varied local communities, drawing on their talents, ideas and concerns. Occasionally this relationship directly produced shows such as *Steaming* which couldn’t be more local, set as it was in a local Turkish bath, and yet it went on to the West End, Broadway and Australia and was made into a film.

Newham in which the Theatre Royal is situated is the borough in Britain with the highest percentage of ethnic minorities who are now in fact a majority of 61% of the population. It has the highest percentage of young people in its population and the biggest turnover of residents of any borough. It is also one of the most deprived boroughs in the country, a position aggravated by its unaccountable exclusion from being named an inner city borough by the Government.

These factors combined allow Newham to claim to be on the front-line of social change. It also happens that if any area in Britain can claim to be the cradle of UK hip-hop music, then it is the East End. The Theatre Royal read the writing on the wall and seven years ago began a process of developing the Urban Musical, while not excluding or disparaging the creation of new musicals in the classic Broadway tradition which The Bridewell, the National Youth Music Theatre, Mercury Musical Developments and several regional theatres all champion.

2. *Urban Music and Musical Theatre*

The genre now called Urban Music includes an extraordinary range of musical forms which are continually evolving and fusing. These include R’n’B, hip-hop, rap, basement, garage and bashment among other forms. Like so much of popular music its roots are in black culture. However with the rich mix of races in Britain’s inner cities, culturally diverse fusions of musical styles are inevitably happening, notably with Asian music from which not just populist forms like Bhangra and Bollywood are appropriated to add to the mix but also elements of Indian classical music. The mixes in Urban Music have no barriers in its eclecticism.

It is greatly to the advantage of the originality of British pop music that this mixing of styles of music from different racial backgrounds happens more readily in London than in New York. There is the advantage too that no country has the particular mix of cultures that Britain has from its colonial history, and so the contemporary musicals developed in Britain will by definition be different to those developed in the USA.

This exciting fusion of culturally diverse talents has contributed much to the British pop music and club music scenes and to the distinctive British successes in the worlds of fashion and film. In the performing arts contemporary dance has been inspired by new musical fusions, but the world of theatre has remained largely untouched by them.

When the Theatre Royal began its research-and-development process into using British Urban Music in musicals, we were told by two leading West End producers that this wasn’t possible to do because it simply wasn’t “musical theatre music”. The same was said early last century about ragtime, then later about jazz and yet again about rock and roll. There was always a delay between these musical forms coming through in popular music and finally being imported into musical theatre. There was for example a 14-year gap between rock and roll dominating the hit parade in 1955 and the staging of the first successful rock musical *Hair* in 1968.

However there has now been a 25 year lag between the rise of rap and hip-hop in the pop charts and the staging of a UK Urban Music show on the West End stage. We are still waiting, which seems to indicate a serious problem for the current and future popularity of the musical as a popular art form.

Why is this? It’s partly the usual historical reasons. Powerful commercial producers tend to be middle-aged, white males who don’t connect with new music. Their audiences tend to be over 40, partly because only by that age can many afford West End prices and they are often nostalgic for the music of their youth.

However there are particular reasons why the new Urban Music has taken longer to be accepted in theatre. One is that, unlike traditional musicals, which depend on a combination of live musicians, technology is central to the new music. So there has to be a major re-think and much experimentation for creating a new musical theatre, but one which will probably be as dependent as ever on the eternal dramatic verities of character creation and good story-telling.

A second factor would be that Urban Music is dominated by black and Asian artists, but there are next to no black or Asian producers or directors in positions of power. Perhaps more important at this stage of development though would be the fact that there are comparatively few black and Asian writers and composers concentrating on musical theatre. Noticeably none of the famous musical writing teams in the USA in the last century were black, although the original sources of the new American music were primarily black and to a lesser extent Jewish. There are though isolated examples of change in British musical theatre, which need to be pro-actively encouraged.

3. *Stratford East's Musical Theatre Development Project*

With all these issues in mind, Theatre Royal Stratford East began in 1999 a series of annual, month-long, full-time workshops to experiment in using all manner of contemporary popular music in theatre. The participants included playwrights who had already worked in theatre but were interested in writing the book and/or lyrics for a musical. Most of the composers involved had never worked in musical theatre before. They worked in many different musical traditions but there was gradually year by year a greater concentration on contemporary Urban Music because it became obvious that was the most difficult and possibly eventually the most productive style of music to incorporate into musicals. As one of the West End producers who thought the task was impossible added, "but if you crack it you'll make a fortune".

The courses are lead by two lecturers from the Tisch School at New York University, which has the only university course in the world which teaches the art of writing for musical theatre. It's a two-year, post-graduate course and it is very expensive to do and of course to live in New York. Hardly any of those doing the Stratford East's month-long courses would be academically qualified enough or rich enough to do the New York two-year course. The young Lionel Bart would have been neither for example. The lecturers concerned are excited by the diversity of the participants we find for them and they say there is no equivalent producing theatre in New York concentrating on developing contemporary urban musicals as Stratford East is.

One of the biggest hurdles was contacting rap and hip-hop artists and interesting them in the possibilities of musical theatre in which there were no role-model artists or shows for them to identify with, but contacting artists has become gradually easier as word got round. After six years, over 100 writers and composers have taken part in Stratford East's extremely practical courses. Approximately 60% of them have been black with 20% Asian and 20% white.

4. *Successful Urban Musical at Stratford East*

Progressing those artists the theatre is most interested in developing from the annual workshops is a very expensive business, and Stratford East has been supported by several organisations to do this, notably the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Cameron Mackintosh Foundation, the Hollick Foundation, the Follett Foundation, the Gulbenkian Foundation, Unity Theatre Trust, Equity Trust and the TUC. However the underpinning of public subsidy from the London Borough of Newham, the Arts Council and the Association of London Government, provides the essential support necessary to the core funding of the Theatre Royal, and allowing it in the first four years of the project, when the theatre was closed for Lottery—supported renovations, to concentrate on musical theatre development. An associate producer was appointed to organise the development process, and honorariums were paid to a small group of mostly young, mostly black artists to advise the theatre and direct the workshop shows.

An excellent example of a composing and writing duo who have been developed in this period are the poet Hope Massiah and the composer Delroy Murray who both graduated from Stratford East's annual Musical Theatre Writing Workshop four years ago and were then offered a commission for a 20 minute show, which was workshoped to enable the writers to see professional actors and musicians performing their work for the first time. This was followed up with a commission to write an eighty-minute show which toured the East End, and finally they became the first black, words-and-music team to write a traditional British pantomime, but with a Caribbean and Urban Music flavour. This was enthusiastically received by the Stratford East audience, which is the most multi-racial of any British theatre. Stratford East has now commissioned this team to write an original musical and another pantomime.

The most radical and significant example to date of what Stratford East is trying to achieve is the production it staged in May 2003 called *Da Boyz*. It was a modern version of the 1930's Broadway Show *The Boys from Syracuse* by Rodgers and Hart. It was the first time that permission had been given to update into up-to-the-minute Urban Music the music of a classic Broadway show still in copyright. This exciting opportunity came about because the enterprising Rodgers and Hammerstein Organisation recognised the high seriousness with which Stratford East was approaching the process. This was a coup for British Theatre.

The music was updated by two young East Enders of nineteen and twenty-two and the show was directed and designed by the international theatre and opera director, ULTZ. The main aim of Stratford East's Urban Musical Theatre project was to connect with young people who wouldn't normally go to the theatre. This show did that highly successfully because it was their music and because it was set in the East End today.

The cast were principally rappers and hip-hoppers drawn from auditions throughout the East End, and many were graduates of the Theatre Royal's Youth Theatres. The young people were in effect the style gurus and everything was done to make young people feel they owned the show.

Techniques for marketing were drawn, with EMI's advice, from how the commercial music business connected with young people, and this had excellent results. Young offenders teams, mentoring groups and youth clubs from tough areas booked young people in and many of the young people re-booked to come again individually, breaking that invisible but daunting barrier many young people feel exists between them and theatre.

Not only did the show achieve this social aim, which accords with central government's and the Arts Council's policies on social inclusion, but the show was also acknowledged with a whole page report in the *New York Times* and another whole page in the American entertainment bible "Variety" hailing it as a "break-through in international music theatre" and calling the Theatre Royal a "pioneering theatre".

5. *The Commercial Response*

There was an unusual response from the commercial sector. The West End understandably showed no interest at all in a musical which had a cast of 30 rappers and hip-hoppers and which could well not appeal to their current audiences. However, two American TV network companies (HBO and MTV) a British independent TV production company (Blast Productions), Channel Four and BBC TV have all shown enthusiastic interest, ranging from making a film from the idea but not of the stage show itself, or making a documentary of the process of creating our next hip-hop show and then screening the theatrical production that comes out of it.

There have also been ideas of creating American versions set in and using talents from black inner city areas like Harlem or South Chicago, or creating a South African version for the Market Theatre Johannesburg.

This is very different to the common pattern since the Second World War where commercial producers would pick up a successful, regional, subsidised production to take to the West End. After a run there the show might tour at home and abroad, and then be made available for other regional theatre producers, followed by the release of amateur rights. Urban Musicals might prove to be a different genre demanding a different process, but some may eventually work in the conventional exploitation process outlined here.

One can't help surmising though that there has ultimately to be a breakthrough of the new Urban Music into commercial theatre, and that the West End cannot just rely on new musicals developed in the mainstream Broadway classic tradition in which there is little enough support for development anyway, as colleagues have reported to the committee. It would be against the pattern of history if West End theatre simply skipped a popular genre of music, which is the biggest-selling commercial music in the world today.

6. *The Arts Council Response*

The CMS committee asked those organisations which gave oral evidence about their access to and treatment by the Arts Council

Stratford East's experience of access with the Arts Council is very different to those organisations interviewed primarily perhaps because Stratford East has long been a regularly funded organisation. We have no difficulty gaining access to Arts Council officers at all levels and in several departments. We have frequent discussions with them and have gained much valuable advice from them. This process has probably been much aided by the fact that over the last 30 years I have served on ten Arts Council committees, which may be more than any other British artist has done.

The main reason why I have been asked to serve on so many committees is that Stratford East has for 50 years had at the heart of what it does social issues, such as education, training, accessibility and multi-culturalism. However the Arts Council did not value Joan Littlewood's artistic work and only in the eighties, long after she had left, did the Arts Council appreciate Stratford East's work, when in fact they were gradually adopting her social values themselves.

Unfortunately over the last two years since our theatre building re-opened relations with the Arts Council have been rockier, as the direct result of an ill-handled, Lottery-funded, re-building project. The tragic result of this situation has been the recent abrupt discontinuation of the musical theatre research-and-development and the delay of a new musical from this year until the next financial year.

Stratford East's extensive renovation project, largely funded by the Arts Council and administered by Newham Council, was planned for a 15-month period but the time was constantly extended until it reached four years. By the time of re-opening two years ago the extended closure had had a disastrous effect on audience numbers with the majority of those on the theatre's mailing list not returning, except for the pantomime. The situation has improved considerably in 2003 but not soon enough to prevent a financial crisis in August 2002, which led to the Arts Council placing the Theatre Royal into the preliminary stages of a scheme called Recovery.

This is a three-year scheme designed to help arts organisations in financial trouble to re-assess themselves and make radical changes if necessary to find a way to survive within a prescribed amount of subsidy. Many organisations that have gone through Lottery building projects have got into immediate financial trouble and been put into the Recovery scheme, when it has been discovered the original projections for revenue needs proved unsound. However no organisation suffered as long an extended closed period as Stratford East.

So far in the preliminary eighteen months before it is decided if Stratford East will be accepted onto the Recovery scheme next April, 2004 some of the Arts Council paid consultants have been of real value in improving the Theatre Royal's money-earning capacity and its financial management. However just when we had on-stage the show *Da Boyz*, hailed as an international musical theatre breakthrough in May 2003, the Arts Council decided not to award the £200,000 interim money that was indicated as possible for this financial year (2003–04). This decision has meant the closing down of our whole musical theatre development project, and the laying-off of personnel involved, just as it was about to take off in a big way. It has hindered too the commercial exploration of what we have already achieved.

The Recovery process is intended as a tough re-structuring programme but I am personally mystified that it should include abandoning the research-and-development process that could possibly lift the Theatre Royal out of its financial problems and make a real-break through for British theatre generally. It feels like a repeat of the situation in Joan Littlewood's time when she was not backed to carry out her vision of theatre's future.

Even if Stratford East can find a way to rescue some of its development process the exigencies of operating inside the grant allocation already set for 2004–06 means the Theatre Royal could not afford to do more than two Urban Music musicals over the next three years, and only then if it finds the money both to develop them and to hit its fund-raising targets for its core activities. The Arts Council believes that Stratford East gets sufficient money compared to "like theatres in London" and it must concentrate on cutting its cloth according to the subsidy already determined for the next three years. The Theatre Royal believes there is no such thing as a "like theatre in London", which has Stratford East's particular combination of local demography and the developed ability to create new musicals. The Arts Council has declined to treat the Theatre Royal as a special case worthy of extra investment, even though it is also at the heart of the Thames Gateway, the biggest development site in Europe and within 10 minutes walk of the proposed Olympic stadium.

Regarding financial benefits, it is worth mentioning here that Cameron Mackintosh's accountants calculated that taxes on the money earned nationally and internationally from *Five Guys Named Moe* paid back to the Treasury the equivalent of all the money the Theatre Royal had been given as subsidy from national and local government sources in the previous 10 years, apart from giving Stratford East four financially healthy years of adventurous innovation.

It's only fair to add here that there is another other theatre company which is developing the expertise to create musicals using Urban Music. The admired and long-established black touring company, NITRO, has carried out several years of exploration and is staging its first full-scale rap and hip-hop musical, *Slamdunk*, next year for a five-month spring tour of England. Such has been its popularity with booking theatres already, from being seen at an Arts Council showcase as part of its Eclipse initiative, that it may well tour again in the autumn.

However, on currently planned subsidy NITRO can only produce one major musical a year and Stratford East is struggling to do even that. This is not an adequate output to ensure that Britain stays ahead in creating urban musicals and reaps the artistic and financial rewards that will otherwise go to the USA. The main aims of the Arts Council's current policy statement, "Ambitions for the Arts", are to advance the causes of multi-culturalism, of innovation in the arts and of involving young people with the arts. All three causes can be pro-actively advanced by involving artists new to the theatre, particularly ethnic minority ones, in the creation of new Urban Musicals, which would then be staged to attract a young audience.

7. The DCMS And Wider Government Involvement

With regard to the Committee's questions on ability to achieve access to the DCMS the Theatre Royal Stratford East has excellent relations with several officers at the DCMS and finds them always ready to discuss ideas and offer advice.

The Secretary of State for the DCMS, Tessa Jowell, has invited me to bring in a few theatre and music practitioners in January 2004 to discuss a comment I made at a conference to the effect that to involve disaffected young people in the arts the best place to start is with the art forms like Urban Music with which they are already engaged. All manner of grass-roots, community arts organisations have found that Urban Music is the best art form to use as a first point of contact, whether one is simply trying to re-involve young people in society or lead them back into education or involve them with the theatre.

Many of these community arts, and in particular music organisations, are supported by the Arts Council and/or the DfES' Youth Music, but all of them could do significantly more work if they were adequately and regularly funded, which they are not.

There has been much research already done into the wider artistic, social, and educational benefits which the arts could bring if supported more, and the Arts Council, the DCMS and the DfES are all devoting much time, imagination and resources to these matters. I would only like to point out here a couple of examples of how the lack of new musicals using contemporary Urban Music has opened up gaps in what should be a continuous loop of give-and-take between the educational and artistic experience of young people.

Urban Music by its nature can be composed acoustically on street corners, or with minimum equipment in make-shift studios or bedrooms, but these wonderful participatory opportunities are rarely taken up inside schools. It is well-known that an art form that readily involves young people can be used in the teaching of other subjects e.g. the writing of rap lyrics, which has as many rules to learn as does blank verse, could be used in the teaching of literacy. One of the DCMS' Creative Partnership zones, the one in Birmingham has centred its work on Urban Music, with much success.

Another gap in the natural give-and-take there should be between arts and education, and one closer to the CMS Committee's immediate subject, is thrown up by the fact that enterprising teachers who produce the school musical have to fall back on the old-fashioned, often excellent, classic musicals like *Annie*, *Oliver* or *Grease*. Young people can enjoy doing these shows immensely and learn a great deal from the experience of being in them. However being restricted to these musicals means that the whole school is also indirectly learning that theatre is an old-fashioned activity intended for their parent's and grandparent's generations. Many teachers in inner-city schools in particular are aware how they could involve a wider range of young people in a production if participants could use their rapping, hip-hopping and dj-ing skills.

The Gulbenkian Foundation has recently given the Theatre Royal Stratford East a £4,000 grant to explore the feasibility of developing a package of video and written material for schools to do their own version of *Da Boyz*, the music for which would have to be up-dated constantly by the students themselves because the range and the fusions in musical styles change so rapidly these days.

If this could be achieved, and permission then given by the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organisation, schools would have the opportunity to study how Shakespeare took the story of a Roman comedy to create *The Comedy Of Errors* which became a thirties Broadway musical, *The Boys From Syracuse*, which in turn became *Da Boyz* in 2003. They can then, with due regard for the laws of drama, which they will have learnt about in this process, and due regard for the expertise and brilliance of Rodgers and Hart's score and lyrics, stage their show, which can be set in their hometown and be up-to-the-minute musically.

I hope this submission helps illustrate how the progression of musical theatre, to bring full theatrical, social and educational benefits, depends on achieving full joined-up thinking both inside the Arts Council and across government departments such as the DCMS and the DfES. All these organisations are working hard at achieving this joined-up thinking on many other subjects. It would be good if musical theatre could be taken into the fold.

It is of course easy to extend to see how opportunities for involvement could be of benefit to other government departments too. The use of Urban Music to re-involve young offenders is already on the agenda of the Home Office, witness the development of rap with young offenders at Feltham. Then there's the contribution to be made by young talent to the music industries, which is of concern to the Department of Trade and Industry. There's the financial benefits for the Treasury, and there's the massive contribution the arts can make for regeneration areas and development projects such as the Thames Gateway, under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Apologies I have ranged so far. I wish the CMS Committee well in their deliberations, and I hope they come to some practical conclusions to suggest to the Arts Council and the DCMS to achieve more support for the advancement of British musical theatre.

24 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Howard Goodall

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The current government has been more generous to the Arts during its term of office than any previous administration in British history and so it is with some dismay that once again we encounter arts organisations in dire straits whose only hope seems to be bailing out by the tax payer. Whilst it is undoubtedly true that it is harder for new musicals from young or unknown writers to be produced than it is in either the "straight" theatre sector or opera, it does not necessarily follow that the answer to this dilemma is direct state funding of some kind. New musicals whose material is challenging and whose cult audience may expect to reach around 100 or 300 people a night for a few weeks are not necessarily the same species of work that could expect to fill larger theatres for months or years.

It is assumed in much of the discussion thus far that there is a pyramid structure at the bottom of which lie untried writers and their works who learn their trade and move upwards through that pyramid to the heady heights of West End triumph, and that their ground-breaking material feeds through to the

blockbusters, nourishing the roots of a lucrative, tourist-friendly industry. Yet the two genres—smaller, intimate chamber works written in the shadow of, say, Stephen Sondheim and the blockbusters written in the wake of Lloyd Webber or Boubil-Schonberg are in fact entirely different in their aim, style, structure and appeal. There is, for example, very little crossover between their respective audiences. Personally I wholeheartedly support the excellent repertoire and goals of the Bridewell Theatre but it does not follow that their work is linked umbilically to that of the West End, or to the country's wider theatrical community, and for the small dedicated numbers of people who are its core audience a state subsidy, whilst desirable, might have limited national impact. Crudely put, the taxpayer might as well fund slap-up meals at Quaglino's for selected groups of citizens across London. The Bridewell does offer opportunities for the mounting of small scale professional productions, but in the year 2003 there are many ways to showcase and present musical works other than full-blown try-outs of this kind. For potential producers and investors in musicals it is possible, for example, to arrange low-cost workshops and "readings" thanks to the availability of supportive performers offering their services, similarly it is possible to make low-cost, high quality recordings on CD and most of the country's conservatoires, universities, drama schools and colleges offer opportunities to showcase works to various levels of finesse. Edinburgh Festival Fringe and the Scarborough National Student Drama Festival feature scores if not hundreds of such small-scale musical theatre works presented by enterprising student bodies. Musical theatre pieces that show outstanding promise can and do find an audience—I do not believe developing that small audience into one the size of a West End theatre is the job of a national funding body, it is the job of producers. There may indeed be a shortage of enterprising producers in musical theatre but that is a different problem from the one specifically being addressed here.

Many of the MMD's members write musicals in the hope of finding success in the West End or Broadway—the genre not surprisingly attracts composers who wish to emulate the extraordinary pecuniary achievements of Lord Lloyd Webber—but must accept that in this highly commercial field a commercial market is operating whereby populist works with mass appeal will attract producers more readily than cutting-edge pieces of musical theatre. If writers of musical theatre want to benefit from lavish state subsidy they may do so within the opera sector, but accept that the downside is never having that jackpot hit on Shaftesbury Avenue. Very few writers of "musical theatre" are prepared to approach opera companies (of all sizes) with their works.

THE ROLE OF OPERA

In terms purely of idiom and singing style the two fields of opera and musical are growing ever closer. Opera companies increasingly programme classic musicals, their studio projects of new works are often indistinguishable from modern "musical theatre", and their education/outreach programmes are almost always music-theatre-based rather than straight opera-based, since they appreciate that the musical is an altogether more user-friendly commodity than "opera", especially amongst young people. I myself have worked with the City of Birmingham Touring Opera Company on a "community" work, involving 120 local people performing alongside 20 or so professional opera singers and musicians. Not one member of the cast, company, audience or visiting press seemed to be bothered that the compositional style of the piece, whilst through-sung, was largely of a "musical" nature. Jonathan Dove's community pieces are similarly cross-bred stylistically. Given that this is now the case may I make the following plea?

Instead of funding yet more buildings and administrators specifically for new small or medium-scale musicals, encourage the opera companies—who already receive gigantic sums of public subsidy—to embrace this sector of the market, to benefit not just those writers of new musicals but also the opera companies themselves whose aim surely in the 21st century is to widen their audience. With respect to opera provision in the capital city, if one could start again from scratch one obviously wouldn't create *two* large opera houses 800 metres from each other. Nor would one saddle these houses with outdated sitting orchestras. Paying four trombones and a tuba player, say, during a month of Mozart performances nowadays is ludicrous, as is the concept of paying a player to "belong" to the company when the practice of deputising is now widespread and commonplace. But these are insanities that have been inherited from the working practices of a 19th century form that would take a genius to unravel. Likewise, the principal accepted distinction between ENO and the Royal Opera House used to be that ENO performed operas in English with a repertory company whereas the Opera House performed in the original languages with visiting stars. In an age of subtitles the language issue is meaningless. In an age when a visiting opera star can command tens of thousands of pounds for one performance, the concept of state subsidy of such excess is equally dubious. But the situation is as it is and if so much government money is to be ploughed into both houses why not, as a *quid pro quo* suggest that the Opera House's superb Linbury Studio take on the task of presenting—in association with ENO—new works of musical theatre that have shown promise in other smaller-scale showcases? With the NYMT two of my musicals were presented at The Linbury Studio Theatre and I can imagine no better permanent home for the showcasing of NYMT's national work, or indeed for the kind of repertoire currently presented by the Bridewell Theatre. In other words, instead of providing yet another "home" for the modern musical—with all its associated overheads—accommodate it within the existing structures?

In line with the above thinking, it is also absolutely right that the Arts Council of England are shifting their funding priorities in this area to the projects themselves rather than spreading the existing money yet further to accommodate more buildings and organisations needing year-on-year core support. However I suspect many others working in the field of the musical will have been as puzzled as I was reading the exchange between John Thurso and Ms Weir in the uncorrected oral evidence (Q85) relating to the relative amounts spent by the ACE on operas and musicals. What exactly is the quoted figure of £3.6 million spent on? Since currently there are no core-funded clients of the ACE whose explicit role is non-operatic musical theatre one must assume the figure is solely devoted to grants and commissions towards the mounting of musical works themselves by a range of organisations, and yet the larger figure of £41.6 million *included* the running costs of the client opera houses and presumably another pot pays for the running of Britain's repertory theatres. These reps are not required to allocate any specific amount to musical theatre, one must therefore assume that their general budget includes their musical productions, such as they are. So to whom is the £3.6 million paid and for what? There are roughly 150 writer-associates of MMD, a group who represent a good number if not the entire body of the working, professional writers of musical theatre in the UK. If the £3.6 million was spent on commissions and grants for productions by companies *other than* regional reps and opera houses then a sizeable proportion of that writer-associate list must have received a great deal of support already in the year 2003–04. Indeed, some of these associates may have accrued considerable wealth as a result of the grants. Perhaps there is another explanation that did not emerge from the minutes.

Another case worthy of more detailed examination is what happens to the investment made by the taxpayer in favour of musicals that become commercially rewarding thereafter. In the last 18 or so years the RSC would have earned hundreds of thousands if not millions of pounds from the great success worldwide of *Les Misérables*. All of us applaud the huge benefits to our industry of the popularity of this show. Given that the taxpayer made a considerable investment in this show before it transferred to the Palace Theatre, it might be appropriate to ask in the light of this discussion about the future of the musical in Britain what happened to those RSC millions? Did they use any of this windfall to re-invest in some new, small or medium-scale musicals, or was it used to fund new plays or new Shakespeare productions? Did it end up acting merely as a sponge to soak up the high running costs of the company? Do the ACE know what happened to the return on their investment?

Again, I applaud the success of *Jerry Springer: the Opera*, but it is true to say that it owes its present existence on the London stage almost entirely to the taxpayer, both from its productions at BAC and at the RNT. It may even have received indirect government support for its earlier incarnation at the Edinburgh Fringe, though I do not know the details of this previous arrangement. If its current production goes on to be a West End long-runner and even to open successfully on Broadway, it will earn for both BAC and the RNT substantial royalty dividends, not to mention fortunes for its creators and private sector investors. If that happens might it not be proper for that money to be ploughed back *specifically* into musical theatre at those two organisations? Can it not be a condition of ACE core funding that BAC commit themselves to a minimum number of small-scale productions of new musicals each year? Cameron Mackintosh has characteristically ploughed some proportion of his company's profits from that and other shows into investment in new musicals—supporting a range of projects and organisations including NYMT and MMD—and Andrew Lloyd Webber made a significant contribution to the future of musical theatre with his support for the NYMT over a long period. What gesture has the publicly-funded RSC made in the same period to new musicals? Perhaps if they had not made the decision to move out of the Barbican Centre they might have been able to provide a small corner of their offices there to the NYMT, who unlike the RSC would gladly have used the purpose-built rehearsal facilities at the site as well.

The ACE and London's local authorities and boroughs already fund a great many medium-scale, local and fringe theatres within the M25. A casual glance at *Time Out's* weekly listings suggest the figure may be in excess of 100. Leaving aside venues that simply receive material, there are still a good number of producing playhouses. Instead of finding yet more money to create yet another venue for musical theatre is it not quite reasonable to suggest that *one* of these already-funded theatres becomes a specialist home for new musicals? Is that not a more sensible use of resources, and are we not in danger of recreating the muddle that saw the ENO and the ROH set up side by side in the centre of London?

As a writer of musicals I am naturally attracted to the idea of a permanent “home” for the musical, paid for by someone else, but I am much more in favour of channelling the available pool of cash into the projects and works themselves, not into bricks and mortar. I would suggest that to support the aims of the MMD and its UK-based writing teams, one solution would be for the Arts Council to make available to regional repertory theatres ring-fenced grants for the producing of new musicals by UK-based writers. It is well known that regional theatres are frightened of mounting anything but sure-fire musical hits because of the costs and risks involved. If there was a financial top-up available similar to that offered by commercial-sector producers who are “buying” options on the future life of a show my view is that more regional theatres would do so and would actively seek out possible collaborating teams.

There is some confusion when contributors to this discussion refer to “new writing” in the musical theatre as to its provenance—and therefore relevance—to this discussion. The Bridewell Theatre commissions and produces works from all over the world, but inevitably—given the form's history and repertoire—the emphasis is on American musicals or musicals whose style owes much to Broadway or Off-Broadway. It is worth noting that the

Royal National Theatre's past record on musical revivals has also been one of presenting American masterworks. There is nothing inherently wrong with this—a good piece is a good piece and its revival may actually stimulate the “home market” by setting high standards all round—but it is important that the UK Government's funding from whatever source is directed to the perceived weakness in the arena—namely the difficulty that new UK work has being produced to a high standard. No-one can responsibly claim that the American musical is in need of help from our side of the Atlantic, especially as the prospects for new musicals in the USA are generally far healthier for the reasons recorded in your earlier submissions. It is perhaps worth remembering that the 20th century American musical in large part grew out of an English genre—the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, mounted with enormous success without any state subsidy of any kind!

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE MUSICAL

It has been my great privilege and delight to have worked on so many musicals with young people, either through the auspices of the NYMT, through Sainsbury-sponsored education projects, Music for Youth, or through countless school and youth productions of my works. There is no doubt whatever that it is in this area that musical theatre can make the most profound impact on our cultural life and on the lives of so many youngsters across the UK. That the experience can transform the self-esteem and outlook of a young person is beyond question and the huge growth in school, college and university courses, modules and extra-curricula activities in this area is evidence of a sea-change in the perception of musical theatre during my lifetime. In the 1960s a tiny proportion of schools attempted their own productions of musicals, now it is the norm. These events in the school's life are seen as key confidence and team-building exercises, with many intangible spin-offs in terms of relations between students and with their staff. The work of the NYMT as a “fast track” to run alongside this phenomenon at local level has been outstanding, bringing high levels of expertise and experience into the field. It is odd, then, that schools are forced to pay fairly hefty percentages of their takings for such events, plus up-front licence fees, just to perform these musicals. For a well-endowed school with middle-class parents, finding a few hundred pounds even before you have built your set or installed your sound system is not prohibitive but it might be more of a deterrent in a less privileged environment. Because of this and other pressures, schools—like regional theatres—often fall back on old chestnuts like *Grease* and *Joseph*. Might it not be possible to make available to schools ring-fenced grants to put on musicals by living UK-based writers (perhaps they'd spot a loophole and still do *Joseph*)? If every secondary school in the UK, when alerted to this opportunity were also given details of the MMD's members and their extensive repertoire of works, is it not possible that the added bonus of the presence and participation of these skilled professionals in themselves would help raise standards and widen the horizons of the students involved?

In Q94 of the uncorrected oral submissions to the Committee, I note with pleasure that the chairman referred to the last World War II destroyer now preserved in Chatham Historic Docks, saved by government intervention from the scrap yard. By coincidence I was filming at the Destroyer this week for my new Channel 4 music series and very impressive it is too. Perhaps because I wasn't on one of the excellent guided tours I was not aware that the warship had been saved in the manner the chairman mentioned and wish that there had been a more prominent sign to this effect at the site. In the late 1980s, I seem to remember, the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford received a then record sponsorship package from Royal Insurance to support their work of, I think, £1 million. For this magnanimous gift they had—understandably—negotiated extremely prominent billing outside the theatre for all the millions of visitors to Stratford to admire. However, it was still only a fraction of the huge sums paid to the RSC from the British taxpayer and I wondered then as I wonder now with respect to that WW2 destroyer, the Royal Opera House, ENO, the National Theatre and all other such national treasures, if it would be appropriate for there to be a large and friendly sign, eclipsing that even of the sponsors, reading “Funded by the People of Great Britain” so that every taxpayer could see and be justifiably proud of what their money buys, to ensure that whenever a member of an operatic design team contemplates a costume costing £3,000 they are reminded who is footing the bill, and so that the Arts Council officers, instead of being seen as the men (and women) from Del Monte who say “yes” are properly perceived as servants of the people of this country and their magnificent heritage.

3 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr David Levin

BRIDEWELL THEATRE

I refer to the recent submission by the Bridewell Theatre to the Select Committee regarding their perilous financial and venue situation.

I wholeheartedly not only support the Bridewell submission but demand from a civilised country that all areas of its artistic life be adequately funded. I assume that the Select Committee does not need to be instructed on the importance of the essential need of works of art and music to human beings. Not to support a venue for music theatre and contemporary music theatre writers would be the equivalent of denying space to modern music or contemporary art. Music Theatre deserves to be supported in a parallel way to straight theatre—the West End is full of venues for successful commercial theatre which does well and makes money; London also has several venues, like the Royal Court, which provides a platform and “commercial” space for new, untried writing, playing to smaller audiences, which may be equally successful artistically but of course cannot compete financially, and is supported as such. Of course, all writers and composers aspire to be very successful—nobody writes in order to fail—but you cannot become successful with a gun to your head. The Bridewell Theatre is the only venue in all London which tries to provide some of the answers to the creative process of music drama. I feel ashamed that there is only one venue like this, and to think that this venue needs my support, well, there is nothing more to say.

I really hope that this Committee will come up with the necessary practical and financial support to keep the Bridewell operating comfortably in its wonderful venue.

2 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Ms Julia McKenzie

FUNDING FOR NEW MUSICALS

I would like to add my voice to the remarks made last week regarding the funding for new musicals. The National Youth Theatre and the Bridewell Theatre are so important in the quest for new musical writing talent. I would urge you to look into the necessary funding.

3 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Michael Dresser

The union between music and drama is possibly one of the most powerful art forms in the world and possibly the most relevant to modern society in terms of how media culture is consumed by audiences. Musical theatre has a huge potential to reach out and communicate with people who otherwise would not consider themselves interested in “art” or even venture into a theatre. The language of music mixed with dialogue and visuals is one which the “MTV generation” understands perfectly. As this label could now apply to many of those over the age of 40, this represents a significant proportion of the population.

As a writer of musicals and a small-scale theatre practitioner, my experiences of the contrast between producing a straight play and producing a musical could not be more different. There are virtually no venues or opportunities to develop innovative musical theatre in the way that plays can be. The recent trend for “retro” or film based musicals has opened the door to new audiences and provided them with something to which they can relate. What is desperately needed now is for those audiences to be given the opportunity, having discovered that they have the capacity to enjoy musical theatre, to broaden their understanding and enjoyment of it.

One of the recent West End success stories has been *Jerry Springer: the Opera*. This production started life as a one-off sketch and was then given the opportunity, by a non-mainstream theatre, to grow and be developed. I suspect that if the idea for this show were pitched, even now, to a commercial production company it would be laughed down. However it continues to pull in consistent and diverse audiences (on attending a performance at the National Theatre I saw ages ranging from teenagers to old age pensioners in the auditorium!).

There are frighteningly few non-commercial venues in London (and even fewer in the regions) who are prepared to support work like this and nurture it through the process that every successful theatre piece must inevitably go through. However there are many avenues of support for other theatre forms such as plays, dance and physical theatre—probably not enough, but significantly more than there are for musical theatre. Off the top of my head I could name several dozen venues who provide such support for non-musical theatre. I can think of less than half a dozen for musical theatre.

In addition, competition for support from those venues or organisations that do exist is so fierce that it is often extremely difficult to get a foot in the door simply because they are not physically able to give attention to the volume of work which is jostling for consideration.

For an art form which so obviously holds such incredible potential in the process of drawing people into the arts this situation seems insane. As *Jerry Springer: the Opera* has shown, musical theatre has the possibility to cross many boundaries and be innovative and commercial without compromising its own voice and integrity; but it needs support in order to do so.

If dedicated support and funding for musical theatre does not begin soon this country may well lose a golden opportunity to develop a language which the population is already telling us they want to learn. In the same way that galleries have propelled their art into the 21st century consciousness, musical theatre now has the potential to cross over fully into popular culture and become part of the world of the everyday person; but it needs support in order to do so.

4 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Marita Phillips

ARTS DEVELOPMENT: MUSICAL THEATRE

I am a scriptwriter and lyricist with direct experience of writing for the musical theatre.

The obvious difficulty of musical theatre is that it is more expensive to produce than straight theatre. It needs musicians and it needs a bigger cast.

This does not prevent musical theatre dominating the West End. But it has led to productions being chosen purely on the basis of their commercial value which in turn has led to the lack of original material, the gimmicks, the celebrities etc. However, it also shows the musical theatre is extremely popular.

There are two main reasons why musical theatre needs supporting by the subsidised sector. Firstly, it would be fair if new writers of musicals should receive some financial encouragement which unlike classical composers and playwrights, they currently do not do. Other than an occasional competition, resulting in a showcase—there is not support for new works.

Secondly, because of the popularity of musical theatre there is every reason to believe that regional theatres would put on one or two musicals a year, if they could afford it. This in turn would give a new musical the chance to make its way to the West End, which currently is almost impossible. It would also give performers of musical theatre the chance for experience and work.

The only place consistently nurturing the musical theatre is the Bridewell Theatre, and that is threatened with closure. I have showcased a musical at the Bridewell and been to many productions there. I cannot speak highly enough of the way it is run and the role it plays in musical theatre today. The knowledge, expertise, encouragement, quality of production and support for musical theatre, at whatever stage of development, is unrivalled. Its closure would be a catastrophe for new writers of musical theatre.

I believe musical theatre should be treated as a separate entity, like drama, opera, dance etc and have its own specific public subsidy. I believe it will be an investment in the future of Britain's writers, composers and theatre life.

8 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by the Actors Centre

There is a palpable imbalance in the developmental support available for the genre of musical theatre as compared with nearly all forms of non-musical theatre.

As the UK's premier resource for the acting profession, the Actors Centre represents the interests of actors across all media and provides further professional development in every aspect of the craft, for every genre and from traditional technique to experimental exploration. It is a fundamental tenet of the organisation that performers should be involved and associated with the generation of new work, and for this reason we have valued the presence of MMD in the building as movers and shakers in a key area of creativity. The problem is that a vicious circle exists.

The musical is a popular medium, one of the bastions of light entertainment culture, and the most conspicuous examples of the genre are inevitably perceived as conservative product: *Les Miserables* has been there a very long time; *Guys and Dolls* will get you out of a box office pickle. For this reason it has a hard time claiming the high ground rhetoric of trailblazing and breaking new ground, reinvention and experiment. Consequently there is very little support for new work that attempts to innovate and any genre which lacks that activity will be in danger of stagnation. For my own part at the Actors Centre I will be seeking to connect the development of musical theatre skills in the acting profession with those who are trying out new ideas and testing work in progress, just as I already do with contemporary playwrights, new writing theatres, film-makers and companies which devise new work. The two-way street of the developmental workshop, where composers, lyricists, mds and bookwriters share their expertise with performers, but also learn from

performers about the viability of their next musical concept, is one way I would look to support venues such as the Bridewell, but they clearly deserve more substantial resources to pursue their stated objectives and broaden their horizons.

The Bridewell is an important outlet for the promotion of new musicals on a more modest scale than the lavish production outlay demanded by the commercial mainstream will allow. The future of the genre is potentially fascinating: what new energies can be brought into theatre by engaging with new evolutions in popular music, the rich possibilities of world music, internationalism, reflections of global culture that can transcend the limitations of text-based theatre, the notion that the musical might lead the way in the integration of future technological resources . . . These are all questions that are crucial not just to the tradition of popular musical theatre but to the whole culture of the performing arts. They will require artists to make gambles and be daring if progress is to be made and for the full dynamic potential of the medium to be realised. Before formats that command widespread appeal and blockbusting financial clout can evolve, there must be scope for many more tentative forays and interesting failures.

As a body representing the artistic voice of the acting profession we wholeheartedly affirm the need for a review of the criteria applied to the funding of new work to take account of musical theatre in general and the National Youth Musical Theatre and the Bridewell in particular.

10 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by the Greenwich Theatre

I am writing in reference to the recent Select Committee into Arts Development: Musical Theatre which took place on Tuesday 14 October and wish to make a formal submission to the investigation.

Greenwich Theatre reopened in November 1999 after a lengthy period of closure and the loss of its funding from London Arts. The new management decided to re-focus the theatre as a centre of excellence for musical theatre and over the last four years we have been active in both presenting established companies and developing new work. In 2000 we launched an annual festival of new musicals (*Musical Futures*) which has successfully showcased more than 30 new pieces, some of which have gone on to be produced fully elsewhere. Indeed, we produced one (*Sadly Solo Joe*) in 2002 and transferred it to the Cardiff Festival of Musical Theatre.

In July 2003, and following a pilot project, we secured £250,000 from the Learning & Skills Council to support the development of a new musical theatre training academy which was launched by The Minister for Arts in September. The aim is to provide high-quality skill-based training for 14–19 year olds (especially Black and multi-ethnic youngsters) to enable them to apply successfully for higher education. We are now developing a business plan which will incorporate the performance work with a full-time education and training strategy for young people and emerging artists.

To respond specifically to the issues:

The UK certainly falls way behind the USA in terms of development opportunities for musical writers. There are many well supported regional theatres that present musicals and so the producing opportunities are greater. Studio spaces off and off-off Broadway provide relatively low-cost production space for fringe companies and there are a number of useful umbrella organisations such as the National Alliance for Musical Theatre which support showcases and networking. One distinct difference worth noting: the National Alliance is a membership organisation whose members are theatre managers—not writers. The emphasis is therefore more focussed on the presenting needs of the venues.

It is certainly true that the UK funding bodies provide many more resources for the development of new plays rather than musicals. This is probably due just as much to the enthusiasm of the officers as to the historical view that musicals are commercial and therefore don't need subsidy. However, the development process for musicals is far more complex than that for plays. Musical costs a great deal more and so there is a huge gulf between the initial showcase and full production (whether commercial or subsidised). It is perfectly possible for a new play to be transferred directly from the Royal Court Upstairs Theatre into a West End venue because the basic running costs remain the same. The same is not true for musicals where costs for performers, musicians, sound equipment etc can be reckoned at probably three times the cost of a play. This may explain the reason why so many musicals struggle to move beyond the non-union showcase stage.

As an example of how expensive it is to produce mid-scale musicals, Greenwich Theatre produced two musicals in 2002–03. The first, *Sadly Solo Joe*, was a four-hander with a minimal set and a band of four. This cost around £65,000 and attracted box office income of about £20,000. The second, *Golden Boy*, had a cast of 11, a band of five and cost £110,000 and earned £24,000 at the box office. In both cases, we were able to allocate direct Arts Council subsidy towards the costs which ensured that the losses were modest.

Creatively, we are in a depressed period of musical writing. The era of the Lloyd-Webber epics is over but British writers are still hugely influenced by the success of *Les Miserables* and *Phantom*. The West End is bereft of new and original work that is commercially viable and so relies on a succession of “juke box” musicals that are safe territory for the audience and easy to publicise. In this climate it is important to

recognise the value of The Bridewell in providing performance opportunities for new writers. However, I am concerned that the majority of musicals staged there are by American writers—most of whom are unlikely to be produced further in this country. The reason for the bias is obvious; the quality of musicianship is certainly superior to most of the new work offered by British composers. But, it is a worry that there is so little emerging talent from the UK with truly original voices and comparable technical facility. It would be useful to identify and promote the emerging courses offered by conservatoires like Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College of Music which should help develop talented writers in the future.

The Arts Council should be encouraged to take a more strategic role in the development of this important artform. There are a small number of committed and energetic organisations who could form the core of an infrastructure and help promote training and development opportunities. Some of these organisations currently receive Arts Council funding and others might benefit from some modest support. There is a risk, however, that limited resources could be wasted through duplication of activity and I would recommend that an audit is undertaken of the national picture. The drama schools provide a useful function as many choose to produce new musicals as part of the students' training. We are currently discussing with the RSAMD ways in which new musicals showcased in Musical Futures could be developed further by their Musical Theatre students and perhaps performed at the Edinburgh Fringe.

There is no doubt that the West End needs good musicals to satisfy the demand of the audience (both home-grown and tourists) and that Britain plc benefits from a healthy musical industry in terms of direct tax revenue and tourism-related income. Any business needs research and development to produce the cash cows of the future and the arts world is no different. It is a good time to evaluate the resources needed in order to sustain and revitalise this important sector.

7 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr James Chalmers, Shoreline Productions

ARTS DEVELOPMENT: MUSICAL THEATRE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSICAL THEATRE AS A GENRE WITHIN THE UK

Musical Theatre out of all the theatrical genres provides the most entertaining and memorable performances for audiences. Theatre would be extinct, as a result of the competition from television and the cinema, if it weren't for stage shows that provide an experience that can't be generated on the small or large screen. Who wants to go out on a dark winter's night, leaving the comfort of one's own home and pay a lot of money to watch some dreary stage play, however good the acting or story is. However a lively musical is a different matter altogether and nothing can compare with an exciting performance involving, dance, songs and live music.

It is unfortunate that most theatres, when they do decide to have a musical, go for the well tried musicals, usually by a well known writer/composer. New musicals don't often get a look in, which is a shame, because if the theatre is to continue to thrive, it can only do so with new material coming along, to attract audiences back who perhaps have seen those musicals that keep going round and round. It is understandable that theatres are reluctant to try new shows without a track record. However, if the artistic directors took the trouble to go and see the musicals being premiered in smaller local venues, usually by struggling local theatre companies, then they might be pleasantly surprised at what is available. And when it comes to getting in an audience, the fact that the writer is new and unknown can so readily be compensated for by a fairly modest level of advertising and exposure in the media. I would conclude that artistic directors in general are quite lazy when it comes to seeking out new shows including musicals and this doesn't help in the expansion of this important genre. The majority of the new musicals I guess must sink into total obscurity after a couple of performances, never making it to the attention of the people who put the shows on at main stream theatres. I have yet to persuade any artistic directors to come and see any of my work, despite free tickets and advance notice of six months plus. Of course I do accept that the majority of new work is probably worthless and going no where, but amongst the dross there surely is work by unknown writers at least worthy of further development. Much of the new musical theatre premiered in small local theatres is being done on shoe string and is not being seen at its best—some would certainly become viable if given the West End treatment.

To sum up: musicals are the life blood of the UK theatre and they have great appeal right around the world. Musical are too valuable not to be given decent support and development of new and original work should be a priority with funding bodies and theatre directors.

THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO MUSICAL THEATRE

Recently I forced myself to sit through an excruciatingly awful theatre production at a local theatre I knew had received significant funding from Arts Council North West. It was a straight piece of drama—new writing from a local author. There was just a handful of people in the audience and this was a Saturday—the third and final night of the performance. As far as I was able to work out, this particular

theatre company had placed particular emphasis on employing young, newly qualified, unemployed actors, when it made its submission for funding. Also attaching educational workshops for young people as part of the package. I would say the production itself had absolutely no artistic merit whatsoever and made a zero contribution to the theatre in general, which is particularly galling to me, having been turned down on several occasions by funding bodies re new musical theatre pieces—on one occasion the reason given that it appeared to have little artistic merit.

Funding appears to be more readily available to unconventional projects—ones that shout out that they are breaking new ground. But this is not what the theatre needs. It needs pieces that fill seats—in other words shows that entertain. Another point worth mentioning here is that one of the conditions of an award is invariably that the project has a mechanism for monitoring success. The producer of the bad piece of drama just mentioned addressed this issue by handing out a questionnaire to those in the audience—but it was all tick boxes that did not allow people to say what they really thought about the show. This situation in many ways is like the Artistic Directors who don't bother to go and see new shows. The funding bodies rely on feedback from the person they have awarded the grant to, so how will they ever know what's going on out there in the real world?

I ran a new musical called *Dream Beat* (a 1960s rock musical about Liverpool—with original music written specially for the show—not cover versions) at two main stream Merseyside theatres during 2002. An extract from this same show went on to win a prize at a local drama festival earlier this year. I had to fund the whole project myself and made a significant loss. I've been told that if only I could get this show out of the Liverpool area to Birmingham or London, it would very likely take off. But practicalities ie funding prevents this. I rely entirely on the good will of the director, actors, dancers and musicians working just for minimal expenses, and the hope that they might get a career break as a result of being part of it. There is no way, without financial support, I could afford to pay wages. It would be self financing if I could fill theatres and charge the going rate for tickets—but obviously I can't get to this point without some help on the way.

My next project, also in the same precarious position re actors etc, is another musical, but I fear I have possibly moved too far away from the concept of pure entertainment—as it was with *Dream Beat*—and have tried to be more serious and dramatic. But this didn't work either in trying to attract funding.

To sum up: Theatre needs good entertainment on the stage to attract audiences, something which musicals are particularly good at achieving, however funding from the Arts Council and other bodies is heavily biased towards experimental and other offbeat productions, particularly those that claim to have a positive benefit to those taking part, even if they are unlikely to attract anything other than a minimal audience.

November 2003

Supplementary memorandum submitted by James Chalmers, Shoreline Productions

I recently submitted an item re Musical Theatre to the Committee which has been acknowledged.

I am forwarding this e-mail as it has some relevance to the subject.

This is feedback from the Arts Council England NW explaining why my application for funding for a piece of Musical Theatre was turned down.

This is probably the fourth time I have applied and been rejected—in each case it was for musical theatre.

The general thrust of the awards system appears to be to fund projects which are targeted to minority groups, socially excluded people, etc. It is certainly not the case that support is given to projects which encourage the development of musical theatre in its own right.

I have a real problem with the way things are. Do I drag a selection of people off the streets to represent the minority groups in order to gain funding—even if they are not really interested in taking part? As it happens members of my team do include people with disability—the choreographer for example is partially sighted—but too proud to make this known to all but a few people close to her—so I can never declare this on my applications—she would be grossly insulted.

And I have had some racial minority participation in the past—but what am I supposed to say to a young girl who looks oriental “Are you Chinese—I need the information to put on a form”?

The Magic Opera for which I was trying to get funding is a sung through piece in two Acts for young performers—a Gothic Rock Opera. Completely original and conceived as an entry for the All England Theatre Drama Festival 2004. You will see from point two of the feedback—that it is acknowledged as being interesting and ambitious. It will go ahead without the funding from ACE, but it will be my own money that goes into it.

I have had a small amount of funding from the National Lottery Awards for All—to cover the recording costs of a CD and then to buy radio microphones. I will be applying for funding to try to cover the costumes for The Magic Opera—but the amounts involved are small by comparison to that handed out by ACE.

Annex

E-mail from Ian Tabbron, Arts Council England to James Chalmers, dated 24 November 2003

Points from the assessment of this project:

The bid was not failed overall but did not score as highly as other applications in a very oversubscribed process.

The project was clearly described and based on an interesting and ambitious proposal.

The open audition process and time limited nature of the work was an issue as ACE is looking to prioritise sustainable and inclusive opportunities for young people as part of ongoing programmes. Raising expectation of young people has to be seen against the likelihood of them having further chances to use and develop skills and interests. While competition is not unhealthy, public investment in participatory work requires the offering of opportunities for young people with a wide range of skills and potentials.

Given the above and the nature of the project the lack of substantial partnership with appropriate groups or organisations (youth arts groups, schools, youth services etc) was a real concern.

The budget showed heavy dependency upon earned income and Grants for the Arts award being made. Some other applications show more robust spread of income from other sources including some cash already confirmed.

Artistic team were also the administration and financial team. In some projects there are specialists taking on these responsibilities.

The marketing and evaluation plans while not inadequate were not very detailed and lacked appropriate budgets for implementation.

I hope this is helpful James and gives and adequately demonstrates why you did not score highly enough to secure an award.

27 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by The Stage Musical Appreciation Society

INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR MUSICAL THEATRE

INTRODUCTION

1. The Stage Musical Appreciation Society (SMASH) is an independent non-profit making organisation for those interested in the musical theatre. Our aim is not just to “preach to the converted” (ie those who already know a lot about musicals) but also to “spread the gospel” to those who would like to learn more and share their interest with others.

2. We were formed in 1997 and our newsletter (*Spotlight on Musicals*) gives members the latest news about shows, recordings and other events. We have a small, but devoted, band of members and also have a number of high profile readers.

3. Neither the Society, nor its founder and Secretary, David Thomas, have any connection with the professional theatre or any formal relationship with any of the organisations likely to give evidence to the Committee or be affected by its deliberations.

4. What we offer therefore is a view from an informed audience committed to the musical theatre.

MUSICAL THEATRE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

5. The Society regards musical theatre as an important element in the cultural life of the nation. Its unique blend of music, lyrics, drama and dance calls for a wider range of artistic skills than other forms of entertainment. The genre can accommodate an astonishing range of shows: from very small-scale offerings to vast, lavish productions; from serious works putting across significant social or political messages to more light-hearted shows whose objective is just to entertain or amuse. The range of music can be equally varied in style—covering the whole spectrum from pop to operetta; from jazz to quasi-classical.

6. Little wonder then that musical theatre is one of the most popular forms of entertainment. Currently some 19 of the 35 theatres in London's West End are mounting musical productions. As musicals tend to occupy the larger houses we conclude that at least six million of the 10 million tickets sold each year must be for musicals. At the same time there are around a dozen musicals on tour throughout the UK—most playing to packed houses.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSICAL THEATRE TO THE UK ECONOMY

7. Those with access to official statistics will no doubt draw the Committee's attention to the important contribution that London theatres make to the economic health of the capital. Clearly it is substantial. As West End theatres are often dominated by musicals it follows that musical theatre must take the major share of the credit for this contribution. Over the past 20 years some British musicals have become world famous, in the process becoming major tourist attractions as well as contributing to invisible exports.

THE COMMERCIAL THEATRES

8. But, of course, evidence of the economic benefits of theatre-land does not necessarily justify support from public funds. Many musicals (of the very sort which attract visitors from home and abroad) have been financially very profitable for the creative teams, producers and theatres concerned. In some cases the marketing of shows worldwide has made fortunes for those involved. For these reasons, and given the pressures on the public purse, there can be little justification for general subsidy for the commercial theatres.

9. However, the recent suggestion by The Theatres Trust that outside help will be necessary if the fabric and facilities of the older London theatres are to be improved, raises new issues which should be considered separately. The Society does not have the evidence or knowledge to comment on this issue but regards it as less urgent than other matters which are being considered by the Committee (and to which we turn later).

THE NEED TO ENCOURAGE NEW WORK

10. The commercial nature of most of London's theatres has encouraged "long-running blockbusters" and revivals (and, more recently, shows based on the well-known back catalogues of pop and rock stars). In some ways those facts should not cause concern. The long-runners have invariably been either written or produced by British talent and their success is something we should be proud of. Although the revivals have usually been Broadway musicals, they have come from what many consider to be the "golden age" of musical theatre and it is right that their merits should be available to new and younger audiences who did not see them first time around. The shows based on well-known pop music can attract a new audience into the theatre. In all three cases the shows have given much needed work and experience to British performers, musicians and creative staff.

11. Regrettably however these trends—driven by commercial considerations—have done a disservice to new writers and composers who have found it difficult to find theatre space to showcase their work or to persuade producers and theatre managers to take the risks involved in presenting new or unfamiliar musicals.

12. In these circumstances budding writers and composers, and producers and theatre managements who are willing to present their work, have a strong case for help from public funds if musical theatre is to thrive.

THE CASE FOR PUBLIC FUNDING

13. Like all artistic and cultural endeavour, musical theatre needs constant renewal and development. It is essential that public funding should be available to support the training and development of writers, composers and young performers, and to encourage the production of new or little known musicals.

14. Public funding for the arts should remain primarily the responsibility of the existing national and regional arts bodies and local authorities. Normally musical theatre must continue to make its case for its share of limited public funds alongside other claimants.

15. However, everything possible should be done to make sure that those dispensing public funds recognise the artistic and economic importance of musical theatre. Despite their popularity (or perhaps because of it) there is, we believe, a tendency on the part of many involved in the arts to regard musicals as somehow artistically inferior to other forms of live entertainment. Evidence of this is difficult to come by. But the impression is confirmed by stories of past complaints that the National Theatre should not mount popular musicals; from current murmurs that many regular patrons dislike the idea of the Royal Opera House producing "Sweeney Todd"; and from a perceived bias against musical theatre amongst

the professional members of the Olivier Award judging panels. We feel that there is a danger of such elitism finding its way into those organisations which have a responsibility to allocate public funds to the arts and we hope that the Committee can address this danger in their report.

SPECIFIC SUPPORT FROM NATIONAL FUNDS

16. In addition to the normal arrangements for grants and subsidies, however, we would like to see special arrangements at national level which could offer support to those organisations which, for various reasons, fail to get sufficient recognition via the present system.

17. Two specific, and ring fenced, types of support should be available:

- (1) *annual core funding for a limited number of organisations* which make a contribution to the development of musical theatre which has an impact beyond the immediate geographical area in which they are based (the grants being related to the standing costs of buildings equipment and staff but not to the costs of mounting individual shows or events); and
- (2) *financial support for individual productions or events in the form of an investment rather than an unconditional grant*. The idea behind this should be to underwrite the cost of staging new work (particularly by British writers and composers) with the funding body having a financial stake in the production. For successful productions the funding body would get a return on its investment (to be ploughed back into the fund and used for future projects). For less financially successful shows the investment would be written off. Such an arrangement would encourage writers and producers to strive for work which is not only new, innovative and artistically worthwhile but is also likely to appeal to audiences.

TWO URGENT CASES

18. Grants such as those proposed above are likely to be justified for only a relatively small group of organisations and the effect on public expenditure is therefore expected to be modest.

19. At present the Society feels that the following organisations can make a strong and urgent case for support on the basis of the contribution they make to the health and success of musical theatre throughout the UK:

- (1) *The National Youth Music Theatre* in recognition of the unique work they do to encourage young performers and musicians (and in doing so to attract younger audiences).
- (2) *The Bridewell Theatre* which, almost alone in London over the past 10 years, has encouraged the performance of new or little known work; has put artistic merit above commercial considerations and, with limited resources, has achieved remarkably high standards of production and performance. They are unfortunate in being located within the City of London who, no doubt because of their very low night-time population, do not feel they can offer significant support. But the Bridewell's audience comes from a much wider geographical area than the City and their work has, in the past, been of National significance.

20. In both cases it might be necessary to attach certain conditions to any grants made from public funds. One might be that they should give priority to musicals by British writers and composers. Another, that they work closely with each other (and with other non-commercial organisations like the Mercury Musical Developments and the various stage schools).

OTHER ISSUES

21. In general terms we feel that comparisons between the UK and the USA will not be helpful to the Committee's considerations. Musical theatre is much more central to the American culture and there is considerably more private and corporate sponsorship of individual shows in the United States. We do, however, suggest that in Britain we need a central resource on musical theatre similar to that contained within the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. This would be an invaluable focal point for research and information. Such a project would be unlikely to attract private investment and is therefore a worthy contender for financial support from public funds. It could be based on an existing organisation such as the Theatre Museum or a major library.

SUMMARY

22. Our views can be summarised as follows:

- Musical theatre is an important element in the cultural life of the nation (paragraph 5) and one of the most popular forms of entertainment (paragraph 6).
- Musical theatre makes an important contribution to the economic life of the UK (paragraph 7).

- Successful musicals can be very profitable for their creative teams and producers and there can be little justification for general subsidy for commercial theatres (paragraph 8). However, the recent report of The Theatres Trust calling for help on improving the fabric and facilities of London theatres needs separate consideration (paragraph 9).
- The commercial nature of most of London's theatres has favoured long running musicals and revivals (paragraph 10). This has meant that new writers and composers have found it difficult to get their work performed (paragraph 11).
- Like all artistic and cultural endeavour musical theatre needs constant renewal and development. This deserves an element of public funding (paragraphs 12 and 13).
- Everything possible should be done to ensure that those responsible for dispensing public funds recognise the importance of musical theatre and counter any suspicion that musicals are regarded by some as inferior to other forms of live entertainment (paragraphs 14 and 15).
- In addition to the normal arrangements for grants and subsidies, special arrangements are necessary at national level to support a limited number of organisations whose contribution extends beyond the geographical area in which they are based and who fail to get sufficient recognition under the present system (paragraph 16).
- Those arrangements should include core funding (paragraph 17.1) and support for individual productions which should take the form of an "investment" rather than an unconditional grant (paragraph 17.2). The cost is likely to be modest (paragraph 18).
- The two urgent cases needing support are the National Youth Music Theatre (paragraph 19.1) and the Bridewell Theatre (paragraph 19.2). Certain conditions might need to be attached to any grants (paragraph 20).
- Whilst comparisons with the USA are not likely to be helpful, the UK would benefit from a central resource for musical theatre along the lines of that provided by the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (paragraph 21).

17 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Richard Hugh Card

ARTS DEVELOPMENT: MUSICAL THEATRE AND THE THREATENED CLOSURE OF BRIDEWELL THEATRE (CITY OF LONDON)

For the past 10 years The Bridewell Theatre, the only producing theatre in the City of London, has been at the forefront in developing and encouraging innovative musical theatre.

The musical theatre industry attracts little by way of public funding and investment and yet is a major contributor to foreign earnings through tourism and exports. It is also a vital feature in the programming and income for provincial theatres such as The Theatre Royal in Brighton. Musical theatre is popular, accessible theatre and is a genre that is the financial mainstay for many venues.

The Bridewell is unique and I think should be considered an important, creative, national resource.

Steve Bell (political cartoonist for *The Guardian*) and I are currently experiencing the value of the Bridewell to writers who are new to musical theatre. Carol Metcalf, Artistic Director, has provided advice, encouragement and free, practical assistance in bringing our musical comedy "Great Scott ..!" to a point where we expect to showcase the piece for potential producers at the Bridewell in January 2004. As far as I am aware there is no other organisation who would have given their support to a project as unusual as ours and I am sure that without the help of the Bridewell we would not have progressed so far.

I hope that the Committee will act to ensure funding is made available for the Bridewell Theatre to continue their valuable work.

17 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Robert Berry

RESPONSE TO INQUIRY INTO "ARTS DEVELOPMENT: MUSICAL THEATRE"

The funding problems currently being faced by the NYMT and the Bridewell Theatre, while of immediate and obvious concern are also significant as warning signals for an industry which if allowed to continue on its present course will be in severe jeopardy in ten years time. Although your inquiry highlighted many pertinent issues, there are further matters which should be considered.

Robert Cogo-Fawcett's talk of the relationship between subsidised and commercial theatre demonstrated some of the essential problems, especially with regard to the contrasts between our set up and that of New York's. I would like to tell you something of my own situation, as I believe it is relevant to this.

As a young writer of musicals, I moved to London from Scotland, last year. (I graduated in Music from Bristol University two years ago and then worked full-time on a musical). I moved to London, as having written the musical, had it performed in Bristol and re-written it, I felt it was ready for development. I also felt London was the place to meet other writers of my own age. (I was wrong—there are very few people my age writing musicals.)

Two institutions have been of particular interest to me, since moving here. The first is Mercury Musicals Development. The personalities involved (in particular Georgina Bexon and Caroline Underwood) have been very accessible and helpful. The organisation has provided me with the majority of the contacts I now have, as well as useful advice and information. I feel very fortunate to have joined them. However, they do not have the resources to properly help develop work. Despite having the support of an extensive network of important industry figures who are all too happy to have their names attached, there is not a great deal of financial support.

Like most other musical writers, attempting to find somewhere to help develop this material has proved difficult, owing to the lack of theatres, which deal with this. The general lack of support both in the development and performance of new musicals in this country is something that is deeply worrying.

The West End Producer's motivation at the moment seems to be geared towards exploitation of pre-existing fan-bases. This is totally understandable, at a time when the tourist market is so unpredictable. However, this results in the appearance of musicals which tend to fall into the following categories: revivals of musicals from 1940s onwards; musicals focusing on the back catalogues of successful rock-bands; and musicals, which have been adapted from popular (often musical) films. While each of these aforementioned categories is perfectly valid as a means of keeping box-office revenues ticking over, new musical material in the last ten to fifteen years has hardly had a look in.

The lack of developmental support means that all too often, producers—who bother to turn up to showcases—see work that is not complete and either write it off, because they are unable to see the potential or will say “Come back, when it has been fully developed”, but are not willing to support that development. I have not show-cased my material, but I have been to 25 in the past year and not a single one seems to have led anywhere. (Most of them were not ready for show-casing, but some of the writers could not get help developing it, so thought they would showcase it to get cash for development.)

I have only met a very few people my age writing musicals, even though I know plenty of talented young song-writers. The perception is that it is totally unfeasible and unrealistic, given that the developmental support is not there and there are no new musicals being promoted. (I have been extremely fortunate to be able to give it a proper shot, as I had a bit of cash just to live on, unlike most my age.)

The second institution I am particularly interested in is the Bridewell, as it actually offers the opportunity to develop material. (It is also in a great location for targeting potential investors, who work in the city.) While it is great that this theatre gives audiences an opportunity to see American work that might otherwise not be seen, ironically the crucial significance of the Bridewell is for commercial theatre.

Producers' lack of commitment to the life-blood of their industry means that the Bridewell is almost alone in helping realise a full development of something, which might prove to be a commercial hit. Although it is a rather lonely effort—and especially when compared to what is going on in New York—at least it is one channel, which will allow the next Lloyd-Webber to come along with musicals, which could be national institutions/cash-cows in ten years time. Shut this door and it is another nail in the coffin, which leads to musical writers transferring their skills to other mediums like pop songs or just going to New York, where people have the commercial sense to treat new musical writing as an investment in the future.

The way things are going, in ten years time, if there is a new musical on the West-End, it is highly likely that it will come from New York, (with some money going back to new American musical writing.) People will realise then that sitting back and watching the Bridewell struggle and then close was an appalling act, which was more than symbolic of the shallow grave made for decent new musical writing and development in this country.

19 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Samuel French Ltd

Samuel French Ltd is the largest play publisher in the world both for straight plays and for musical plays. Our primary aim is to promote our titles to the world amateur performing market and to collect performing royalties for our authors from productions of those titles. Although we have an American parent we are an autonomous British company primarily promoting the work of British authors.

We are extremely concerned at the current dearth of British talent in Musical Theatre and applaud all that Mercury Musical Developments and The Bridewell are doing to reverse this trend. The current way for new work to filter down to the amateur sector is for French's to acquire the right to represent new work

through seeing new productions, both West End, fringe and regional, which will in the course of time become available for amateur production. Many amateur societies have large budgets for their show—not only for performing royalties but also for scenery, costumes and the hire of an orchestra and Musical Director. Amateur drama is a thriving leisure activity throughout Britain and in many rural communities, without benefit of theatre or cinema, is often the only live entertainment available.

With the increasing number of revivals and American shows on the professional circuit there will rapidly be a situation where no new shows are filtering down to the amateur who currently generates a large amount of income for British authors and for the support industries. If amateurs have to rely on American imported shows in the future then performing royalties will flow out of the country to the USA. We feel that organisations such as The Bridewell, for encouraging showcases of new work, and the National Youth Music Theatre, for nurturing new performers, are essential to the wellbeing of Musical Theatre in Britain.

19 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Jenifer Toksvig

ARTS DEVELOPMENT: MUSICAL THEATRE

I LIKE TO BE IN AMERICA

Comparisons between support for the development of new musical theatre writing here in the UK and the situation abroad, particularly in the US.

I lived in New York for two years whilst studying for an MFA in Musical Theatre Writing at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. In developing Mercury Musical Developments' website, I had to research all the opportunities for financial and developmental support offered to writers of new musicals in the USA and the UK. For the purposes of this document, I have done further research into this subject. Attached to this document is a list of the opportunities that I've been able to find, for the development of new musical theatre in both the USA and the UK. There are over 30 opportunities in the USA, and only a dozen or so in the UK. One might argue that the USA is significantly bigger than the UK. However, 15 of the USA opportunities that require a location (ie: are not purely financial awards) are based in New York. Eight UK opportunities are based in London.

<i>New York</i>	<i>Ed</i>	<i>Prod</i>	<i>Fest</i>	<i>Sup</i>
Amas Musical Theatre	✓	✓		
ASCAP Foundation	✓			
BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop	✓			
Dramatists Guild	✓			
Genesius Guild	✓	✓		
Graduate Musical Theatre Writing MFA Program, NYU	✓			
Harold Prince Musical Theater Program	✓			
Inneract Productions		✓		
Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts				✓
NAMT Annual Festival of New Musicals			✓	
National Music Theatre Network NMTN	✓	✓	✓	
Playwrights Horizons		✓		
Theatreworks/USA		✓		
Wings Theatre		✓		
York Theatre		✓		
<i>London</i>				
Bridewell Theatre		✓		
Greenwich Theatre Musical Futures			✓	
John Caird Co.				✓
Mercury Musical Developments	✓		✓	
National Student Drama Festival			✓	
National Theatre Studio				✓
NITRO		✓		
Theatre Royal, Stratford East	✓	✓		

Ed = workshops or education programmes. Prod = production opportunities. Fest = festival of new musicals. Sup = support of some kind for the development of new musicals (financial, venue, etc).

That doesn't look too bad . . . until you start considering it from my point of view. I have a new musical that is currently in first draft stage and needs developing. It's an hour long, and requires five actors and simple staging. Let's assume, for now, that it's a good piece of writing and I'm successful when I submit it to a company.

In New York, I could take it to Amas (who receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts) or Lincoln Center (who also receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts). I could submit it to NAMT (National Alliance for Musical Theatre, who receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts). I could take it to Playwright's Horizons, or the Wings Theatre, or the York Theatre, any one of whom would help me workshop it and then possibly produce it. The NMTN might also help me with script/score evaluation, or a showcase of some kind. At all of the aforementioned places, I believe I'd get to work with a professional director and musical director who can guide me in development.

Seminars and such might help me with it, and I could attend those at the Dramatists' Guild (if I join, which I could) or the Genesis Guild (who might also help me develop the piece). Having graduated from the Tisch MFA program, I can always ask for their support in terms of meeting with one of the tutors and discussing the work. They also offer alums the chance to showcase some of their material occasionally, and they offer at least one developmental workshop for which alums can apply each year. The only financial support I could get in New York would be from the Kleban Award, since one has to be resident in the US for all the others. If I lived over there, I could apply for at least four financial awards for musical theatre, to help me develop the piece.

It's also possible I could find a theatre company and together we could get funding from the National Endowment for the Arts on terms of a one-off project. (See Annex A for an internet link to the National Endowment of the Arts' list of Musical Theatre Grants for 2003, which includes 27 new musicals supported in development and production and 11 musical theatre projects supported to increase the accessibility of musical theatre as a genre.)

In London (see Annex B), there's MMD. I could have entered it into the MMD Festival ("The Works") and worked with a professional director, musical director and actors. MMD also offer me some seminars and craft workshops that will help me develop my writing. If MMD had funding, they could offer me the MMD Development Programme or the MMD Reading Service, both of which are currently on hold until subsidy or sponsorship can be secured.

If I enter it into Greenwich Festival, I just get given a venue to use and have to provide everything else myself (which would cost me money), so I wouldn't learn all that much from the process. This is a collaborative artform. To learn, I need to work with someone who can see the work objectively. The John Caird Co. has musical theatre as part of its policy, but has only done one musical reading in the last year, and has no other financial support on offer at present.

The National Theatre Studio is rumoured to do readings of new musical theatre pieces, but they apparently don't make that information widely available. I could submit it to the main theatre as unsolicited material and hope for the best. There are no UK financial awards that are specifically focused on musical theatre, either from the private sector or the Arts Council.

The Bridewell will certainly support me as best they can, but they don't have any money right now. I could give it to a youth theatre to do, and then I might be lucky and get it into the National Student Drama Festival—but with my own director and cast, so unless I know a great director who would work for nothing, I won't get much out of that process either. And again, I'd have to put my own money into it. My show is not 'black' musical theatre, so NITRO is out. My show doesn't fall into the musical categories that Stratford East supports.

If I give up on the idea of learning about my craft through the development of a specific show (try learning how to be an architect without ever building an actual building), I could attend multiple educational programmes in New York. In London, there's MMD, who do the best they can on limited funding.

Oh, to be in New York.

So, I'll develop it myself. I'll find a space (possibly free) and hire some decent actors from whom I can really learn (at a minimum of £50 a day for five days, for five actors, which = £1,250) and a good director from whom I can learn (another £250), not to mention a good musical director from whom my composer and I can learn (another £250). All I have to do is find a minimum of £1,750.

I'm the MMD Administrator. Part of my job seems to be receiving emails from writers and composers who ask me how to develop their work and learn about their craft. I urge them, constantly, to find amateur companies, youth theatres, even a group of friends—anyone who can read the material through, perform it at some level, just so they can see their work on its feet. There is only so much one can do on one's own.

This is a collaborative artform. I cannot develop my own work, on my own, up to the point where Cameron Macintosh would produce it in the West End. I'm just one part of a whole team: director, designer, lighting, sound, musical director, arranger, cast and so on. A musical theatre production isn't My Work, it's Our Work. I can't do it without them.

In my own career, I've done as much as I can on my own. I was lucky that I found a theatre with a good youth department and a great director, and there I learnt some of the basics of my craft. I was lucky to be accepted at Tisch and be able to take out loans to pay the ridiculous fees there. I developed my craft skills, learnt how to use the basics. I was lucky to find MMD and be given the chance to share what I've learnt with others, as well as benefit from whatever MMD can afford to give its writers. I'm lucky to know some good actors, directors, musical directors who will sometimes work for much less money than they should be getting, in the name of furthering the artform.

No matter how lucky I have been, it is still endlessly frustrating to me that MMD has no funding, that the Bridewell has very little funding, that NYMT is going down, that others have funding reliant on specifics that rule out most of what I write.

But then, this is just musical theatre we're talking about. Why should we care so much about the fluffy confection that is musical theatre?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSICAL THEATRE AS A GENRE

In a play, some of the most moving moments are those when the character can no longer speak about how they feel. The unspoken emotion is what touches the audience. In a play, those moments are often more quiet, reserved. Even a character who shouts about his emotions only has his spoken voice with which to express them. If I write a speech for a character in a play who is shouting, obviously angry, I risk alienation of the audience because of the instinctive reaction we all have to someone who is demonstrating an inability to handle their own emotions. The expression of emotion within a play is a subtle craft that allows the audience to have a quiet, more private catharsis within their connection to the character and the moment. Sometimes, it's a more intellectual study of that emotion, from the audience's point of view. We are allowed a distance from the action, if we wish it.

In a musical, the normally unspoken emotion is dragged out of the character and enhanced with music. Characters in musicals not only show how they feel, they let their feelings out on a glorious wave of music, and the audience can sail along with them. It's also a catharsis, but of a vibrant and immediate nature. The audience is rarely alienated, because singing is not an everyday occurrence. We have no instinctive reaction to defend ourselves from it. Rather, we instinctively allow it to move us in some way.

Here's an example for you. A snippet of dialogue, from a play called "Liliom":

Marie: May he rest in peace, poor man, but as for you. Please don't be angry with me saying it, but you're better off this way. He's better off, the poor fellow, and so are you. Much better, Julie. You're young, and one of these days a good man will come along, am I right? A year from now you will have forgotten all about him, won't you?

This play was the original source material for the musical "Carousel". The dialogue I've quoted, and that moment in the play, became the song "You'll Never Walk Alone". Listening to that song, you can clearly see the difference between the two. In the dialogue I've quoted, the pain of loss is hidden by a "chin-up" attitude. It's implied, not revealed. Anyone who has ever seen the musical will know how openly emotional the song is, specifically because of the music. Anyone who has heard Liverpool football fans singing the song will know how moving the song can be, just on its own. That's the difference between a play and a musical.

These differences are not all that obvious unless you really analyse the affect plays and musicals have on audiences, which I have only done in a limited capacity as a writer trying to understand my craft. However, they are vital differences. One of the first questions I ask myself when beginning a new musical is this: Why should this story be told within a musical? What is it about the use of song that will enhance the telling of this story in a unique way? If I can find no answer, I'll write the story as a play.

Musical Theatre has served many purposes within society, over the years. The 'fluffy confection' of musical theatre, the jolly singing and dancing, has brought us joy through war and despair. The comedy of musical theatre comes to the fore as a coping mechanism at such times. The drama of musical theatre helps us to have that emotional catharsis we seek from art in general, as well as an intellectual understanding of the life we live and the choices we make. The music of musical theatre allows us to open ourselves up to that emotional catharsis. The lyrics of musical theatre give us a concise and structured form to follow. Songs please the ear and facilitate an easier way to connect with and remember the characters, the emotions, the moments.

Some of these things are true of plays, some of orchestral music, some of film, some of pop songs. Only musical theatre combines them all. That's why it's a collaborative artform, ultimately between the stage and the audience. That's why it's a rich artform, full of craft-tools and brimming with potential.

Surely no-one needs to ask why art is an important part of the culture of any country? Art is our cultural expression, our emotional catharsis, our individuality as a nation and as a human being. Art is exploration, wonder and enlightenment. Musical Theatre is a powerful artform. It is also a unique artform, and therefore deserves an equal place in the art world.

Opera is musical theatre. Music, lyrics, drama. Writers of musical theatre look jealously upon the world of opera. We feel that we are separated from it, segregated, treated like the poor cousin. We use music, lyrics and drama too. It's very hard to understand why an opera company can spend millions on a production when I am trying to scrape a couple of grand together to do a five day development workshop.

Musical Theatre isn't just about some characters who suddenly stop what they're doing and spontaneously break into a song and dance routine that everyone just happens to know. It has been that in the past. It might continue to be that if no-one funds the development of new work so writers and composers can explore the endless possibilities of the collaboration of music and drama.

I can't talk about the amount of revenue generated by musical theatre in the West End. I'm sure someone else can tell you all about that. I'm guessing it's a lot of money. I can't tell you facts and figures about amateur, community and youth theatre who produce musicals in this country. I'm guessing it generates a lot of happiness and good community feeling. I know I get a lot of positive feedback and thanks from people who do my shows.

I can tell you that as an artform, musical theatre deserves respect and requires development. The desire is out there. We just need some encouragement. Of the financial variety.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUTH MUSIC THEATRE IN TERMS OF BOTH THE BENEFIT TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MUSICAL THEATRE WORK.

We should give young performers the opportunity to learn more about their craft. Absolutely. That surely goes without saying. We should also give young people the opportunity to experience performance. Having worked with young people, I can attest to the extraordinary ability drama has to help young people gain self-confidence, learn about the power of communication, work as a team towards a common goal, and spend time in a safe environment that gives them the freedom to be creative, and explore emotions and interactions they might otherwise not have the opportunity to explore. These things are pretty easy to both understand and argue for.

I wish I could make the development of new work tie in nicely with the need for a National Youth Music Theatre, especially in light of the fact that the Arts Council would plainly prefer to spend taxpayer's money on something that very obviously benefits the community. However, it is absolutely true that young people can gain just as much from performing established works as they can from performing new works. With one notable exception. I think it's a difficult one to grasp without having experienced it.

I've developed four new musicals, written by myself and composer David Perkins specifically for performance by children aged 8–13. These were first produced by Act 2 Youth Theatre, part of the Youth Department of the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford, Surrey. The Yvonne Arnaud's Youth Theatre offers an extensive array of workshops, classes and theatre activities for all people between the ages of 6 and 19. They have four production groups that each perform in the Mill Studio with a team of professionals at the helm and a summer musical on the main stage which is open to all members of the Yvonne Arnaud Youth Theatre. Everyone who wants to do some drama can do some drama. The department is currently run by Julia Burgess, who also directs many of the shows.

When we wrote shows in collaboration with Julia and Act 2, my composer and I did not just hand the script and score to the director and then leave them to it. We worked with them during the rehearsal process, collaborating with the kids involved, including them in the development of the show. Our shows would not have been as successful as they were if we had not had the opportunity to do so. The composer and I would not have learned as much about the craft of writing a musical without that opportunity. You can't fool kids, and kids can't fool you. A kid isn't going to believe you that the character should be annoyed if they don't see why that character should be annoyed. A great adult actor can make an ineffective piece of writing seem okay onstage. An untrained kid can't do that. Writing shows for young people to perform is all about doing the basics. There's no room for complex, experimental drama. It's got to be good storytelling, plain and simple. Working with the Arnaud Youth Theatre is where I learnt the basics of my craft.

The kids who were part of the process knew that they were being given more than the chance to be in a show. They would eagerly answer questions we asked them about their characters. They would offer suggestions. They are proud to say that they were the first person ever to play a certain character. Indeed, many of the characters have glorious characteristics that could not have come from anywhere other than the kid who played them.

For all of us, the entire company, the experience was so much broader than simply being part of a musical production. The kids were our partners in creating this new, exciting piece of entertainment. Together, we explored the art of communicating with an audience; the art of theatre, and the way it can mean more than just making people laugh or clap. Imagine how it feels to the kid to be told they are not only playing a part in a show, but they get to help create and shape that character, and therefore the show as a whole. Learning must be about discovery. A pro-active journey. For all of us, children and adults alike.

It's hard to explain how exciting that is, how much more proud we all were of the final production, how much it enabled all of us to discover more about ourselves and each other.

I have also taken part in drama workshops with teenage groups within the Arnaud's youth theatre, a few years ago now. This weekend, a young woman I did not recognise came up and said hello to me. She had been part of one of those workshops, a one-off occurrence in which I happened to be visiting Julia Burgess and happened to have a partially written script in my bag. We gave copies to the kids and they read a scene. Then we discussed the characters and the action. I asked them to tell me what they thought about it, how they might change things, what it meant to them. At the time, it was very helpful to me.

I had forgotten about the session, but this girl had clearly not. She told me how nice it was to see me, and how much she had enjoyed the experience. Having the opportunity to involve young people in the creation and development of the artform really does make a significant difference. After all, young people are just adults with less experience. Why overlook the chance to give them so much more of an experience?

The reason the Yvonne Arnaud's Youth Theatre is such a fantastic environment for the exploration and development of new work is a simple one: they are willing to collaborate. James Barber, the Artistic Director, and Julia Burgess, the Youth Theatre director, have been nothing but welcoming and supportive towards my composer and myself. That's all it takes. It didn't cost them anything extra to let us work on a new show. They didn't pay us anything. We'd have paid them, if we could! Audiences of parents and friends come to see the show no matter what it is.

However, it's possible that regional venues and youth theatres are reluctant to be as open to collaboration because they fear some financial repercussion when doing a non-commercial new show. If funding could be found specifically to support Youth Theatre groups who produce new work, both Youth Theatre and the development of new work would be encouraged.

UK-based writers and composers of new musical theatre are in desperate need of the chance to see and develop their work "on its feet", with a cast and a production and an audience. They could work with their local community theatre, but what they lack in such circumstances is a guide. When we first worked with her, Julia Burgess didn't know much about the process of writing a new musical, but she did know about Youth Theatre: what works for the kids in the show, and what works for the kids in the audience. We had a guide who could help us find the places where there were problems within the piece. As writer/composer, it was then our job to find ways to fix those problems. That's what collaboration is all about, and that's the kind of collaboration we need to develop our craft. If more writers and composers had the chance to develop new work for Youth Theatre, it would benefit everyone involved.

Kids love musicals. I get emails from kids all the time, telling me that they're doing one of my shows, and which character they're playing, and how much they love the songs. As a steward of public money, that is surely part of the NYMT's objective: to encourage young people to make discoveries through the unique medium of musical theatre. The NYMT has demonstrated to UK Youth Theatres that new musicals can be enormously successful. The NYMT should be the Government's flagship for Youth Music Theatre in England. If that is allowed to fall because of a lack of funding, what hope is there that other Youth Theatres will want to continue to do musicals, let alone take part in the excitement of developing new work?

Annex A

LIST OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MUSICAL THEATRE (USA)

1. *Academy for New Musical Theatre, LA*

<http://www.lmmtw.org/>

"The writers' workshop core curriculum is based upon the teachings and writings of Lehman Engel, the pre-eminent Broadway musical director." It is affiliated with Theatre Building, Chicago, and there is a fee to attend the workshop.

2. *Amas Musical Theatre, NYC*

<http://www.amasmusical.org/>

"A non-profit, multi-racial theatrical organization dedicated to bringing people of all races, colours, creeds, religions, and national origins together through the performing arts. The musical theatre program provides opportunities for writers, composers, and lyricists to create new work, free of the pressures of the commercial stage. Musical Theatre programs include the Amas Six O'Clock Musical Theatre Lab, Amas Workshop Program, and Amas Mainstage Productions. Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts."

3. *The ASCAP Foundation, NYC*

<http://www.ascapfoundation.org>

ASCAP is a USA performing rights organization similar to the PRS in the UK. They run a workshop in collaboration with Disney, run by Stephen Schwartz. They have a partnership with the Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts, to nurture new musicals. They also offer writers the opportunity to record a demo at a state-of-the-art facility.

4. *BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop, NYC*

<http://www.bmifoundation.org/home.asp>

BMI is an American performing rights organization, similar to the PRS in the UK. This musical theatre writing workshop is free of any cost to participants and takes place in NYC. BMI also offer various financial awards to graduates of the workshop.

5. *Cedar Crest Stage Company, Pennsylvania*

<http://www2.cedarcrest.edu/academic/tsd/playcomp/>

New Play Competition 2003: Cedar Crest College, Allentown, PA

“Cedar Crest is proud to announce the second bi-annual New Play Competition for the year 2003. In our continued effort to present musicals and dramatic works with themes that emphasize the contributions of women and further elevate the image of women on stage as well as works by new playwrights.”

6. *The Dramatists Guild, NYC*

<http://www.dramatistsguild.com/>

Offers a series of seminars and symposiums for members, including some on musical theatre.

7. *The Genesius Guild, NYC*

<http://www.genesiusguild.org/>

“A non-profit company of professional theatre artists dedicated to the creation of new plays and musicals. It provides a forum in which artists from all theatrical disciplines can interact to create, develop and produce new plays and musicals through a variety of programs which includes The Script Club, The RAW Reading Series, The Staged Reading Series, Upstairs @ Red, The Revolutionary Writers Workshop, The Actors Lab, The Directors Lab, GenNext Youth Theatre Program, Mix and Mingle Networking Events, and Main Stage productions. The goals of our programs are to engender the next generation of groundbreaking theatre and to create outstanding new works of unique caliber that are also in one way or another impactful.”

8. *Gilman Gonzalez-Falla Musical Theatre Award*

<http://www.ggftheater.org>

An annual award given to writers and composers of musical theatre.

9. *Goodspeed Opera House Foundation, Inc, Connecticut*

<http://www.goodspeed.org>

Goodspeed works in collaboration with the Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Each year group of students spends a period of time living and writing on site at Goodspeed, supported by the creative team from the venue. Writers and composers are given the chance to present some of their work to the venue at the end of their stay.

10. *Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, NYC*

<http://www.lincolncenter.org/default.asp>

Although rarely advertised, Lincoln Center develops a host of new musicals by providing space and resources for readings and workshops.

11. *The Harold Prince Musical Theater Program, NYC*

<http://www.thedirectorscompany.org/hpmt.html>

A program designed to “seek out and bring together the next generation of composers, lyricists, book writers and directors in order to ensure the future vitality of American musical theatre; to encourage early and close collaboration between musical theatre artists in the creation of original musicals; and to create challenging and adventurous new musical theatre works.”

12. *Inneract Productions, NYC*

<http://www.inneractpd.com/home.html>

“*Quality Theatre by Artists of Color* is a vibrant, not-for-profit production company committed to the highest standard of excellence for theater and special events. In our quest to foster the continued development of quality works by and/or for artists of color we maintain an open submission policy. One-acts, full lengths, and musicals are accepted.”

13. *Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation*

<http://www.jlpaf.org>

Grant awards based on merit and need. Jonathan Larson wrote the musical *Rent* and died a tragic death at a very young age.

14. *Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Washington DC*

KC/ACTF Musical Theatre Award

<http://www.kennedy-center.org/education/actf/actfnta.html>

Cash prize for musical produced at ACTF-participating college or university; at least 50% of the writing team must be a full-time college student.

15. *The Kleban Award*

newdramatists@newdramatists.org

<http://www.newdramatists.org/kleban—award.htm>

<http://www.newdramatists.org>

This award is open to all nationalities, including UK writers and composers. “Given by the Kleban Foundation Inc annually to a librettist and a lyricist. This award is administered by the New Dramatists group, who also present the Frederick Loewe Award in Music Theatre: Award to support the development of a new musical work-in-progress.”

16. *National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT)*

Annual Festival of New Musicals, NYC

<http://www.namt.net>

“The festival, held in New York in two Off-Broadway venues, consists of selected musicals that given 45 minute showcases with professional actors, directors and MDs, in front of an audience of NAMT affiliated industry professionals. Prior to the Festival, the NAMT Conference considers all aspects of musical theatre in America.” UK writers are welcome to submit material but must do so via an NAMT member organisation (of which Mercury Musical Developments is one). Several UK shows have been showcased at NAMT in the past. Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

17. *National Music Theatre Network (NMTN)*

<http://www.nmtn.org/>

“The National Music Theatre Network is dedicated to being the number one national support organization for the evaluation, evolution and presentation of new musical theatre product. NMTN provides programs that assist in a musical’s evolution through all its stages, programs that assist these works finding productions and programs that get new musicals to audiences that can’t otherwise see them.”

18. *New Line Theatre, St Louis*

<http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/3164/>

“New Line Theatre was created in 1991 to involve the people of the St. Louis region in the creation and exploration of provocative, alternative works of musical theatre—daring, muscular, adult theatre about politics, religion, race, sex, violence, the media, and other contemporary issues. New Line does accept submissions of new, small cast, issue-oriented musicals for production or readings. New Line Theatre receives funding from the Regional Arts Commission, the Missouri Arts Council, and the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis.”

19. *New Opera and Musical Theatre Initiative (NOMTI), New England*

<http://www.nomti.org/index.htm>

“The New Opera and Musical Theatre Initiative (NOMTI) nurtures and supports New England writers and composers of musical theatre and opera in the creation of new works. We also strive to strengthen audience interest in new musicals and operas by presenting works in progress.”

20. *New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, NYC*

The Graduate Musical Theatre Writing MFA Program

<http://www.nyu.edu/tisch/musical>

“A two year master’s degree program specially designed for the major collaborators in the creation of new musical theatre. Students and faculty include composers, lyricists, and bookwriters—those who put their individual talents together to write works for the musical stage.” The program also runs a summer school in musical theatre writing for college students/adults.

21. *North Shore Music Theatre, Massachusetts*

<http://www.nsmt.org/>

“Musical theatre combines primal concepts of music and storytelling. It is uniquely American, emotional, ageless, and a celebration of the human spirit. Furthermore, musical theatre is dynamic and evolving, always stretching its boundaries and challenging perception. Bold, exciting new musicals are created by theatres, writers, composers and audiences willing to take risks because of a fundamental interest in, and commitment to, the growth of this art form. Looking towards the future, North Shore Music Theatre (NSMT) is redefining its mission to emphasize the development of new musical works and the expansion of educational programming to capture the interest of all age groups in the creative process. As a non-profit theatre, our ability to rely on generous donations means we can focus maximum resources on high caliber productions, while sustaining and expanding our many education and community outreach programs.”

22. *O’Neill Music Theatre Conference, Connecticut*

<http://www.oneilltheatrecenter.org/prog/music/musiprogram.htm>

“The O’Neill Music Theatre Conference advances the development of new music theatre works and supports the creative visions of both emerging and established librettists, lyricists and composers. OMTC encourages fresh and bold work by creators who strive to take risks, thrive on exploration and embrace collaboration. Since 1978 a symbiotic group of directors, musicians, performers and audiences gather each summer to participate in an environment of discovery and exploration.”

23. *Playwrights Horizons, NYC*

http://www.playwrightshorizons.org/frames/fs_about.htm

“Playwrights Horizons is a writer’s theatre, and the only theatre in New York City dedicated solely to the creation and production of new American plays and musicals. We provide an artistic home for playwrights, composers, and lyricists—from the emerging newcomer to the accomplished veteran—to work in an environment of trust, collaboration, support, and experimentation.”

24. *Prince Music Theatre, Philadelphia*

<http://www.princemusictheatre.org/index.html>

“The mission of the Prince Music Theatre is to nurture and develop the unique American art form of music theatre of the highest artistic caliber over a wide aesthetic range-including opera, music drama, musical comedy and experimental work. Above all, we are dedicated to artists of our time seeking to break new ground, while we also celebrate the legacy of the creative mavericks and pioneers who have forged the American musical theatre.” Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

25. *Richard Rodgers Award*

(001) 212-368-5900 (tel)

“Administered by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, this award provides subsidies for full productions, studio productions, and staged readings by non-profit theatres in New York City of works by new composers and writers.”

26. *Robert R. Lehan Playwriting Award for one-acts, including musicals*

Contact: Professor Jack Shea Theatre Arts Program Department of English Westfield State College 577 Western Avenue Westfield, MA 01086-1630.

27. *Theatre Building Chicago Writers Workshop, Chicago*

<http://www.theatrebuildingchicago.org>

This workshop is dedicated to developing and producing new musicals. It is affiliated with the Academy for New Musical Theatre in California, and there is a fee to attend the workshop.

28. *Theatre Building Chicago "STAGES" Festival, Chicago*

<http://www.theatrebuildingchicago.org>

“Each summer, Theatre Building Chicago presents *Stages*, a weekend festival of new musicals. *Stages* is an opportunity for authors and composers to see and hear their work interpreted by a production team and performed for an audience. It is also an opportunity for producers and directors to assess new musicals and musical theatre talent.” UK writers may submit to this festival if they are Associates of Mercury Musical Developments. Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

29. *TheatreWorks, California*

<http://www.theatreworks.org/index.htm>

“TheatreWorks has a high standard for excellence. We prefer well-written, well-constructed plays that celebrate the human spirit through innovative productions and programs inspired by our exceptionally diverse community. [They accept] plays and musicals submitted by theatres and/or agents including: plays produced Off-Off Broadway and regionally other than the Bay Area, plays and musicals not produced in the Bay Area within the last five years, plays and musicals that have never been produced but have had some development, plays and musicals looking for development.”

30. *Theatreworks/USA, NYC*

<http://www.playbill.com/twusa/html>

“Theatreworks/USA is one of the nation’s largest, if not the largest, not-for-profit producers of professional theatre for young and family audiences, creating and touring original plays and musicals to millions of people in 49 states a year, and garnering critical acclaim from coast to coast. Theatreworks/USA commissions musicals and plays, and encourages playwrights, lyricists and composers to send their ‘pitch’. Theatreworks writers/composers include Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, Peter Parnell, Ossie Davis, Mary Rodgers, Charles Strouse, Arthur Perlman and Jeffrey Lunden, Marta Kauffman and David Crane, and Leslie Lee.” Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

31. *Village Theatre, WA*

“A musical theatre development program. Five staged readings and five table readings of new musical works will take place in Village Theatre’s development program, Village Originals.”

32. *West Coast Ensemble (WCE), California*

New Musical Works Development Program

<http://www.wcensemble.org/>

“A program which is designed to nurture new musicals through a process of readings and workshops onto a WCE Parallel Season production. During the reading portion, the musical is read aloud and assessed, and when necessary, changes are made. If the musical progresses successfully, a public reading and workshop production are given. Material may be submitted by the Director of the program or selected by the Artistic Director for a Parallel Season or a MainStage production.”

33. *Wings Theatre, NYC*

<http://www.wingstheatre.com/>

“Wings Theatre produces a year-round season of new plays by American playwrights. Plays submitted must fit into either of two categories: The Gay Plays Series (Plays or musicals with a major gay character or theme); or The New Musicals Series (Musicals on any subject or theme).”

34. *York Theatre, NYC*

<http://www.yorktheatre.org/>

“The York Theatre Company is the only theatre in New York City—and one of very few in the world—dedicated to developing and fully producing new musicals, and preserving neglected, notable shows from the past. For over three decades, York’s intimate, imaginative style of producing both original and neglected classic musicals has resulted in critical acclaim and recognition from artists and audiences alike.”

And finally . . .

35. *National Endowment for the Arts, Musical Theatre: FY2003 Grants*

<http://www.nea.gov/grants/recent/disciplines/Musictheatre/03musictheatre.html>

A comprehensive list of funding given for musical theatre projects in the year 2003. The list consists of 27 new musicals supported in development and production and 11 musical theatre projects supported to increase the accessibility of musical theatre as a genre. This list contains more examples of venues and theatre companies developing new musical theatre.

Note in particular:

MCT, Inc. (aka Missoula Children’s Theatre), Missoula, MT

“To support the MCT Tour Project, a touring musical theatre residency project offered to children nationwide. By using participatory performing arts workshops and performances, Missoula Children’s Theatre strives to empower and develop life skills for children.”

Annex B

LIST OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MUSICAL THEATRE (UK)

1. *The Bridewell Theatre, London*

<http://www.bridewelltheatre.co.uk/>

The Lunchbox Series offers writers and composers the chance to have short new musicals produced. The Bridewell is always open to receiving unsolicited materials for consideration, and has supported, developed and produced much new musical theatre in this country.

2. *The Global Search for New Musicals, Cardiff*

<http://www.cardiffmusicals.com/searchhome.html>

During The International Festival of Musical Theatre in Cardiff, chosen musicals are given a 45 minute showcase in front of an audience of industry professionals.

3. *Greenwich Theatre Musical Futures, London*

<http://www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk/>

Fifteen chosen musicals are given a 30 minute showcase at Greenwich Theatre. Tickets are sold to the public, and industry professionals are also invited. Writers are given a large number of tickets to distribute to their own industry contacts.

4. *John Caird Co., London*

Have initiated a new writing program with supposed funding from private sources, although MMD is not aware of any development of new work that has come of this as yet.

5. *King Alfred's College, Winchester, Music Theatre Undergraduate Degree*

<http://www.wkac.ac.uk/>

“This new programme offers students opportunities to investigate, explore and develop music theatre as an evolving form of artistic practice. There is an emphasis on creating performance as a means of research, and research as a means of creating.”

6. *Mercury Musical Developments, London*

<http://www.mercurymusicals.com>

“Mercury Musical Developments exists to support writers and composers of musical theatre, both in the UK and worldwide. Through a unique programme of opportunities and events, MMD offers its associates the chance to gain workshop experience and professional expertise.”

7. *National Student Drama Festival, London*

<http://www.nsdf.org.uk/>

NSDF Selectors travel the country watching and assessing student productions. Feedback is given, and around fifteen student productions are chosen to perform at the NSDF Festival. Relevant Specific Awards: the Cameron Mackintosh Award for Outstanding Contribution to Musical Theatre. This is not exactly a scheme set up specifically to develop new musicals, but it is a possible opportunity for new musical writers.

8. *The National Theatre Studio, London*

<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/home.html>

No information is made widely available to writers and composers on this subject, but I understand they undertake some new musical theatre development work.

9. *National Youth Music Theatre*

<http://www.nymt.org.uk/>

Until recently, commissioned and developed new musicals.

10. *NITRO, London*

<http://www.nitro.co.uk/>

“Formerly known as Black Theatre Co-operative. A new name, a new direction: Generating high quality Black Musical Theatre. Exploring new possibilities in Black Musical Theatre. Encouraging Black artists working in film, video, music, live art, visual art, fashion, digital media, poetry and rap to join us in expanding the boundaries of Musical Theatre.”

11. *Theatre Royal, Stratford East, London*

<http://www.stratfordeast.com/>

“We produce eight new shows a year including a traditional pantomime and one-off Sunday Variety shows and try-outs. A new initiative, now in its third year, is to develop new contemporary musicals that represent the eclecticism of multicultural London. There has been no natural bridge into theatre for much of the music writing talent which abounds in Britain. R ‘n’ b, garage, house, hip hop, jungle and drum ‘n’ bass dominate the charts, the club scene and the gig circuit, but are largely absent from the theatre. The Theatre Royal Stratford East is confident that staging shows which express contemporary themes using pop and street music is a way to attract audiences mixed in age and race.” They also run a workshop and commission new works.

And finally . . .

12. *Producing Theatres* that have informed MMD that they are willing to accept unsolicited musical theatre materials for consideration:

Chichester Festival Theatre

<http://www.cft.org.uk/index.shtml>

Royal National Theatre

<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/home.html>

Liverpool Playhouse & Everyman Theatre

<http://www.everymanplayhouse.com/>

Crucible & Lyceum Theatres, Sheffield

<http://www.sheffieldtheatres.co.uk/>

24 October 2003

Memorandum from Stephen Daltry

I would like to make a personal submission to the committee to emphasise the importance of musical theatre in our culture today. I am a member of BASCA and a Mercury Musical Developments associate, and I believe it is vitally important for new writing for musical theatre to be given the space and financial support it needs to flourish. I do earnestly believe that there are tomorrow’s Cole Porters, Lionel Barts, Jerome Kerns out there, that bodies like Mercury Musical Developments allow us to hone our craft as writers and their recent “the Works” at the Arts Theatre gave opportunities for young writers to see their work staged.

There is a current trend to have themed musicals that are based around the lives of popstars, such as Queen and Rod Stewart, but there is a real hunger for musicals with a strong story and melodies that touch the heart—as “Anything Goes” is at the moment—and this art form should receive due recognition.

Writers need a space, they need a chance.

Please remember musical theatre and please support those bodies like the Bridewell and MMD that are offering real opportunities for many writers.

25 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Fenton Gray, Artistic Director of The Co-Active Music Factory

THE THREATENED CLOSURE OF THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE AND FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC THEATRE IN THE UK

The Co-Active Music Factory is a non-profit making organisation that exists to promote new musical theatre writing and nurture new musical theatre talent.

The fact that the Arts Council does not have a musical theatre department, or even one officer specialising in music theatre (as far as I am aware) proves the low regard with which this art form is viewed by the powers that be. We believe it is time for a shift in attitude towards funding for new musical theatre.

If the Bridewell Theatre were to close, this country would lose its only producing venue whose main artistic policy is the development of new music theatre.

We are producing a show over Christmas and New Year at the Bridewell Theatre. It is the UK première of a musical revue celebrating the work of London composer Charles Miller and New York lyricist Kevin Hammonds, a writing team that the Music Factory has been working with for four years. Their last musical, *Brenda Bly: Teen Detective*, enjoyed a very successful run at the Bridewell over the summer, and a major UK theatre producer is planning a tour for next year, with his eventual sights set on Broadway and the West End.

Our current production will involve over 40 people. The main company of ten are working on a profit share basis (ie not very much), and each performance will feature guests that (in keeping with one of our key artistic policies) combine graduates from colleges such as the London School Of Musical Theatre and The Royal Academy Of Music with seasoned musical theatre artists such as Helen Hobson, Michael Praed, Paul Baker, Linzi Hateley, Jenna Russell and Zehra Naqvi. These people are giving their services free of charge because they believe in what we are trying to do.

The passion felt by the practitioners of this art is tangible; we would like to see that matched by an acknowledgement from funding bodies that the art form is both economically and culturally important to this country.

24 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr David Francis, PRS Foundation

The PRS Foundation is one of the few funding organisations who support the development process relating to new Music Theatre works. What is interesting is that despite our modest contribution to this area PRSF is one of the largest funders for the development of new Music Theatre in the UK (outside the commercial sector).

Seed funding for the development of any new work should not be beyond the realms of the funding system regardless of the genre. However, it is clear to PRSF that new Music Theatre does not, in general, seem to have the financial support other genres of music attract.

In our experience the creation of new Music Theatre is often used as a vehicle for projects focused on communities, access and inclusion (Operation Hackney, Orpheus Centre) but sources of funding available for music projects with a social agenda are far greater than for projects which simply develop new work and further a particular genre (this is true in all genres of music).

Some centres for the development of new Music Theatre works have emerged: Battersea Arts Centre, Bridewell Theatre and now Greenwich Theatre. The National Youth Music Theatre were working on an exciting initiative "Generator" to devise new work before ceasing operations. Likewise Chicken Shed's output was entirely made up of new work before they began their period of closure. However, as demonstrated by recent events at NYMT and Chicken Shed it is clear that the long term existence of these centres is precarious, despite notable success.

In terms of financing the development of new Music Theatre, the costs at the early stages should be no greater than any other genre of music—it is the demand on the finances which is different (in that the process may involve creative workshops/try outs, rather than, for instance, a commission fee and one rehearsal).

Successes may be few and far between, but this is by no means unique to Music Theatre and not a reason to single it out. Music Theatre has as much right to development funding as any other genre: the funding system should recognise that. Whether or not Music Theatre should have special treatment is an argument for the sector itself to pursue.

25 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Martin Weber

I am a musical writer from Germany, member of Mercury Musical Development and I must confess that we are not able to produce a popular musical in our country, because we don't have the suitable infrastructure.

As I read the report from 14 October—I realised that this could be a big chance for the industry to develop the products of the next famous writers.

I was thinking immediately of "*Rent*". If Jonathan Larson hadn't the chance to develop his piece with the money of the Richard Rodgers Foundation (he got about 12,000 dollars) there would be no performance at the New York Theatre Workshop.

And if "*Rent*" hadn't been such a success at the 125 seater NYTW there would be no transfer to the Nederlander Theatre where it continues to run today.

Kevin McCollum said at the 3-day-Intensive-Program in New York I attended this year: "It was so easy. The show was a success at the small theatre, so we moved with nearly the same set at a theatre with a capacity of 1,181 and began to earn money".

A few figures: 3 million dollars investment—174 million dollars gross until today at the Nederlander—275,000 dollars running costs a week (Producer Jeffrey Seller reported at the same meeting).

Exchange the Richard Rodgers Foundation with Mercury Musicals Development and the New York Theatre Workshop with the Bridewell Theatre and maybe you have soon the next "*Rent*" in your country.

In Germany the situation is sick. We have the Company Stage Holding and they import the stuff the world knows with better ("*Mamma Mia*") and less ("*Titanic*") success. They have an artistic director who has no experience in producing new work and seems to be employed just to keep the new writers out of the door.

We have an organization, called the GUBK who made a showcase of new German works at Hamburg in 2002. One production of this showcase got further: "Beyond the Mirror"—a musical about the life of Lewis Carroll and his problems with little girls. It got a production at the Stadttheater Heilbronn and I went to see the show in February and was shocked. It was brutal and vulgar with no romantic sentiment I saw at the presentation in Hamburg.

Later I learned that the authors protested against the director by refusing to get on stage on opening night. There was also a war in the chat room of the Stadttheater Heilbronn between the ones who were for the authors and the ones who were for the director.

What I want to say with this example: The big problem in Germany for musicals are the subsidised theatres.

There is too less pressure at the artists to make a work accessible. If its a failure—the public will pay for it. Our one big oeuvre "*The Threepenny Opera*" got a success in the US and then around the world. In Berlin it was just a so-so production.

American and English theatre producers are used to think economical. And if you install an organization like Mercury Musicals Development and a theatre like the Bridewell as a platform for new musical writing who feed the industry with input—you will remain the leading entertainment countries in the world.

And if Mercury Musical Developments and the Bridewell give one day a european composer a big shot who is not a native anglo-american speaker—they may get a surprise.

My last words: Go on and fund this extraordinary and good organisation and theatre.

24 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr John Schofield

I was delighted that the Government has initiated an inquiry into the development of Musical Theatre which is particularly apposite against the backdrop of the difficulties facing the Bridewell Theatre and the National Youth Music Theatre, both organisations with whom we have a very close association.

Josef Weinberger was founded in 1885 and from that time until the present day has been engaged in music publishing and the exploitation of stage rights in an extensive catalogue of music theatre works, including opera, operetta and musicals. It acquired rights in the operettas of Johann Strauss II and Franz Lehar and in modern times controls rights in many well-known musicals of British origin by authors such as Lionel Bart and Tony Hatch as well as acting as agent for the works contained in the Rodgers & Hammerstein Theatre Library and Music Theatre International including most-loved titles like *The Sound of Music*, *Guys and Dolls*, *West Side Story*, *Amie* and hundreds of others.

Although much of our repertoire is popular, in the wider sense we are also deeply interested and involved in developing and encouraging new writers. We have over the last 20 years published most of the musicals commissioned by the NYMT and have enjoyed a close contact with the Bridewell whose unparalleled

example of producing only cutting edge work has resulted in their staging some of the finest examples of ground-breaking American shows under our control by Adam Guettel, Jason Robert Brown and Michael John LaChiusa.

Music Theatre is the most popular art form in the world and in the UK contributes to the Commonwealth, in terms of employment, and VAT revenue for the exchequer from the commercial sector as well as being a magnet for tourists.

Unfortunately none of the revenue from this highly speculative business finds its way into the development of new work or the support of those who are dedicated to moving the art form forward. With the ever escalating expense of mounting musicals, commercial producers are retreating further into the conservative position of mounting revivals of a handful of classic sure-fire hits or creating shows using the back catalogues of popular song writers.

One should examine the history of the musical to discover that composers of musicals in the past did not just create hits instantly but gradually honed their craft over a period of years in an era when only new shows were staged. The composer Richard Rodgers is a classic example. He spent his formative years in England writing a succession of indifferently successful shows gradually perfecting his skills to write his finest work first with Lorenz Hart and later with Oscar Hammerstein. Today, would be composers and authors of musicals are discouraged because of the virtual impossibility of having their work produced, even in a work shop situation.

The knock on effect for us is that however much we may believe in the talent of a writing team, with no prospect of production there is no point in us acquiring rights. The cost of marketing a musical is such that we are able to do less each year as more performance prospects dry up.

In this climate the musical faces the prospect of degenerating into a spectacle-driven musical entertainment with ever-diminishing artistic merit.

In the USA with organisations like the National Alliance of Music Theatres, whose membership comprises independent theatres across the country supported by local communities, there are many opportunities to develop new work and with many more fringe theatres in the major cities writers have a chance of having their work aired. Here the prospects are bleak which is why it is so important that organisations like the Bridewell, Mercury Musical Developments, Theatre Royal, Stratford East and the National Youth Music Theatre must be supported.

I should be very happy to give oral evidence if it is required of the vital need to ensure the future of music theatre by preserving the above organisations.

26 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Ian Albery, Chief Executive, GSA Conservatoire

ARTS DEVELOPMENT: MUSICAL THEATRE

The GSA Conservatoire has a key role in musical theatre. Unique in the UK our school has the majority of its BA Hons degree courses focusing on vocational training for actors in Musical Theatre. Because new writing for the Musical Theatre, primarily through US influence, is the most diverse and all embracing of the dramatic arts we do represent the fusion of all ethnic communities in creating the actors for the 21st century. The level of talent and skills developed is prodigious. In the States it is known as the triple threat performer, one who can sing, dance and act with equal élan—and thus will beat all other actors competing at auditions to win the job.

Regrettably because of Arts Council attitudes to the arts and lack of interest in musical theatre, most new musical theatre writing is American. Why is this? Because the Americans consider musical theatre to be an “art form”. In the UK *laissez faire* dictates that Arts Council funding for new writing for the musical theatre will be too little and too late. The West End will increasingly become a port of call for American musical show imports. Why should this be? Because intellectual snobbism in the UK decries musical theatre as “the end of the pier”.

At the Arts Council there is at last much more emphasis on including all ethnic communities in theatre—however the penny has not yet dropped that musical theatre is the best medium for stimulating genuinely inclusive arts in our country.

Musical theatre is multi-disciplined and it:

- Extends the skills of the creative artists, writing and performing
- Broadens the audience base by appealing on so many levels
- Provides a multicultural accessible educational route to the Arts.

It is thus perverse that at this time theatres and organisations like the Bridewell and MMD that specialise in new musical theatre writing should be so poorly supported by our arts funding system. For the NYMT to be allowed to disappear without apparently any support being offered shows a lack of awareness of the importance of nurturing the roots of musical theatre.

At Sadler's Wells, where I was Chief Executive for nine years until 2002, we built a new theatre for "dance". I believe that thanks to Arts Council funding Sadler's Wells has developed an ethnically diverse and younger audience for dance. Now at the GSA Conservatoire we are training multicultural and highly talented students, with DfES scholarship funding, to be "triple threat" actors. Please ensure that when they graduate they have the artistic challenge of new UK musical writing to perform, and not largely imports or revivals—however brilliant—to recycle.

25 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Peter Watts

I note from the press notice issued by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee of DCMS that written submissions can be made in relation to the evidence session on the public support for musical theatre. I would like to write a few notes about "the significance of the Bridewell Theatre in the development of new musical theatre writing and productions within the UK".

I have been going to performances at the Bridewell Theatre for many years. So far as I am aware, there is no other small theatre where new musical writing is given such prominence. I know that there are very few theatres in the City of London and that the Bridewell Theatre in addition to evening performances, provides many "lunch box" performances. Although the theatre is small, it is an ideal venue for nurturing and displaying new musical theatre talent. The space is infinitely variable with its seating and the possibility of a small orchestra in the deep end of the covered swimming pool (the water has of course been removed!). Also, the team at the Bridewell, in particular the theatre director, Carol Metcalfe, have been there for many years and have built-up an enviable reputation in the medium in which they excel, musical theatre. The reviews for recent productions fully support this view.

The Bridewell has been given very little notice of a substantial reduction in funding (I understand) from next 31 March and needs relatively modest help to secure its future. The writers of the blockbuster musicals that produced such huge direct and indirect earnings for this country have to be nurtured somewhere and I believe the Bridewell Theatre provides the best opportunities available to nurture such future talent.

I hope that the above submission will be useful in your deliberations.

25 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Jodi Myers, Director of Performing Arts, South Bank Centre

I am writing in support of the case for public investment in new musical theatre expressed by the Bridewell Theatre to the Committee at its evidence session on 14 October.

Most industries invest extensively in research and development in order to ensure that some if not all, ideas can grow into major projects. However, while "R and D" in the arts industry often struggles to attract significant support, it is the case that some artforms have been more successful in attracting funds for small-scale experimentation from public sources than others. This is for a variety of reasons, some historical, some financial; for example, by their nature musical theatre and opera are usually more expensive than say, drama or dance, but that doesn't mean that they are less in need of support.

While there are a number of publically-funded opera companies in the UK operating primarily on the large and medium scale, some of which are actively engaged in the development of new work, new work is not their core business. In the case of musical theatre there are no regularly supported organisations and this may be because of an impression that this is primarily a commercial activity. However, in the late 1970s the Arts Council of Great Britain recognised that large regional theatres needed more than plays, ballet and opera to survive, so it established an important touring musical partnership with Cameron Mackintosh which helped keep major venues open and fuelled interest amongst new generations of audiences. Since then public funding for musical theatre has been sporadic at best. While large-scale musicals can earn significant amount of revenue for their producers, the economy and the Treasury, they are the tip of an iceberg which needs a strong base if it is to avoid meltdown and stay afloat.

New work is essential to the development of any artform, but it doesn't appear fully formed as if by magic. As well as the result of original thinking, imagination and talent, shows are the product of a team of people working long and hard to create and refine something, and in order to change and grow new work can benefit hugely from being seen and responded to by audiences in intimate venues. If the development of composers, lyricists, directors, music directors and performers is important, it is a risky strategy to rely on the producers of long-running, commercially successful large-scale shows to take responsibility for developing new work which can be labour and time intensive.

Of course organisations such as the National Theatre, the Royal Opera House and the South Bank Centre and some repertory theatres mount the occasional musical, but none are in a position of commissioning and nurturing significant amounts of new musical theatre. In any case given that musical theatre is as diverse a field as drama or music, it is arguable that it would benefit from a variety of organisations involved in the development of new work.

Over the last decade The Bridewell has begun to have a significant impact on the development of new musical theatre and on a new generation of musical artists. Being the only small theatre dedicated to this genre it is playing an increasingly important role, and if its future is not secured it will be a major loss, not just to London but also to the future of musical theatre in the UK.

25 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Sarah Schlesinger

I have read about your inquiry into the issue of musical theatre development with great interest. I applaud your willingness to explore this vital area and would like to add a few comments from my own perspective about the importance of the Bridewell Theatre, not just within the United Kingdom but on the world musical theatre scene.

I am interested in the new musicals movement both in my capacity as Chair of the Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program at Tisch School of the Arts at New York University—and as a working lyricist and librettist. I had the great good fortune to be invited to London five years ago to be part of an intensive several day workshop concerning new musicals. Since that time I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with most of the leaders of your new musicals' movement and to get to know a group of aspiring musical theatre writers as well.

Soon after I began my interchange with British musical theatre creators and producers, I had the opportunity to visit the Bridewell Theatre for the first time and to meet its gifted leaders, Carol Metcalfe and Tim Sawer. I was totally captivated by the work I saw produced there during my visits to London and with their dedication to their very important mission.

I would like to first discuss why I feel the Bridewell is an exceptional institution and then to examine why the loss of this first-rate institution has ramifications much broader than the loss of one first-rate venue might suggest.

I have had first hand experience with the Bridewell as a producer of my own work and of my student's work. In the summer of 2003, the Bridewell produced "The Ballad of Little Jo," a musical for which I had written book and lyrics. Seeing that production take shape was one of the finest theatrical experiences I have ever had. The show had premiered in a poorly realized million dollar production at the acclaimed Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. After seeing it in Chicago, Carol Metcalfe began working to raise funds to produce it at the Bridewell, a process that she never gave up on over a three year period. Her vision of the show was translated into a wonderful production that restored our faith in the piece and in many ways, our belief in the point of trying to do musical theatre in the future. The reviews were extremely positive, not just for our work, but for Carol's direction and the Bridewell's role in bringing this piece to the British audience. A life spent writing musical theatre is filled with many memorable moments—but Little Jo at the Bridewell will always be the one most prized by my collaborator Mike Reid and myself. The production was exquisitely wrought and any writer who is so well served by a theatre has been given a gift that is beyond price.

My students at NYU are writing outside every existing musical theatre box. They come from all over the world, are of all ages, and political persuasions—and their work is rarely produced in the US because they are trying so much that is new and not easily put into categories. Ironically, their work has found a home at the faraway Bridewell. Alumni work has appeared in the Bridewell lunchtime series and several pieces were also included in the most recent mainstage production. The presence of the Bridewell is extremely important to my students. Just knowing that there is a theatre that finds the work of our graduates exciting is very encouraging to the current students as well as the rest of the alumnis.

I believe the situation in which musical theatre finds itself in the United Kingdom and the United States of America are in fact quite similar in many regards. The challenges faced by this art form as it struggles to find its place as a powerful means of communication about the human condition and an agent of change in this century are overwhelming. It will not be able to survive and flourish unless serious attention is paid to what it will become in the future.

Since the moment when popular music was revolutionized by the advent of rock, musical theatre in the UK and US has too often tended to become frozen in time. Invention and discovery have become the exception. The form has become stagnant, trivialized, and marginalized. A numbing sameness has frequently marred its choice of subject matter. It has failed to understand its role in the face of film, television, and computer technology—that in fact being grounded in the realm of immediate experience is

its most essential quality. There have been few identifiable musical theatre giants produced in either country in recent decades with the exception of Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber and Stephen Sondheim. Two men, no matter how great their bodies of work, do not make a robust art form that can be taken forward.

Much of this failure to advance artistically has taken place because producers of musical theatre are afraid of change; afraid to experiment. Costs of producing musical theatre have risen dramatically on both sides of the Atlantic and producer timidity has risen along with the increased financial risks. New product is almost non-existent in a sea of revivals and anthology shows built from the catalogues of pop artists of the past. The income derived from commercial musical theatre in the UK is vast, but it cannot be taken for granted that there will always be a musical theatre to bring in that level of income.

Musical theatre is an industry in which there is almost no research and development. In order for the art form to advance it needs to find sanctuaries where it can be free to experiment and to redefine itself. This cannot be done without some element of risk. Inevitably it is only in the non-profit sector where that kind of experimentation can take place.

This searching process will never happen in the commercial theatre as it exists in today's cultural and economic climate. It can only happen sheltered in an institution dedicated to the process of experimentation, where there is freedom to risk and to contemplate what might be—not just imitate what has been. It can only happen in an institution where all kinds of voices and all kinds of music are welcome. It can only happen where serious and controversial subject matter is as welcome in musical theatre form as tried and true light fare.

Word by word, note by note, song by song, new form by new form, new viewpoint by new viewpoint, challenge by failure, as surely as those who search for ways in which to reinterpret and go beyond in every other aspect of the arts, the musical theatre artists in the UK want to take their art form forward in the 21st century. Without considered planning and concerted encouragement, the reality is that this isn't going to happen.

As I understand it, there has been very little public money invested in the grass roots development of musical theatre by the Government. In a climate where all development is being left to commercial producers who have no intention of taking chances, this results in there being an immense vacuum instead of a lively and creative seedbed of new work. Consequently very little new British musical theatre arrives at the West End—or at other theatrical venues throughout the country.

At this point in the history of the British musical theatre, the Arts Council appears to be the greatest source of hope. Intervention in the form of a development strategy and funds to implement that strategy could turn the status quo around and signal other funding sources that paying attention to the evolution of musical theatre is essential. I believe that key to this strategy are two elements: funded venues with a proven track record in new musical theatre development and accessible training in the field.

I would like to posit that in the Bridewell Theatre you have a world-class development venue already in place with ten years of experience and evolved skills that can be the heart of this development effort and a leader for other theatres that would hopefully follow as the new musicals movement grows. I understand that there are funded venues in London who have the mission of developing and producing new dramatic work and surely it makes sense to institute a similar group of venues dedicated to doing the same for new musicals.

I think many artists working in new musicals in the UK are under the illusion that we have theatres like the Bridewell in the US—and in New York City specifically. Nothing could be more distant from the truth. I think of the Bridewell as a miracle—and every day I wish that it were in New York City because I believe that with its leaders as partners in our movement—there is very little we couldn't do. In New York, we have no non-profit theatre dedicated to new musicals; most non-profits are inept at producing musicals. If they squeeze in one a season—it's a miracle. My agent, who directs the Theatre Department at the William Morris Agency, one of the top agencies in the entertainment world, considers the Bridewell one of the several best development venues in the world.

I wish I could find the words to tell you how valuable this remarkable theatre is and what a terrible loss it will be if it is allowed to disappear from the scene. I have rarely felt as strongly about anything as I do about the fate of the Bridewell. As one who battles every day to move my own work and the work of a small group of amazingly talented alumni forward, I know how few beacons of hope there are on our horizon. The Bridewell is a singular institution—and the people who run it have sacrificed much to keep it alive. Their belief in this form is everywhere in their operation; to work there is to be invigorated and to discover all over again what it means to create musical theatre and to strive for excellence in an environment where elaborate settings and costumes and gizmos are not the point; words and music interpreted with amazing insight and immense care and skill are the point.

In the years that I have worked with British musical theatre writers—both in London and at our NYU Program, where a number of students from the UK have come in recent years, I have come to truly respect their talent and potential. It is very discouraging for them to have no prospect of being heard if their work does not fit the narrow and somewhat stultified profile of what is currently on the West End.

No doubt there is a huge pool of both untapped musical and writing talent in the UK. Until they see a viable field, young artists will not gravitate towards musical theatre. Hand in hand with funded venues for development, there needs to be attention paid to encouraging the growth of organizations that can provide rigorous education in musical theatre writing in the UK. The Mercury Workshop is already doing an excellent job of serving musical theatre writers and offering them access to instruction that is affordable. My great concern about my own Program at NYU is its high cost. Again, this kind of training should be funded and not left up to private institutions of higher learning to provide if you want the next generation of British musical theatre writers to represent the whole population—which is what it needs to do to be fully vital.

Please, please do everything you can to save the Bridewell—and to encourage the generations of young voices in your midst that wait to create great musical theatre about the UK for the UK.

25 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Bill Banks-Jones

1. INTRODUCTION

I was delighted to hear of the Committee's investigations into the area of musical theatre. I feel strongly that government funding is not only disproportionately sparse for the independent development of musical theatre work, but also prices this costly but underfunded work out of the market through its far more generous attitude to the independent development of the competing fields of dance, spoken theatre and so on.

I am a freelance theatre director, also working as Artistic Director of Tête à Tête, "probably our best purveyors of contemporary opera, certainly the most hip," (Anna Picard, *Independent on Sunday*.) I am also Chair of the Opera Music Theatre Forum ("OMTF"), for which has contributed separately a more formal submission. In addition to that, I wanted to add my own personal, anecdotal response to this very important investigation. It may also help to add a little more background.

I've been working in this field for over 15 years, initially working in the spoken and "musical" theatre (eg Associate Director, Redgrave Theatre, Farnham, 1989–91.) More recently, I have focused principally on opera, both within our larger institutions, and by running one of our most successful smaller innovative companies, while undertaking a considerable amount of work abroad. This year, I have directed:

- Essential Scottish Opera for Scottish Opera
- *Die Fledermaus* for English Touring Opera
- *Otello* for the New National Theatre Tokyo/Royal Opera, Japan
- *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for Läckö Slottsopera, Sweden
- Family Matters for Tête à Tête
- A Nitro at the Opera Nitro/ROH2 (The Royal Opera House's experimental wing.)

Between Family Matters and A Nitro at the Opera these include world premières of the work of nine composers.

My own work focusing largely on opera nowadays, I will of course focus on that in this submission. But I think it's very important indeed that the Committee consider opera as part of this investigation: opera is, after all slipping through the same hole in the funding net as musical theatre. Meanwhile my own company, Tête à Tête, has depended heavily on the Bridewell Theatre—the only London venue dedicated to Music Theatre in its broadest sense—as host for the London Run of our past three new commissions.

2. OPERA VS MUSICALS

The first thing to say here is that from the transcript of the hearing, it appears that the Committee was accidentally misled:

"Q85 John Thurso: *Looking more broadly at what you do in music, you wrote some interesting appendices and opera was brought out. Can you tell me broadly how much is spent on what one might call 'classic opera' as opposed to how much you spend on what might be termed 'musicals'?*"

Ms Weir: The figure for music theatre is £41.6 million in the year 2003–04. Within that £41.6 million, £38 million is for large-scale opera houses which would be the Royal Opera House, ENO, WNO and Opera North.

Q86 John Thurso: *Which leaves £3.6 million for musicals.*

Ms Weir: But of course do not forget that some of those opera houses also do musicals."

In fact all of this £3.6 million is allocated to the Regularly Funded producers of opera or organisations training opera singers who aren't "large-scale opera houses," set out in detail in the OMTF's submission. And these large-scale opera houses do musicals so seldom that the Royal Opera's imminent staging of *Sweeney Todd* is a major news story.

The vast majority of musicals staged by subsidised companies are not new, and are nothing to do with this budget at all, but rather produced by regularly funded theatre companies at their own discretion. Some do a magnificent job, and there are very exciting developments, such as the move of Tom Morris from Artistic Director of BAC to be Associate director of the National Theatre with a remit for developing music theatre for larger spaces. At the same time, there are devastating catastrophes, such as the closure of the Leicester Haymarket Theatre, one of our richest sources, recently, of new musicals. As long as the development of music theatre remains at the discretion of ACE clients, rather than acknowledged in the national funding strategy, it will remain unstable.

3. OPERA: SCALE, INNOVATION, TOURING

I'll start here by including a letter published in *The Guardian* earlier this year:

"Low note for touring opera"
Saturday March 29, 2003
The Guardian

"I was interested and pleased to hear that "touring productions of smaller chamber operas is now a possibility" for the Royal Opera House, thanks to an uplift in its funding of £3.1 million over the next three years (Covent Garden puts on its first musical, March 27). Anyone working in the field of opera, and a great many other people who simply appreciate it will be delighted with the recently announced uplift in funding for the hard-pressed opera sector generally.

"What is very disappointing is the Arts Council of England's commitment to small- to middle-scale touring. It claims that "the Arts Council is committed to the fast growing middle-scale opera and music theatre sector". Yet of all the opera companies it is regularly funding, the dedicated small- to middle-scale professional companies seem to be allotted £126,000 of the £170 million funding for opera from 2003–06, or put another way, 0.075% of the opera budget.

"The Opera Music Theatre Forum is the UK's representative body for professional companies, representing some 150 companies right across the sector, of which the new Arts Council spending plans fund 13. Our 2001 report, *Opera for All*—commissioned by the Arts Council itself—showed that there is a growing demand for this kind of work, and dwindling funding to provide it.

"While one can only be pleased for the new or augmented support for the very specialised work of British Youth Opera, Birmingham Opera Company, Buxton Festival, Pimlico Opera's work in prisons and the National Opera Studio, it is puzzling and extremely disappointing that the Arts Council hasn't funded a single one of our many highly skilled, experienced, successful, popular, dedicated small- to middle-scale touring companies, despite its stated commitment, and that the funding for this kind of work continues to dwindle despite the increase for the sector overall.

Bill Bankes-Jones
Chairman, Opera Music Theatre Forum"

I think this sums up the situation still pretty fairly. In her opening statement to the committee, Sarah Weir on behalf of the Arts Council of England states that "The most fertile area for the development of new musicals is undoubtedly the smaller organisations . . . the process of developing the work is often more appropriate for the smaller developmental organisations." I couldn't agree more. The OMTF's 2001 report "Opera For All" and our 2002 major conference "A leap of faith" both exposed vividly how, alongside the larger-scale work of our bigger regularly funded organisations there's a powerful and prolific movement of smaller scale work.

It was a pleasure and a privilege recently to direct three short operas by black composers for the Royal Opera House's experimental wing ROH2. I wholeheartedly applaud the initiatives in WNO, the Royal Opera and Opera North at the moment to take on more experimental and smaller scale work, while lamenting the current morbidity of the ENO studio. These expansions are a tribute to the success of our smaller companies, and a vital step towards the future. Without supporting smaller companies as well, though, introducing hefty competitors like this is also engineering the destruction of the independent sector—and as Sarah Weir says above, you need small players to gamble, take risks, be dangerous, experiment, revolutionise, in an environment where the stakes are not so high.

Sadly, in terms of regular funding, and despite the Arts Council's state aim to "work with funded arts organisations to help them thrive rather than just survive" ("Ambitions for the Arts," ACE 2003) the value of experimental/developmental opera and music theatre on the smaller scale is not recognised financially by the state funding system.

Take my own company, Tête à Tête, as an example. In relative terms, the company is pretty near the top of the opera tree, as far as genuinely small-scale companies go. We've benefited from excellent partnerships with Regularly Funded Organisations such as Battersea Arts Centre, who really nursemaided the company into existence, or ENO, our co-producer for Six-Pack in the days when ENO fostered smaller new work. We've also benefited from a range of touring, commission, project and now "for the arts" grants, and more recently an invaluable relationship with Natalie Steed Productions, itself a Regularly Funded Organisation providing us with "general administrative support, general development, strategy and fundraising, and project development." Nevertheless, as a company at the forefront of the independent innovative opera sector, after six years of continued successes, sound financial management and exceptional ability to raise funds from the private sector, we still have no regular funding, and consequently no full-time staff. Our future is constantly insecure, planning limited to the short-term, and core operation still funded principally by piggy-backing core costs onto each project.

My experience as chair of the Opera and Music Theatre Forum tells me that this bleak picture is actually pretty rosy in comparison to the majority of opera companies in this country, who receive no direct state funding at all, and yet probably service the majority of opera-goers, and certainly introduce the bulk of newcomers to opera.

This situation is very much aggravated by the fact that not only is opera the most costly performing art form, involving so many disciplines, but it's also the least well subsidised on the small scale. This means that the many companies like Tête à Tête that would like to perform our work in the mixed programmes of local arts centres around the country are priced out of the market either by far cheaper performances (eg stand-up comedians) or the plethora of regularly funded small-scale dance and theatre companies, such as Improbable, Told by an Idiot, Theatre de Complicite, Union Dance, Yellow Earth, Forma, Lawnmowers, Monster Productions, NTC, Theatre sans Frontieres, Action Transport, Ashton Group, Chapter 4, Horse & Bamboo Theatre Company, Lip Service, Rejects Revenge Theatre Company, Fecund Theatre, OTTC, Sankalpam, Theatre Melange, Attik Dance, Common Players, Kneehigh Theatre, Miracle Theatre, Natural Theatre, Sixth Sense, Theatre Alibi, Eastern Angles Theatre Company, etc etc etc etc . . .

Salt is only rubbed into the wound but the fact that whereas all these companies have regularly funded umbrella bodies—dance umbrella, ITC—neither the OMTF nor any other umbrella body for this sector receives regular funding.

4. THE FUNDING SYSTEM

The situation is very simple, though obviously far from clear to the Committee. In the new structure of the arts council, there are two principal ways to be funded—either as a "regularly funded organization" or through "grants for the arts."

A. *Regular Funding*

The "regularly funded organisations" for opera are set out clearly and in detail in the OMTF submission. There are no regularly funded organisations dedicated to fostering new musical theatre as defined by the Bridewell and the NYMT. Amongst all the RFO's, only a small minority of theatre companies contribute to this work. They are funded by the Drama Department of the Arts Council. This is in no way a formal part of their remit, but simply their own choice of how to deploy their funds. And since the 2001 Theatre Review, funding for theatre companies appears to have shifted away from regional theatres, which at the start of my career produced new musicals fairly frequently, towards smaller independent companies. Probably the majority of regional repertory theatres (like Farnham) that existed when I began my career have now ceased trading. And those that survive appear to have been discouraged from producing popular/populist work including new musicals towards more "art house" type of programming.

There is no transparency at all in the process of becoming a Regularly Funded Organisation. You are not allowed to apply, you are just awarded funds. There is no formal publicly announced process of how these funds are allocated. The bulk of regularly funded organisations announced in the last batch, for April 2003–06, appear to be funded not on merit or innovation so much as on historical precedent. Other than Base Chorus, with a meagre £15,000 per year, there are no small independent companies at all regularly funded specifically to produce experimental opera or music theatre on the small-scale.

B. *Grants for the Arts*

This replaces numerous different funding schemes, such as Regional Arts Lottery Programme, National Touring Programme, and many others. It's a visionary idea, that the funding system is massively simplified, that you can apply for whatever you want within the one scheme, and your application is considered on its own merits rather than by arcane criteria. In practice, this is certainly not yet working in the area of smaller opera and music theatre—there's no noticeable improvement in this neglected field. The Arts Council representatives gave the impression, judging from the transcript, that this represents a potential bonanza for producers of musical theatre and opera. There's not any discernable change yet, though it is early to judge.

5. COMPARISONS WITH ABROAD

Last year, I directed Verdi's *Otello* for the Seoul Arts Centre. This is an enormous national arts complex, including equivalent facilities to the entire South Bank Centre (Theatres, concert halls, museums) plus calligraphy hall, outdoor Korean traditional performance venues, national library etc etc. This is one of two comparable centres in Seoul. The Seoul Arts centre theatre has 3 auditoriums, all of which are used for an equal spread of spoken theatre, opera, musicals, traditional Korean Theatre, dance, and experimental work. While I was there I saw the off-broadway hit *Urinetown* which has yet to make it to the UK, as well as a small-scale production of *Figaro*. The staff of the centre were astonished when I told them the Royal Opera never (at that time) staged musicals.

At the New National Theatre in Tokyo, there's again a small auditorium for small scale work, where I saw Andre Previn's *A Streetcar named desire* (I think again, yet to be performed in this country.) Though both opera and musical theatre are relatively new to the far East, especially Korea, they seemed to have recognized both the validity of musicals alongside opera, and at the same time, are way ahead of us in accepting small-scale opera as an important part of the work of their National companies.

In Sweden, meanwhile, I was working for a project jointly promoted by a local company and *Musik I Väst*, a kind of equivalent of the Arts Council for the west of Sweden. Sweden, like most other European countries, has many more state funded opera companies than the UK. In addition, all the regional agencies also act as promoters, so *Musik I Väst* was working on all scales to promote both music and opera in local arts centers, schools, ancient monuments, wherever possible. Quite different to the megalithic system in this country. I had no direct experience of Musical in Sweden, though was aware of a flourishing musicals "scene" in Gothenberg and Stockholm.

6. COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE IN THE UK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MUSICAL THEATRE WRITING AND THE SUPPORT ON OFFER FOR NEW DRAMATIC THEATRE WRITING

Very simply, while there are many regularly funded organisations in this country dedicated exclusively to the development of new dramatic theatre writing—The Royal Court Theatre, Hampstead Theatre, Soho Theatre, Bush Theatre, Live Theatre, Ashton Group, LLT New Writing Theatre, North West Playwrights, Quondam, etc etc etc etc, there isn't a single one dedicated to the new musical, nor to new opera, on any scale.

7. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MUSICAL THEATRE WRITING AND PRODUCTIONS WITHIN THE UK; THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHER VENUES AND ORGANISATIONS

With the possible exception of Greenwich Theatre, the Bridewell is the only theatre in London dedicated to the presentation of musical theatre, and without doubt, stages more new musicals than any other venue. All this is accomplished on a woefully inadequate level of irregular subsidy.

This of course makes the Bridewell enormously significant in the development of new musical theatre writing; and were the company in a more stable financial state, I am sure it could pursue this objective far further.

For Tête à Tête, the Bridewell has been absolutely crucial as a performing venue, placing huge confidence in our productions at an early stage, and allowing us to tap into their musical theatre audience to bring a whole new tranche of audience into the usually more *recherché* form of new opera. There are relatively very few theatres in London prepared to chance their arm on contemporary opera in the way the Bridewell has.

8. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE WIDER PUBLIC POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE ARTS COUNCIL AND DCMS AND AS A STEWARD OF THE PUBLIC FUNDS IT RECEIVES

Given the level and nature of the public funds the Bridewell receives—relatively small intermittent grants—the Bridewell delivers extraordinary value for money, certainly spends it responsibly, and from time to time, as much as it can afford, certainly meets the arts council objectives of innovation and excellence. Were it stably funded, I'm sure it could also meet the objective of organizational stability.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The whole area of Musical, small-scale opera and musical theatre is not adequately supported by the current state funding system. My own personal view is that:

1. There should be a review of musical theatre and opera, much like the 2001 theatre review cited by Sarah Weir in her submission to the Committee.
2. Opera should no longer be considered as a subset of "music" by the funding system, and Musical should no longer be a part of "Drama"—rather, both should be re-grouped in a separate department.

3. Thanks to this lacuna in the system, and alongside many other companies, the Bridewell has been woefully underfunded and should be properly subsidized to recognise its achievements and maximize its potential.

25 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by the Theatre Committee of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain

1. COMPARISONS BETWEEN SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MUSICAL THEATRE WRITING IN THE UK VERSUS THE SITUATION IN AMERICA

It is useful to reiterate the very basic differences in theatre funding culture between the US and the UK. In America, the thrust of professional theatre production is commercially driven. The tax laws make charitable contributions from corporate sponsors and wealthy individuals totally tax deductible (and, therefore, attractive), and funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and state councils for the arts make up a very small portion of the pie. In America, government funding bodies have no "social" agenda (ie inclusion, etc), although there is a highly vocal minority of right-wing national politicians who continually try to dismantle the small, fragile funding system that does exist on the grounds that it produces morally reprehensible work and pornography.

Within these confines, there is a very healthy theatre landscape across America with a spread of LORT (League of Regional Theatres, the American equivalent of TMA) theatres, which survive on corporate sponsorship and probably some small government funding. But for each of these, there are numerous smaller companies (some of which develop new work, although there is probably only a token fee paid) that survive on a shoestring. The creative participants, who could very well consider themselves professional theatre practitioners, support themselves (and these small companies) by working full time jobs in other areas.

All of this means that dramatic writers are much further from theatre companies, development schemes and funding than in Britain. Commissioning is not the norm. Most LORT theatres do not read unsolicited material under any circumstances, only accepting submissions from agents. Established writers most often complete a play and then have their agents place that work. Emerging writers usually must rely on a vast network of competitions, sponsored by theatre companies, in order to get their work read.

Commercial funding for Broadway musicals traditionally consisted of "backers' auditions", where producers would arrange for the composer and lyricist of a new work to play and audition the work to groups of likely backers to raise money. As the musical gradually became more expensive to produce, these became more and more elaborate. Today, a commercial producer usually follows one or both of two routes, either arranging and partially financing a production in a regional theatre or university (where the work can gradually begin to get onto its feet) or financing a "workshop", where a piece is rehearsed in a studio for three weeks (the participants are paid a token "showcase" fee) and then presented in the same studio both for the purposes of feedback, and also to entice investors. Because of the complexity of developing a new musical, two or even three workshops may be necessary.

Because the "musical comedy" has been globally recognised as an American/"Broadway" art form, several outlets for developing new musical theatre have been in place for some time in New York. In the 1950's, the American musical director Lehman Engel set up the BMI Musical Theatre Workshop (Broadcast Music International, an American equivalent of the PRS, the Performing Rights Society), which is still ongoing (at various points in the past, there were also BMI Workshop groups in LA, Toronto and London, but these are long gone). It consists of separate groups for composer/lyricists (first year [where composers and lyricists are teamed up and given assignments], second year and advanced, where they work on their own projects) and librettists. Participants are chosen by open audition, and can continue in the programme for as long as they wish. In the weekly sessions, musical ideas can be developed over a period of months or even years. (It is not unknown for participants to commute weekly from Washington DC or Toronto at their own expense to attend.) Musicals which have come out of this programme include "A Chorus Line", "Nine" and "Little Shop of Horrors", and the current writing team of Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, who composed "Ragtime", initially met in the workshop. There is an annual showcase of work for commercial producers.

ASCAP (American Society of Composers and Publishers, another equivalent of PRS) has held a differently set-up workshop for over 15 years, where a writing team works on a specific project for a period of a few months with a team of working professionals who act as tutors, ie a composer, a director, a choreographer, thereby gaining a much more rounded picture of developing a commercial work.

Both of these programmes are free to the participants and are costly for the publishers, who feel a certain responsibility to the art form. Additionally, some of the costs are offset if and when the writing teams sign on to have their works published by the organisations, and BMI and ASCAP begin to recoup a percentage.

The Dramatists Guild—the only American professional organisation for playwrights, with over 6,000 members—annually sponsors readings in New York of several selected musicals at which they are critiqued by Broadway professionals.

The Kleban Award was set up in the mid-Eighties from the estate of Edward Kleban, the lyricist of “A Chorus Line”, and consists of an annual award of \$25,000 as a bursary to an emerging musical theatre writer. There are a few other such awards, but, again, they are all privately or corporately sponsored. There is also some support from the Rogers and Hammerstein Foundation, which administers the back catalogue of that writing team.

There are very rare programmes for the subsidised development of musical theatre in America. Theatreworks USA, sponsored in part by the National Endowment, has been running for 32 years. A not-for-profit professional theatre for young audiences, it produces only new, original musicals by emerging writers. The Lincoln Center Theatre, sponsored in part by the New York State Council for the Arts, has a well-established musical theatre programme where seasoned professionals are allowed to experiment and develop new work (Susan Stroman’s “Contact”, which appeared this year in the West End, came out of this programme). The Actors’ Theatre of Louisville (Kentucky) sponsors an annual competition for and showcase of new 10 minute musicals, and there are a few other such competitions.

2. COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE IN THE UK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MUSICAL WRITING AND THE SUPPORT ON OFFER FOR NEW DRAMATIC THEATRE WRITING

It is imperative for the Select Committee to understand and recognise the unique complexity of writing and developing a piece of musical theatre as opposed to a new piece of dramatic theatre writing. While all of theatre is a collaborative process, musical theatre is unique. It is almost a marriage for the writers. Unless the writing team (composer/lyricist/librettist) has worked together for some time, they must first find a shared vision and compatible rhythm of working. (Stephen Sondheim famously said that he and the equally renowned comedy writer Burt Shevelove worked on “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum” for four years, but they were never “working on the same show” ie in a shared tone of voice.) Story structure and pacing (ie where in the scene is the “musical moment”) are less freeform than in a play, and the director and often the choreographer play a much more critical role in “shaping” the piece as a whole well before production begins. Therefore, a musical takes much longer to write and develop—often a matter of well over a year or even two—and then more experimentation in front of an audience to get right. Arts funding in the UK has never addressed the vast and lengthy commitment developing a musical requires.

This unique collaborative process cannot be stressed highly enough. Because in the Twenties and Thirties musicals were fairly cheap to put on, Broadway producers could afford to encourage young writing teams (including Rogers and Hart) through many failures before they got on their feet and began turning out the popular, high quality work we remember them for. Musical theatre writers today do not have that financial freedom to develop this rapport with their collaborators: here in Britain, George Drewe and Antony Stiles are the happy exception. Additionally, the work as a whole suffers. When a commercially-minded producer thinks “Well, that composer is hot, and this lyricist just had a hit—I’ll team them up!”, the finished work is almost invariably mediocre, because there is no opportunity to reach a shared vision.

There is simply no comparison between the support on offer for the development of new musical theatre and the development on offer for new dramatic writing. Throughout Britain, subsidised theatres commission new work and support many ongoing writers’ groups, and many theatres call themselves “dedicated new writing companies” and are funded as such, across a broad range including Paines Plough, the Royal Court and the Soho Theatre Company. We know of no theatres, other than the Bridewell and Stratford East (whose unique annual summer musical theatre development course, led by tutors from the Tisch School for the Arts at New York University, has been lost in its recent funding problems with the ACE) that are even attempting to give any support to musical theatre writers. Given the long-term, on-going support involved in developing new work, as mentioned above, this is an especial loss.

Additionally, while the classic “book” musical (“*My Fair Lady*”, “*South Pacific*”, “*Guys and Dolls*”, et al) can be considered as a pinnacle of the form, it is also seen by many of today’s influential and esteemed theatre professionals as “old-fashioned” and inhibiting, and they choose to ignore the lessons of craft that these works provide. New creators are not encouraged to explore these lessons, to the detriment of the form of new musical theatre as a whole. Nor is this craft being taught anywhere in Britain. It should be remembered that it is unwise to “break the rules” before one is aware of what they are.

We know of no educational institutions in Britain that offer a course on the development of musical theatre, along the lines of the graduate course at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

In our on-going dialogue with the ACE, we have been told regularly for many years that musical theatre—because it does not really fall into the box of either “drama” or “music” (with neither officer probably fully conversant with the form), is usually passed back and forth between the two departments with great discomfort and funded by neither. The recent restructuring of the ACE offers an opportunity to stop this unfortunate practice, but it will take active focus and direction to make this happen.

In our own arena as the only affiliated labour union in Britain for Writers, the WGGB has realised over the past few years that there are no negotiated minimum term contracts for musical theatre collaborators, and we would like to remedy this, working with agents familiar with musical theatre and the Musicians' Union and using model agreements from the Dramatists Guild in America; but it is a complex task, covering a variety of issues not in our existent agreements. The MMD (Mercury Musical Development) offers contract advice in this area, but to this point, we have not had the manpower to achieve this future goal. We would like to feel that, like the Dramatists' Guild, we could offer value to composers and lyricists working in the field, as well as to writers.

3. COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE SUPPORT FOR MUSICAL THEATRE AND SUPPORT FOR OPERA WITHIN THE WIDER "MUSIC" THEATRE AS DEFINED BY THE ACE

We have no specific knowledge on which to base an opinion, although we strongly suspect that because opera falls clearly into the category of "music" (see the answer to question 2 above), there is significantly more funding for opera. We would like to point out the difference between the collaborative process for musical theatre, as outlined above, and the collaborative process for opera. In developing an opera, it is historically common for the librettist to produce a finished piece of writing, which is then independently musicalised by the composer. There is much less of the "meeting of the minds" necessary between the collaborators, and it is therefore doubly unfortunate the musical theatre, which needs so much development, is more under-funded than opera.

At this point, we would also observe that while Britain can be quite proud of achievements in developing full length, narrative ballets by companies like the Birmingham Royal Ballet and Northern Ballet, there is no support given to dramatic writers who could be valuable in developing the scenarios of these works: the scenarios are almost invariably ineptly produced by the choreographers, to the detriment of the final work.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSICAL THEATRE AS A GENRE (a) WITHIN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE UK, (b) IN THE REGIONS SPECIFICALLY, AND (c) WITHIN THE UK ECONOMY, DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY

(a) It is useful to reiterate the place of musical theatre in the cultural life of the UK vs the US. As previously stated, the classic musical comedy is an American art form and, therefore, an ingrained part of American culture as a whole (enhanced and strengthened by the fact that up until the rise of rock & roll, songs from musicals formed the backbone of the popular music charts on radio and recordings).

While Britain historically produced a fair number of musicals, these were the works of unique individuals (Noel Coward, Ivor Novello, Noel Gay, etc) rather than the product of a musical theatre culture. This has continued to be true through the global phenomenon of the blockbuster "British" musicals of Andrew Lloyd Webber and the "*Les Miz*" team (under the production leadership of Cameron Mackintosh).

MacKintosh's sponsorship of the theatre chair at Oxford in 1991, under the tutelage of Stephen Sondheim, for the first time gave a selection of young musical theatre writers the opportunity to see themselves as a group (which led to the founding of the Mercury Workshop), and consider a way forward for musical theatre as a part of the "cultural life of Britain". We are at a time of great opportunity, but support and strategy are necessary if this culture is to move forward.

Because the blockbuster phenomenon was indeed a phenomenon, those musicals are now cash cows which are not inspiring new work. The only visible British product today is the tribute/back catalogue musical, which can either be developed with creativity and thought (as with "*Mamma Mia*") or not. But in either case, whether they make a profit or not, these works are not leading to fresh creative endeavour.

One other point is worth mentioning. As previously stated, musical comedy once produced much of popular music. Since the rise of rock & roll, this is no longer true, and the general public (and, specifically, potential young writers) does not look to musical theatre writers as aspirational role models. From the other side, since popular music is so profitable, successful popular songwriters have felt no inclination to work in the field of musical theatre, where their work might build new audiences. Therefore, those very few popular musicians who do enter the field, like Boy George with "*Taboo*" and Gary Kemp, formerly of Spandau Ballet, are to be encouraged and applauded.

(b) We have little concrete knowledge of the significance of musical theatre in the regions, but we strongly suspect that because musicals remain a popular, relatively accessible art form, new musicals developed in the regions could offer a significant opportunity to develop new audiences, although certain cultural barriers must continue to be attacked, ie, a ticket to a musical is "expensive" although a ticket to a rock concert, at the same price, is not.

(c) The pound figures generated by musical theatre in Britain, both directly and indirectly, speak for themselves.

We would also like to point out that while the chances of creating a "hit" musical are extremely low, the ongoing monetary rewards of a hit to the creative team are enormous. These can allow creators, including directors like John Caird and Phyllida Law and writers like Catherine Johnson and Meera Syal to pursue serious, more risk-taking and less profitable projects without worrying about paying the rent.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR MUSICAL THEATRE AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SUBSIDISED SECTOR AND THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR

We are not prepared to comment on the effectiveness of public support on the production of “classic” musical theatre at venues like the National (*“My Fair Lady”* and *“Anything Goes”* as joint ventures with Cameron Mackintosh) and the West Yorkshire Playhouse (*“Singing in the Rain”* and *“On Your Toes”*), but we feel that a serious monitoring of the financial effects of these on the rest of the work at these theatres would be worth analysing.

The effectiveness of public support on developing new work to this point is very visibly mixed. *“Les Miz”* has made millions. *“Jean Seberg”* and *“Carrie”* went down in flames. But, as stated above, we feel the opportunities, with care, attention and strategy, are enormous, and opportunities to develop such work in subsidised theatres should be encouraged with specific development programmes.

6. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MUSICAL THEATRE WRITING AND PRODUCTIONS WITHIN THE UK; THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHER VENUES AND ORGANISATIONS

While not immediately familiar with the programme at the Bridewell, we believe that the aims, objectives, artistic dedication and outcome, as presented to the Select Committee, are unique in Britain. As already stated, a number of theatres get significant and well deserved subsidised funding as “new writing” companies, most visibly the Soho Theatre Company, and yet not one of these even attempts a programme in musical theatre development. The Bridewell should be funded and encouraged to take on this role.

If the theatre could develop an on-going programme similar the BMI (see question 1), it would also serve a valuable role in fostering new partnerships of collaborators.

We would like, once again, to lament the loss of the new musical development programme at the Theatre Royal Stratford East (which led to their recent hit, *“Da Boyz”*), as a result of their recent financial difficulties and examination by the ACE.

We know that Nick Hytner at the Royal National Theatre has expressed an enthusiasm for new musical theatre, and an interest in introducing new, cutting edge “voices” into the field—playwrights like Mark Ravenhill, dancers like William Trevitt and Michael Nunn of George Piper Dancers, etc. While we enthusiastically applaud this initiative, we have concerns that because there is no focus on the craft of musical theatre, the work produced will not reach its full potential.

We would also like to underline the contribution of MMD (Mercury Musical Development) for its evolving vision and stewardship of musical theatre as an important part of the British theatre landscape.

7. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE WIDER PUBLIC POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE ARTS COUNCIL AND DCMS AND AS A STEWARD OF THE PUBLIC FUNDS IT RECEIVES

While we are familiar with the wider public policy objectives of the ACE/DCMS, we do not have the resources at this moment to analyse the specifics in terms of the Bridewell Theatre.

8. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH MUSIC THEATRE (NYMT) WITHIN MUSICAL THEATRE—AS WELL AS THE WIDER EDUCATIONAL SCENE—PARTICULARLY IN ENTHUSING AND DEVELOPING PRE-PROFESSIONAL MUSICAL THEATRE PERFORMERS; THE CONTRIBUTING OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS TO THESE GOALS

Creating new theatre audiences, particularly young audiences, is a stated goal of the ACE. It is widely recognised and we agree that the best way to introduce young people to theatre is through direct involvement: either through creative programmes in which they participate, or through TIE. Because drama is no longer part of the core curriculum in schools as emphasised in the NACCCE report “All Our Futures”, there is too little in the way of early encouragement and opportunities opened up for school students.

We support and applaud the NYMT in its unique role in both enthusing young audiences and developing new theatre practitioners. We would hope that they offer as part of their programme training in the theory of musical theatre and the writing and composing of original musical theatre pieces, besides stagecraft and performance.

LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art), the Guildhall, RADA and the RAM (Royal Academy of Music) have all invited musical theatre practitioners and writers in to work with students on projected musicals. More funding for drama schools to work in this way on musical theatres would be a very good idea. Additionally, the Liverpool Institute of the Performing Arts has commissioned new musical theatre pieces for its students, and we would like to encourage more such ventures.

9. THE PERFORMANCE OF NYMT IN MEETING OF ITS OWN OBJECTIVES, CONTRIBUTING TO THE OBJECTIVES OF ITS PUBLIC FUNDERS AND AS A STEWARD OF PUBLIC MONEY

We have no specific knowledge on which to base an opinion.

November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Corporation of London

ARTS DEVELOPMENT: MUSICAL THEATRE

CORPORATION OF LONDON—SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

The Corporation is the United Kingdom's third largest sponsor of the arts, second only to the Government (Arts Council England) and the BBC. Our total net budgeted spending on the arts in 2003–04 is £62 million (including £15.6 million in respect of libraries and archives).

As the owner of the Barbican we provide a permanent home for the London Symphony Orchestra. The Orchestra also receives substantial funding from the Corporation. Our prestigious Guildhall School of Music & Drama is based within the Barbican environs, as is the popular Museum of London, whose financial support is shared by the Corporation with the Government. The Corporation is responsible for six libraries, and two art galleries based at Barbican and Guildhall, and its Joint Archives Service houses a wealth of centuries of information which is called on by users from around the world.

A summary of the wide range of arts activities which the Corporation supports is given below:

BARBICAN CENTRE

- The Barbican is Europe's largest integrated arts centre. It provides a wide range of venues for all the arts under one roof.
- The seating capacity of the Barbican Hall is 1989, and the seating capacities of its two performance spaces for drama are 1,150 in the Barbican Theatre, and 220 in the Pit which is the Barbican's studio theatre.
- The Corporation's estimated net revenue expenditure on the Barbican for 2003–04 amounts to £25 million.
- The expenditure referred to above includes support for the Barbican Centre's resident orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra (£1.7 million in 2003–04). The funding is based on a matching annual grant from Arts Council England.
- As part of the Barbican's concert season, both the Barbican and the LSO present a significant number of semi-staged and concert versions of opera each year in the Barbican Hall. Over the course of a year this could be up to as much as 30 performances.
- Within the Barbican's BITE (Barbican International Theatre Events) programme in the Theatre and the Pit the Barbican continues to present medium and smaller scale opera and theatrical work with a significant live (or recorded) musical element. The number of performances of this kind varies from year to year, but averages around 75.
- In Autumn the Barbican has presented significantly more opera due to the season of work by English National Opera during the temporary closure of the Coliseum. It is possible that they may return to the Barbican in future seasons because of the suitability of the space for smaller repertory.
- The Barbican Theatre has an excellent variable acoustic control system, and an orchestra pit for up to 45 musicians.
- Taken overall the Barbican is a considerable contributor to the operatic and music theatre life of the capital, often offering repertory not covered by the national companies. The Barbican's performance spaces are fully committed until 2006.
- The Barbican's unique flexibility enables it to mount multi-disciplinary arts activities under the BITE programme, now in its sixth season. BITE became a year-round programme of international theatre from July 2002. The annual Only Connect music strand is another excellent example of multi-disciplinary activity.
- Last September the Barbican launched its new year round BITE format in both the Theatre and the Pit.
- The Pit has just been awarded the "Peter Brook Empty Space Award 2003" for "Best Studio Theatre".

- The Barbican is also, increasingly, a co-commissioner of the artistic work which it presents. This work is presented internationally in other venues, taking the Corporation's vision to audiences across the world.
- Inspired by the extraordinary diversity of the Barbican arts programme, Barbican Education offers rich learning opportunities to people of all ages and backgrounds. The programme focuses on six areas of work—Schools, Families, Neighbourhood, Talks and Workshops and Literature.
- The "Adopt the Barbican" programme has been working with 12 Schools in the City Fringe areas of the City, Islington and Tower Hamlets since 1999. These long-term sustainable partnerships involve professional artists working alongside pupils on creative projects across the art forms.
- In parallel, the Barbican's Neighbourhood programme enriches the life of the local EC1 community through projects with youth and community groups outside the school environment.
- The Barbican's family programme encourages children and their families to discover the arts together in performances, exhibitions and festivals.
- The Barbican attracts an estimated 1.6 million visitors per annum.

LIBRARIES AND GUILDHALL ART GALLERY

- Alongside the Museum of London the Corporation Libraries stand as crucial centres for the preservation of London's history in manuscripts, in words and images, in small things and large. All the libraries provide free access to the Internet and to a wide range of software packages through the People's Network.
- The Corporation is responsible for three Lending Libraries at Camomile Street (replacement premises are currently being sought), Barbican, and Shoe Lane. All libraries lend books (one million loans per annum), videos, and CDs provide basic reference material and offer facilities for copying.
- In addition the Corporation has three reference libraries. Guildhall Library is one of the capital's major research resources providing everything to do with London whether in form of books, prints, maps, or manuscripts. This Library is regarded as the best in the world in its subject field, the history of London. It also houses the award-winning Clockmakers' Museum.
- City Business Library—one of the largest accessible sources of business information.
- The St Bride Printing Library—the premier library in the UK for the study of the history of printing.
- Guildhall Art Gallery is a purpose-designed gallery which re-opened to the public in 1999. The Gallery contains a fine collection of paintings and sculptures, including some outstanding Pre-Raphaelite works.
- Guildhall Roman Amphitheatre—the excavated amphitheatre was opened to the public in June 2002.
- A wide range of outreach activities is organised by the Libraries Service.

GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC & DRAMA

- The GSMD, which was founded in 1880, is a conservatoire with a national and international reputation.
- For the 2003–04 academic year the GSMD's full-time student population comprises—571 UK/EU Students and 127 Overseas Students.
- The GSMD has three main areas available for student performance. The areas in question have the following seating capacity:
 - Main Theatre (308)
 - Studio Theatre (65)
 - Music Hall (175)

Many of the GSMD student performances are open to the public as ticketed events.

- Junior GSMD provides training for 5-19 year olds who show exceptional promise in music and drama.
- Past GSMD alumni include the singers Bryn Terfel, Beverly Worboys, and Isobel Cooper, the violinist Tasmin Little, the baroque violinist Rachel Podger, the pianist Paul Lewis, and the actors Ewan MacGregor, Joseph Fiennes, Natasha Little and Stephen Campbell-Moore.

MUSEUM OF LONDON

- The World's largest urban history museum.
- 370,000 visitors per annum.
- The Museum's Mission Statement is "to inspire a passion for London".
- It aims to fulfil its mission by communicating London's history and contemporary culture to the wider world, by reaching all of London's communities through being London's memory (collecting, exhibiting, investigating and making accessible London's culture); and by playing a role in debate about London, facilitating and contributing to London-wide cultural, art and educational networks.
- The Museum develops relationships and partnerships with wide variety of arts organisations.
- The Museum is proactive as lender to wide range of institutions and private enterprises in London, UK and abroad.
- In the past year it has staged 1,200 hours of educational and public events particularly aimed at those who are not normally museum visitors.

MUSEUM IN DOCKLANDS

- The Museum in Docklands, West India Quay, is a major new initiative, funded by the Corporation in conjunction with other organisations. The Museum, which tells the 2,000 year story of London's river, port and people, first opened in June 2003.

JOINT ARCHIVES SERVICE

The Corporation is responsible for:

- London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) which is the largest local authority record office in the United Kingdom with more than 32 miles of archives on the capital and its people over nine centuries.
- The Corporation's Record Office (CLRO) which holds outstanding records on the development of the City from early medieval times to the present day, including the finest surviving copy of Magna Carta.
- Education programmes, including after school clubs, INSET training, "A" level and higher education conferences.
- Partnership projects with museums and galleries, such as the 2002 "Real Lives" exhibition on Black and Asian Londoners with Hackney Museum which linked art and drama sessions. LMA recently hosted a visit from The Travelling Archive, an outreach project for schools in Hackney.
- LMA has recently been successful in obtaining significant grant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for London's Theatreland Project. The major portion of the money is to conserve over 3,000 architectural plans from 27 Victorian West End theatres. The plans are of major historical and cultural importance as they reflect the theatrical activity of the West End and record the expansion of provision in the late 19th century.

KEATS HOUSE

- The Corporation is responsible through its Keats House Management Committee for the home (in Hampstead) of the poet John Keats, where he lived from 1818 to 1820.
- The House runs regular events programmes including lectures, poetry readings and family days.
- Education programmes for primary and secondary pupils, including storytelling and drama as well as creative poetry writing classes for adults.

GENERAL

- Our Education Committee's Adult Education Initiatives budget is used to develop innovative arts activities, eg drama workshops at Bridewell Theatre, pre concert lectures at the Barbican and children's performances as part of the Spitalfields Festival.
- Following a request from the Unicorn Children's Theatre, the Corporation has recently agreed to award an interest-free loan of £200,000 towards the capital costs of a purpose designed theatre and education for children.
- Financial support is offered annually by the Education Committee to The Women's Library for an agreed programme usually comprising a lecture series.

- The Corporation provides substantial support for the annual mid-summer City of London Festival, the artistic programme and strategic direction of the 2003 Festival having been regarded widely as a success both by audiences and the press alike.
- The City of London Festival seeks to add value to the City's competitiveness by providing an annual showcase for the arts in the City's unique venues and outdoor spaces.
- The Corporation's Economic Development Service supports a number of arts activities. Working with the City's neighbours immediately to the north and east of the City through the City Fringe and Cityside Regeneration Partnerships, much effort is being directed at developing the concentration of artistic design and craft industries and visitor attractions clustered in the area. Another partnership, the Pool of London Partnership, is seeking to make a cultural gateway to the City by improving the amenities around and access to the Tower of London. To the south, the Cross River Partnership promotes the markets and South Bank as a cultural resource. In addition, the Corporation is also directly supporting the Spitalfields Festival, the Brick Lane Festival, the Baishaki Mela (Bengali New Year) and the Thames Festival, all of which provide important cultural and artistic opportunities for residents in the 360° fringe.
- The Corporation currently provides funding for the London Schools Symphony Orchestra.

BRIDGE HOUSE ESTATES TRUST

Since 1996 the Bridge House Estates Trust has provided 322 grants to arts organisations throughout London at a total value of £9,657,675 in connection with activities that accord with the Trust's criteria.

THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE

The Bridewell Theatre was established in 1994 in the disused swimming pool area of the St Bride Foundation/Institute off Fleet Street. This 175-seat theatre is not owned by the Corporation and the Bridewell Theatre has never sought or received core or recurrent funding from the Corporation. We understand that the St Bride Foundation provides an annual subsidy to the Bridewell Theatre and that in addition it charges no rent to the theatre.

The St Bride Foundation also houses the Corporation's St Bride Printing Library, which the Foundation ran until 1966 when the Corporation stepped in to prevent the library's closure. The Corporation pays rent to the Foundation for the library accommodation. In 2000 the Corporation took a decision on financial grounds to withdraw funding in due course from the Printing Library, and to seek a home for it outside the Corporation. When negotiations with another organisation reached an impasse late in 2002, the Foundation decided that under appropriate terms it would like to resume responsibility for the Printing Library, and discussion is at present taking place on the final details of an agreement to this end between the Corporation and the Foundation. We understand that the Foundation does not feel that it can provide financial support in the future to both the library and the theatre.

Over two to three years during the mid 1990s the Corporation's Education Committee supported the Bridewell Theatre's education activities through four adult education initiatives in association with four productions at the Theatre, typically to the value of £3,000 to £4,000 per initiative. The opportunities were targeted at the City's working community, and were successful in involving City workers in theatre workshops, choral activities, and self-confidence building exercises, sometimes in association with The City Lit. The initiatives were at the time regarded as influential in raising the profile of the Theatre at a crucial stage of its development.

The Bridewell Theatre has been for a number of years an active member of the City's Adult Education Providers' Forum, a strategic body chaired by the City Education Officer which works to ensure co-ordination in the adult learning opportunities available to the residents and workers of the Square Mile.

Most recently the Corporation's Education Committee has provided £1,942 to this theatre for a production by young people to complement the Women's Library "Dirty Linen" project, and the same committee gave £7,000 to the Theatre to enable it to continue to develop its lunchtime theatre ("Lunchbox") and workshops for City employees where no comparable opportunities existed. The "Lunchbox" theatre programme seeks to bring theatre, music, education and inspiration to City audiences with work specifically designed to respond to the work-life balance, leisure and social needs of City employees.

Although the Bridewell Theatre does not have a direct funding relationship with the Corporation, it enjoys a friendly and consultative relationship with the Corporation. The Theatre consults, as and when necessary, both on minor funding requests, requests to external funding sources such as the Arts Lottery Fund, and most recently on the current difficulties which it is facing.

Under the Corporation's procedure for considering external funding requests, both arts-related or otherwise, such requests are considered twice a year in May and November by a sub-committee of the Corporation's Finance Committee. The Bridewell Theatre has not made any formal application to the Corporation, although it has sought advice as to how best to make such an approach.

The Corporation's Bridge House Estates Trust (referred to above) has not received an approach from the Bridewell Theatre. Whilst the Trust's criteria for making grants, the Theatre would not be eligible for revenue funding, a contribution towards the capital costs of making the building accessible for disabled people might be possible if the Theatre were able to demonstrate that it was providing a predominantly local resource for Londoners.

While the Corporation is justifiably proud of its substantial contribution to the artistic and cultural life of the capital, and indeed the nation, its prime commitment, especially at a time of financial restraint, has to be to its own diverse range of cultural commitments. It is with regret that the Corporation is not in a position to start giving substantial recurrent funding to more external cultural organisations at the present time, although it is always happy to assist with advice where practicable.

Reference has been made to potential funds from the Mermaid development. There is no guarantee that today's expectations will materialise, or at a particular quantum. Accordingly, the future consideration and allocation of such a financial receipt is entirely hypothetical for the present.

From the evidence given to the Committee on 14 October by Robert Cogo-Fawcett, Chair of the Bridewell Theatre, we note that the Arts Council is sympathetic to the Theatre's plight, but has never been able to accept the Theatre as a regular annual revenue client with core funding. We would support the Theatre in continuing to pursue its approaches to the Arts Council.

November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr John Farndon

I am a writer of musicals—book, lyrics, and music—and I feel there is a compelling case for dramatically increased support for musical theatre in the UK.

REASON FOR SUPPORT

(1) Musical theatre is perhaps the most popular form of live entertainment around the world, watched by millions of people in this country. It is also a major earner of revenue for this country, through the tax system and by drawing tourists and other theatre goers into the cities. Yet as submissions from Mercury Musical Developments make clear, this popularity and financial success far from guarantees a future. The fact is that the lack of support for the development of musicals mean that there are very few fully developed new musicals waiting for producers to pick them up and take them into the West End—the only place, at present, where an income is generated. As a result, producers are generally only willing to take the risk with back catalogue compilations, revivals or celebrity vehicles—a trend which can only lead to dwindling audience. It is certainly no coincidence that *Les Miserables* one of London's longest running musicals—and one that contributes highly to London's (diminishing) reputation for staging musicals—came from the subsidized theatre. There must inevitably come a major crisis for West End theatre, not to mention theatres all around the country with so few new and original musicals coming through.

(2) Even regardless of their popularity and potential earning power, musicals are a major art form deserving support, because they culturally enrich the country. Creating a successful musical demands levels of skill matched in few other arts—not just from individual practitioners such as composers—but in the combination of a wide range of talents, from choreographers to musical performers. As a writer, I know that the matching of words and music in dramatic form demands a very high level of accomplishment and years of honing skills. Yet writers working in this field receive none of the support available to artists in other fields, such as the visual arts, stage drama or classical music. Writers must develop their skills entirely at their own expense in their own spare time, subsidising their art by working hard at other jobs. Moreover, even once they have managed to develop their skills and complete a musical, there is almost no chance of getting it professionally staged, since there are virtually no theatres willing to stage new and original musicals—except for the Bridewell in London, which is why it is so vital. I believe I am among the top musical writers in this country, yet I have often only managed to get my shows staged by using my own resources for very low budget short runs which cannot really go anywhere. The prospects for less experienced writers are even bleaker. It must be inevitable, then, that few writers in future will bother with musicals—when years of hard graft and accomplishment lead only to a pile of unperformed shows in a bottom drawer, not to mention financial hardship.

AREAS OF SUPPORT

(1) There is a vital need for more venues able to stage new and original musicals, not just in London but around the UK. There are scores of subsidised theatres and theatres companies staging many hundreds of new plays a year—not to mention countless fringe venues. So new writers and new plays are being developed and discovered all the time. The Bridewell in London is almost literally the only theatre in the entire country that ever stages new musicals and even at the Bridewell many of the musicals are imported from America where the development of musicals is hugely better supported. Even with the Bridewell, very few writers of

new and original musicals ever have the chance of getting their work properly and professionally staged. Because of the expense of putting on musicals, with the huge array of talent needed even for a simple show, most theatres avoid new musicals altogether—beyond adding songs to Christmas shows. It is clear that without some government support for producing venues or companies, new musicals will never be staged or brought on to the stage where they are genuinely popular entertainment.

(2) There is a need for subsidised centres where musicals can be developed and workshopped. Because of the high degree of collaboration required, a musical is very far from finished the moment the first draft leaves the writer's pen. More than any other form of theatre, it needs to be developed by theatre practitioners working together—performers, musicians, singers, choreographers and so on.

(3) Direct support is also needed for writers, at present working entirely unfunded and in their own time. Because of the high levels of accomplishment required and the huge amount of time needed to create a finished musical, it is very, very hard for writers to create musicals in their spare time. Without support, few writers in future will be able to develop the necessary skills, and fewer still will be able to successfully complete much new work. Without support, it is highly likely that most of the country's talented composers and writers will simply give up on creating new musical theatre.

26 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Stephen Sondheim

I write this letter to support very strongly the Bridewell Theatre, which is the only venue in London devoted to the professional musical theatre. It not only provides a second life for little-known and underrated musicals, it also encourages new work. It has produced a number of my lesser-known pieces, and done them proud. If theatrical enterprises in London are to be supported (and they should be), the Bridewell ought to be near the top of the list.

12 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by the Stephen Sondheim Society

The Stephen Sondheim Society has approximately 660 members who, for 10 years, have been encouraging and supporting musical theatre. Sondheim is one of the greatest composers of musicals and operas (realised at last by Opera North and by the Royal Opera House), but he also encourages young British and American writers trying to match his standards.

When he last visited the Society, he introduced us in person to some of the outstanding British potential that is still waiting for support. Shakespeare and Mozart deserve their fame, but there should be room for potential Sondheims.

For a long time we have had a close association with the Bridewell Theatre, because encouraging talent is our main objective. A few members have contributed generously with significant financial contributions that have helped the Bridewell to maintain its standards.

The Society believes that a proportion of the taxes its members pay should be allocated to enable talent to flourish, rather than these funds being devoted to companies whose spending is governed by an extreme example of Parkinson's Law.

We beg and urge you to insist on the survival of the Bridewell Theatre. This will require regular, reliable and realistic financial support.

19 November 2003

Letter from Judy Wolfson, lyricist, to Georgina Bexon of Mercury Musical Developments

ARTS DEVELOPMENT: MUSICAL THEATRE

I read with great interest your submissions to the Select Committee on the above subject. I am a lyricist currently working with a young composer, but have been in the field of commercial and non-commercial musical drama for over 40 years!

I have worked as a drama instructor and youth worker in for two London Boroughs, and also in Birmingham and abroad. I have seen many success stories of "lost causes" being brought back into the fold through the media of musical drama. I am therefore, writing from that particular angle on this occasion.

It is difficult to quantify the benefit to the young (and elderly) who are given the opportunity of participating in, or simply having the experience of being part of an audience in musical drama. As a Magistrate on the Youth and Adult Panel (I stress that this is a personal opinion, but one strongly held

nevertheless) I often wonder whether some of the defendants who come before us, would not find themselves in such situations had they had the positive experience and feeling of worth that can be gained from this kind of activity, which sadly is on the decrease.

To be proactive and invest in Arts Development would be financially prudent, and the Bridewell and the NYMT in my opinion, would offer a far better combat to crime and disorder, than many other expensive punishments and rehabilitation orders!

I thank you for your efforts on our behalf and on behalf of the many potential participants who would benefit greatly from such cultural developments in the Arts Field. I sincerely hope that all submissions will be reviewed with due consideration

26 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by The Opera and Music Theatre Forum

ARTS DEVELOPMENT: MUSICAL THEATRE

INTRODUCTION

The Opera and Music Theatre Forum is the representative body for Opera and Music Theatre companies in the UK. Our members include small-mid scale touring and building-based companies, performers, directors, educational establishments and venues all working together to develop an environment in which opera and music theatre can flourish.

We have read with interest the transcripts of the evidence and debate from session 2002–03—Musical Theatre Development—and would like to submit some further material on the public funding of the sector in England for the consideration of the Committee.

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1. The Music Theatre sector, as the Arts Council indicated in their paper to the Committee, “represents a very broad range of work defined as a partnership between Music and Drama where the combination of the two elements form a theatrical presentation in which the whole is more powerful than its constituent parts”. It could be argued that there are two main streams within the sector—“opera” and “musicals”—but that would under-value the richness of the sector and ignore the developments within the artform. The sector includes opera, operetta, semi-opera, the musical, music theatre and musical theatre. The terms music theatre and musical theatre usually refer to small—scale works with an emphasis on accessibility, experimentation and contemporary material. Recent developments that could be included under these headings are staged versions of recital material and oratorio; music-based physical theatre and purely instrumental music presented in a dramatic and theatrical setting.

1.2. It has been convenient in the past to break the sector down into categories for funding and programming purposes but this is becoming less useful as the categories begin to cross over and take in new influences. The Music Department of the Arts Council has traditionally been concerned with opera and the Theatre Department with musicals, whilst other subsets have drifted between departments.

2. FUNDING

2.1. The new Arts Council funding system for one-off grants, Grants for the Arts, recognises that the arts sector is changing and looks at the individual value of a project rather than trying to view it within a specific genre. The system (which will distribute some £123 million during 2003–06 between all art forms) has only been in place since April 2003 and it is too early to discern any emerging funding pattern. Examination of regular funding, however, reveals a distinct pattern.

2.2. Music Theatre work needs funding support from public and private sources. The companies that research, create and mount the projects need support in order to develop the work and their audiences. Individual projects need assistance in terms of mounting costs and performances. All types of work face similar challenges in finding funding but scale of operation affects organisation’s ability to attract it.

2.3. At the large-scale end is “grand” opera, such as can be seen at the Royal Opera House and English National Opera, and the large subsidised musicals such as can be seen at the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company and in the West End, with comprehensive settings, large choruses and orchestras. Whilst they might be differentiated by the fact that one has sung text whilst the other has spoken, one is based on classical western music and the other more on popular musical styles, they face similar problems. Because new work in both genres is complex and costly to mount, it is viewed as high risk and not very good value for money. Mainstream and popular repertoire is the order of the day. [See Annex B for definitions of scale]

2.4. As the Bridewell notes in its submission, without development and new work an art-form becomes moribund. The Arts Council England notes: art-form risk and experiment tends to occur on the small to middle scale in all theatrical forms. At this end of the scale is the work done by small groups and promoters who are freer to develop the artform and work with small forces to re-interpret the classics, make work that is immediate, relevant and accessible to all, produce new material and take the work out to less conventional and more intimate venues. These projects are designed to be flexible and reach audiences and localities that the bigger companies cannot. In the “opera” world, these kinds of productions have often been termed “music theatre” and in the world of “musicals”, musical theatre. They share the same challenges in proposing unfamiliar and experimental work to potential promoters and audiences and in attempting to gain support from funders.

3. REGULAR FUNDING

3.1. Although ACE now has one system to which all genres apply on an equal footing for one-off projects and development initiatives, there is still a separate process for regular, core funding which is less transparent. Regular funding is essential to a company’s organisational viability in order to manage, develop and publicise itself, and be sufficiently secure to undertake forward planning. As the OMTF report *Opera For Now*² reveals, 35% of the sector has no salaried employees in management and administrative roles, and relies on volunteers. Examination of the regular funding for 2003–04 reveals a rather unbalanced picture.

3.2. The funding discussed in questions 85-88 inclusive of the Select Committee proceedings referred to core funding only, and funding to organisations which in the past have been supported by the Music Department. The figures quoted reveal that 91% of this regular funding goes to four opera houses. Although their productions include music theatre, new work, occasional musicals and touring, the majority of their work is large-scale “classic” and “grand” opera taking place only in those buildings. This leaves 9% which is not available, as it might have appeared from the debate, to organisations focusing on musicals. When funded, this has traditionally been by the Theatre Department.

3.3 OMTF have listed the companies and organisations which we understand to have received regular funding in 2003–04. (Annex C). It appears to include 12 companies, five of which could be described as middle or small scale. A rough look at the regular funding of theatre and dance in London alone indicates some 66 theatre companies and 19 dance companies. The mounting of new work is normal business in both these sectors. Six to seven theatres are funded specifically to produce new writing for theatre. Some of this material may include musicals.

3.4 In the Arts Council submission it is stated: *ACE has made a substantial investment in the development, commissioning, creation and touring of new Music Theatre (including new Chamber Opera, and a range of new work involving music and theatre).*³ It appears from our analysis that (excluding educational bodies and “centres of excellence”) 23% of the regularly funded companies focus on mainstream repertoire, 46% occasionally undertake both mainstream and new work and 30% have new work as their *raison d’être*. Of the four companies in the latter category, three are small scale touring companies.

3.5 Of course very large sums of money are needed to maintain the world-class companies and their buildings and permit them to do the kind of work for which they were designed, and we are not debating the sums they need to do a good job; but a question that might be raised is why such a small percentage of the regular funding available goes to the smaller organisations which develop the art form and make it available all round the country.

4. THE PREDICAMENT OF THE SMALL-SCALE

4.1 The small-scale end of the sector is vital to the health and development of the sector as a whole. It is where many practitioners learn their trade and gain their experience; it is largely where the art form is tested, stretched and re-invented; where a significant proportion of new writing is commissioned and where a large part of the touring is undertaken. Many artists and companies prefer working on the smaller scale because it is flexible and best suits their artistic aims of working in non-traditional venues, having close contact with the audience, working in specialist fields and reaching out to people who would otherwise have no access to the art form. In the theatre sector these functions are acknowledged and a much higher proportion of theatre companies are regularly supported.

4.2 Audiences need choice. Some of the large opera and music theatre companies in receipt of regular funding have had their funding increased so that they may diversify and do more small scale work. We are concerned that this will tend to raise costs, stifle variety and reduce the amount of choice available to the public.

² *Opera For Now*, ACE/OMTF, 2001.

³ It is not clear whether this statement refers to all types of funding, not just core funding and possibly to money being spent by the former Theatre Department.

5. TOURING

Touring Companies are the backbone of the arts in Britain. Their mobility means that they bring the arts to unusual spaces and to local communities. They provide the foundations for radical, fresh, innovative new work which pushes artistic and social boundaries. They nourish the flagship arts venues with new ideas and talent.⁴

5.1 Venues and festivals around the country need product and companies need exposure. Touring can be funded through regular funding or project grants. It is not entirely clear whether regularly funded clients can apply to Grants for the Arts for additional funding or not.

5.2 Eighty per cent of the opera and music theatre companies surveyed by OMTF in 2001 tour. Most of them tour mainstream product. Without new work on regular offer to audiences and accessible, fresh productions, the artform stagnates; in the case of opera, it will never overcome its troubling image of being elitist stuff for toffs. This is not helped by the perception that the majority of the cash available goes into the companies that perpetuate that image. Yet there is more funding of building-based organisations and “centres of excellence” than touring operations.

5.3 Obviously there is a fundamental problem here; Music Theatre is such an expensive product, even on the small scale, that funders and promoters see better value for money from other art forms. However, without funding, either to Music Theatre companies or their hosts, Music Theatre cannot keep prices down and compete with other art forms in obtaining bookings to build up a healthy and regular touring circuit. As the 2001 OMTF research reveals, theatres want to programme Music Theatre of all kinds including new work, but do not feel secure enough to do so. The demand is there but there is insufficient support to enable that demand to be met.

5.4 There is no longer a central fund for dealing with national touring, the kind of touring that owes no allegiance to any particular region. Applications for touring are now channelled through the region in which the company is based. There have been fears aired that this will severely hamper the development of touring, especially with the demographic problem that the large majority of music theatre companies who tour are based in London. There are many contradictory anecdotes about how this is working out and OMTF are currently undertaking some research on the subject.

5.5 Venues like the Bridewell and the Battersea Arts Centre in London and the Newcastle Playhouse in the regions play a very important role in the sector. All have at their heart the desire to innovate, develop new work, bring in new audiences and be unprejudiced about the nature of the art form.

6. ACE SPECIALIST ARTS EXPERTISE

6.1 The question of artform specialists raised by the Bridewell is an interesting one and the situation at Arts Council England is not yet clear. In the papers published on the re-organisation in 2001, ACE declared that there would be specialist officers around the country based in regional offices but who would also form a national team co-ordinated and led by the appropriate director from the national office. In this way it was claimed, the new organisation would ensure that it contains all the expertise needed for an authoritative and collective overview of each discipline. There is a Head of Theatre and a Head of Opera and Music Theatre at the national strategic office and music and theatre officers in the regions. It was indicated that the Heads would be concerned with the development of long-term policy and the provision of leadership of their specialist teams but not what their precise functions would be and how they would feed into the regional decision making process. Bridewell voiced the concern that without a dedicated post for musical theatre there will be no overview of the genre and no one to give advice and assistance. It is certainly not clear how these functions are performed.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 There are differences between the opera/music theatre and the musicals/musical theatre streams, in the nature of the music, the way the genres are perceived in critical and funding terms, the attitudes of audiences and promoters, and the potential for commercial exploitation; but these differences are becoming less obvious and significant. We believe that the genres share many of the same challenges, particularly at the smaller-scale, where much of the innovation, touring and new writing takes place.

7.2 We believe that public funding should recognise the value of the smaller scale areas of the Music Theatre sector both for its own sake and for its centrality in the health of the arts. Whilst appreciating that the big building-based companies will always need very large amounts of cash, we believe that the smaller independent companies and organisations deserve a proportion of the cash more in keeping with the contribution they make. We would be happy to be convinced that ACE has a strategy for the Music Theatre sector overall and that this includes a strong position and appropriate recognition for the smaller independent organisations.

⁴ Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Sharp, Stylish, Fluid & Flexible, The Value of Small Scale Performing Arts, 1994.

THE OPERA AND MUSIC THEATRE FORUM

OMTF is the representative body for opera and music theatre in the UK. We are a network of companies working to create an environment in which opera and music theatre can flourish. We receive no public funding.

OMTF seeks art-form recognition through:

- promoting the production, accessibility, understanding and enjoyment of opera and music theatre; and
- lobbying funders for realistic financial support.

OMTF works for its members:

- publicising the work of members to a variety of promoters, funders and public bodies;
- representing members at advocacy meetings with funding bodies;
- supporting members with queries and problems;
- issuing regular news bulletins;
- addressing issues of professional development through seminars and surgeries as well as running specific training courses; and
- providing opportunities for companies to meet and debate current issues.

OMTF works for the sector:

- issuing publications on matters relating to the sector; and
- providing information about opera and music theatre in Britain.

Membership is open to professional opera and music theatre companies, educational organisations, promoters, festivals and individuals.

OMTF Membership (companies)

Almeida Opera
Bampton Classical Opera
*Battersea Arts Centre
Bayliss, ENO/Studio
British Youth Opera
Birmingham Opera Company
Central Festival Opera
Classical Opera Company
*Drill Hall
The Bayliss Programme/The studio at English National Opera
English Pocket Opera
English Touring Opera
Garden Opera Company
Garsington Opera
Glyndebourne Education
Handmade Opera
Hatstand Opera
Iford Arts
Music Theatre Wales
New Chamber Opera
Nitro
Opera by definition
Opera Circus
*Operaluna
Opera Restor'd
*Performing Arts Labs

Pegasus Opera
 Selfmade Music Theatre
 Streetwise Opera
 Tête à Tête

Note: excluding asterisked organisations the companies in this list this represent 29% of the companies listed in the British Music Yearbook.

Annex B

DEFINITIONS OF SCALE

ACE definitions for touring theatre companies:

Large: companies touring to venues of more than 1,000 seats

Medium: companies touring to venues of more than 400 seats

Small: companies touring to venues of less than 400 seats

Definitions in the Music Theatre field are less clear and can refer to company size, playing strength or specialist repertoire as often as venue size. For example the same company may run different projects working in a small non-theatre venues with a few soloists and musicians and in a medium size theatres with an orchestra and chorus.

Annex C

ACE REGULAR CLIENTS 2003–04

1. Musicals and musical theatre (formerly clients of the Theatre Department)

Theatres regularly producing musicals/musical theatre⁵

Bush Theatre	442,433
Drill Hall	222,859
Gate Theatre	254,761
Hampstead Theatre	561,756
Royal Court Theatre	1,816,398
Soho Theatre Company	581,981
Theatre Royal Stratford East	749,749
Battersea Arts Centre	425,064
Approximate % New Writing—Drama	83.8%
Approximate % New Writing—Musical Theatre	16.2%
Training/Development Organisations and Festivals	none
Total regular funding	5,055,001

2. Opera and music theatre (formerly clients of the Music Department)

<i>Building based organisations</i>	<i>Funding</i>	<i>Repertoire, 2003</i>
Royal Opera House and ROH TOO		La Cenerentola, Die Zauberflöte, Falstaff, Cunning Little Vixen, Madame Butterfly (x2), Electra, Louisa Miller, Hamlet, Lohengrin, Semele, Pagliacci, Rusalka (concert), Don Giovanni, Boris Gudonov, Orlando, Aida, Lucia di Lamamoor, Sweeney Todd. ROH TOO: French Opera Week, A Nitro at the Opera, Nitro (see below) and Ion, Music Theatre Wales, (see below)
English National Opera, The Bayliss Programme and the ENO Studio	38 million	Trojans part I and II—new productions, Rigoletto, Der Rosenkavalier, The Handmaid's Tale (British Premier)—new production, Alcina, Tristan and Isolde, War and Peace semi staged prom, At the Barbican: Così fan tutte—new production, Thais—concert version, Capuletti e Montecchi—concert version, Rape of Lucretia Twilight of the Gods—concert version
Opera North and the Project Department		Julietta, MagicFlute, Damnation of Faust, La Traviata, Rusalka, Manon (Massenet), Idomeneo, The Secret Marriage, Tosca. Project Dept: Verklartenacht, Winterreise, puppet magic flute, Resonance I
Welsh National Opera and WNO MAX		Cav & Pagliacci, Elixir of Love, Jenufa, Jephtha (staged Handel oratorio) Don Giovanni, La Boheme, Marriage of Figaro, Il Trovatore, Parsifal. WNO MAX:

⁵ Information supplied by the Bridewell Theatre from ACE information, 2003.

<i>Building based organisations</i>	<i>Funding</i>	<i>Repertoire, 2003</i>
		Fiddles & Fables, Hansel & Gretel, Katerina Chorus, Peter and the wolf for schools, Wise Eye
Glyndebourne Festival, touring and education	1,080,747	Traviata, Idomeneo, Theodora, Education: Glyndebourne in Thanet
Aldeburgh/Almeida	448,290	Who put Bella in the Wych Elm, The Girl of Sand
<i>Community</i>		
Birmingham Opera— regionally and community based	191,973	Candide
<i>Middle-scale touring companies</i>		
English Touring Opera	1,055,227	Die Fledermaus, Ariadne of Naxos, Turn of the Screw, Ariodante
Pimlico Opera	21,800 (funding for work in prisons only)	Guys and Dolls (Winchester prison project)
<i>Small-scale companies— touring and new work</i>		
Natalie Steed Productions (Tête à Tête, the Shout)	41,200	Family Matters (Tete a Tete) Deep Blue, A Day in the Life
Base Chorus	16,800	The Corrupted Angel
Nitro	220,000	A Nitro at the Opera
Total Performing arts organisations	3,076,037	
<i>Training and development organisations</i>		
British Youth Opera	30,000	Midsummer Night's Dream, Magic Flute
National Opera Studio	123,600	Showcases and concerts
<i>Festivals</i>		
Buxton	52,341	Semele, Maria Padilla, Hansel & Gretel (with Opera Femina), Gwyneth and the Green Knight (Music Theatre Wales); Candide (The Opera Group)

November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Personal Managers' Association Ltd

I write further to the submissions made on behalf of Mercury Musical Development, the Bridewell Theatre, and NYMT in connection with the Select Committee Inquiry into "Arts Development: Musical Theatre".

The Personal Managers' Association (PMA) has a membership of around 130 established agencies represented talent within the entertainment industry including actors, writers, directors and composers. The PMA works within a strict code of conduct to which its membership adheres. I write to you in my capacity as an agent representing practitioners (writers and composers) in musical theatre, and also as co-chair of the Creative Team (directors, designers, choreographers) subcommittee of the PMA. I thought it might be helpful for you to receive a submission from the perspective of those trying to get their new work developed and performed in this country.

Musical theatre is of its nature one of the most complex forms of live performance, involving as it does a large number of creative collaborators. A great deal of fine-tuning and exploration is required between writer and composer to bring a piece of musical theatre to fruition, as well as input from director and producer along the way. However the writing of musical theatre is not necessarily a skill one is born with. From the composer's perspective, they might be experienced in writing incidental music for plays, or writing songs, but much more sophisticated skills are required to put together the musical backbone of a piece and to make it a cohesive whole. Similarly there are very high demands placed on the dramatist and lyricist to put together respectively a good strong story, and lyrics which are in keeping with the overall style and tone of the piece, as well as moving the story on.

There is currently no provision in this country on any formal educative basis for writers and composers to learn the craft of writing musicals. As far as I am aware the Bridewell Theatre, Mercury Musical Developments and Stratford East are the only entities who have initiatives aimed at providing sustained skill-building programmes for writers of musical theatre and who offer opportunities to work with experienced practitioners in order to learn the craft and have the opportunity to experiment. If you add to this the fact that aside from the afore-mentioned groups there is little or no scope for active development in theatres/performance venues of work in progress the future of musical theatre in this country begins to look very bleak.

As far as I am aware no regional theatre in the UK has any resources to develop truly new musical work. They are hard pushed as it is to develop new writing of plays never mind the vastly more labour and cost intensive musical side of things.

The experience of many of my clients who are struggling to find exposure for new work, is that they are dependent on very ad-hoc offers of good will, small amounts of sponsorship, and even their own meagre funds to arrange workshops and showcases of new work to potential producers. However they usually only get one shot and if the piece is not already highly developed no commercial producer is prepared to take the risk (and the consequent cost) of what could be a lengthy development process. In any event surely the development aspect is something that is more appropriately funded by subsidy.

Tim Sawers in his submission on behalf of the Bridewell stated: "It is therefore vital that an alternative network of theatres finds the new writers, develops the new work and presents the initial production. . ." I would heartily concur with this statement, but it will not happen until and unless there is provision made on an on-going basis for sustained development programmes specifically aimed at musical theatre.

In my experience there is definitely no shortage of innovative and talented writers and composers in this country who continue to be inspired by the potential of the musical theatre form, in all its various manifestations. They do not necessarily want to produce the next *Les Miserables*, or *Phantom of the Opera* in the first instance, although of course many have ambitions to eventually have the chance to work on major commercial successes of this nature. They are eager to offer something which is frequently new and different and possibly more in touch with everyday life. The opportunity of being able to present work which is on a more manageable scale and does not necessarily require huge amounts of commercial investment, would give them invaluable experience, as well as offering to audiences new and exciting types of performances. However as stated in Tim Sawers submission, we run the risk of bleeding dry that inspiration if we cannot give them the opportunities they need and deserve to nurture and develop their talents.

I wholeheartedly support the work being done by the Bridewell and Mercury Musical Developments and would entirely back the arguments put forward in their submissions. It is just not reasonable or feasible if we are to sustain a thriving musical theatre tradition in this country, that that tradition rests solely on their shoulders. A case must be made for far greater provision nationwide to enable writers and composers across the country to actively develop new work.

26 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by The International Festival of Musical Theatre in Cardiff

Musical theatre is the most popular live art form in the world. That is its problem. A small number of musical theatre productions are commercially successful and a small number are high profile failures which give the general view that (a) the art form is not one which has cultural or artistic excellence and (b) it does not need public subsidy. Both premises are false.

Musical theatre in its widest form encompasses many art forms, opera, ballet, jazz cabaret, concerts, as well as mainstream musical theatre. Mainstream musical theatre provides a considerable annual sum to the Treasury's budget from the VAT on the theatre tickets from musical theatre productions around the country, the national insurance and tax paid by artists involved in this area, actors, directors, choreographers, stage management, not to mention theatre staff both front of house and back stage, and corporation tax paid by the producers and theatre owners. Additionally reports have been done to show the amount of money which comes into the economy from the spend by theatregoers, both from the UK and abroad, on hotels, transport, restaurants and shopping around their visits to the theatre. It is acknowledged that theatre is one of the main tourist attractions for visitors from abroad and musical theatre provides the main magnet for theatregoers, especially those from countries where English is not the first language. Not one penny of this income comes directly back to the mainstream musical theatre industry in subsidy. Subsidy is needed to help this area of the entertainment industry regenerate in order to continue to provide this level of income.

Last year an initiative took place, which was unique, and the first of its kind in the world. The first International Festival of Musical Theatre took place in Cardiff. For three weeks the whole city was taken over with musical theatre in all its forms, international artists, writers, composers, directors and musicians

took part in 100 performances over 11 venues. Audiences from all over the world came to the city. Both the Bridewell Theatre and the National Youth Music Theatre took part in this initiative and productions from both institutions formed part of the Festival's programme. You will see from the enclosed literature the variety and breadth of the Festival's programme. However, not one penny of direct arts funding was provided for the Festival. Despite a deficit after the first Festival, its support funders and corporate donors have showed their commitment and we are now preparing for a second Festival which will take place in 2005.

The development of new writing and the participation in musical theatre events was, and continues to be, at the heart of the Festival's programme and it is the Festival's intention to make both of these areas the subject of year round development programmes, given we can acquire funding for the same. We are working with the Bridewell and Mercury Musical Developments in the expansion of our new writing programme. We are also in contact with a number of organisations in the US, in particular the National Alliance of Musical Theatre and the new writing programmes in Chicago and Los Angeles with whom we are also working on this developmental programme.

In the US the development of new writing is seen as a necessity rather than a luxury. Most regional theatres in the US produce at least four or five new musical productions per annum. In the UK the regional theatres are unable to afford even one without some direct commercial financial input.

The Global Search for New Musicals, the heart of the Festival's own new writing programme, received 165 entries from 16 different countries in 2002—of the nine shows which were chosen for showcase performances at the Festival six have had interest shown for future development and three are already in the process of being developed further, but tellingly, all by US theatre companies.

The relationship between commercial and subsidised sector has over the past 20 years expanded in that the commercial sector has recognised that in the subsidised sector, especially regionally, it can find a base where new work can be tried out at a lesser cost and further from the spotlight than immediately into the West End. A number of new musicals (and indeed plays) have been tried out in regional venues prior to reaching London. The advantages are there for both sides. For the regional theatre, the commercial producer provides extra investment capital so that a production, which the theatre itself could not afford on its own annual budget, can be produced. If the show continues to have a future life after its run at the regional venue, an ongoing income stream is produced for the regional theatre, and the on-going presence of the show in the wider arena provides the ability for that theatre to attract other producers with future projects. For the commercial producer, the benefits are that they have a venue in which to try out a production away from the glare of the West End, and if necessary make changes prior to its opening before the critics. Additionally the costs to a commercial producer of starting a show in the subsidised house, are less than those of starting immediately in the West End. However, with more direct subsidy to these regional venues specifically for the development of new musical productions, even more could be produced, providing more revenue back to the venues and ultimately to the Government.

New musical writing development is, as has already been shown to you, a risky and expensive area. I do not need to reiterate all the points that were made at your meeting on 14 October. However I wish to add to this argument by adding that direct funding needs to be extended not just to the development of new musical writing but also to support the presentation of the standard repertoire as well. In order for new writers to learn their craft they need to see and study those works that have already stood the test of time. In drama, new writers study Shakespeare, Ibsen, Shaw, and Arthur Millar, David Hare and other acclaimed writers of the 20th century. Artists study the work of Turner, Picasso, Rubens; composers study the work of Mozart, Beethoven, Puccini, Verdi. In none of these disciplines is it questioned that the works of these artists should be presented and supported by public funding or that that their study by artists of today is necessary. It is exactly the same in Musical Theatre. The composers of today need to study the work of Gershwin, Porter, Rodgers, Berlin, and indeed Coward and Novello, and other giants of 20th century writing in order to learn their craft.

It should not be questioned that our larger subsidised theatres both in London and the regions should programme the works of these composers. It is acknowledged that these works are also programmed to provide an income for the venues, as they are popular works. However, these works should be balanced by the ability of our regional theatres to support development of new writers in, say, their studio theatres and there could possibly be a relationship established such that funding bodies could equate a grant for development work balanced against the income from the production of an established work. Unless we help to provide the base from which new writing can be developed, and nurtured, we will not in future years have the luxury of a musical theatre industry, which is currently the envy of the world.

Participation in theatre, and especially that of young people, is another area in direct need of subsidy. The participation of young people in musical theatre is widespread throughout the UK, and indeed the rest of the world. Again, the volume of school and young peoples' productions of musical theatre works adds to their knowledge and to their education in many areas. There are literally thousands of amateur productions of musicals produced every year all over the UK providing participation experiences for many people, young

and old. These also provide an audience for theatre for the future and, incidentally, again considerable additional income to the Treasury. At the 2002 International Festival of Musical Theatre over 792 young people participated in Festival events, including disabled youngsters and those from disadvantaged areas. The benefits these young people gained from this participation are immeasurable, especially for those who are not academically gifted, or who are disabled. For them to find an area in which they can excel in is without price.

At the moment the Arts Council, the only direct funding body for the arts, does not have a dedicated musical theatre officer. They have officers for music, opera, drama. A large part of the music subsidy goes to opera but any applications for funding for mainstream musical theatre productions, even if these are in the areas of new work, or education are not assessed by people with a direct knowledge of the sector. This is because musical theatre in this country is not viewed with the esteem in which it is held, for instance, in the United States. There appears to be a view that it is a purely commercial art form, and it should be supported from within its own sector, ie by those producers who benefit from the art form. It is also viewed as an art form without artistic merit. Artistic merit and commercial success are viewed as being mutually exclusive. It is time that this thinking was eradicated. It is true that there are many musical theatre productions of great artistic merit which are not commercially successful, especially those experimental productions which have been so successfully produced at the Bridewell Theatre. However the industry should not be penalised because there are a few productions which are commercially successful.

Musical theatre is at the heart of our cultural life. In the area of the arts it has been the Cinderella for too long. It is now time that proper support is given by public subsidy to support this art form.

November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Youth Music

CONTEXT—YOUTH MUSIC'S ROLE

Youth Music is a national charity set up in 1999 under the auspices of the DCMS and Arts Council England. It provides music-making activities for children and young people from birth to 18 years of age (primarily out of school hours) targeting those who would otherwise not have the opportunity, many of whom are living in areas of social and economic need. By 2006 Youth Music aims to have reached more than one million children and young people.

Youth Music has three main roles—funder, development agency and advocate. Through the 1,172 grants so far awarded it has already begun to establish a legacy of music making opportunities, improve overall standards of music making and prove that music has a positive effect on children and young people.

The organisation's four main objectives are:

Access—For those with least opportunity.

Breadth—Music of all styles and all cultures.

Coverage—Rural, urban, coastal and UK wide.

Quality—Encourage high standards for all.

Youth Music has a commitment of £70 million for seven years from the National Lottery via Arts Council England for work up to March 2006. It also raises funds from other sources for its own work and has levered in more than £13.7 million in partnership funding from other sources, including applicants' partnership funding.

Youth Music is the major funder of music making out of school hours and has made grants in 93% of local authority district areas in England. Attached is a statistical report which indicates the range of ages, geographical coverage, types of music and different programmes. Further information is available on our web site www.youthmusic.org.uk

NATIONAL YOUTH MUSIC THEATRE (NYMT)—SIGNIFICANCE AND ROLE

Although Youth Music's primary remit is to support and increase children's and young people's first access to music making, we are concerned to ensure that opportunities to progress to higher levels of engagement (including pathways to pre-professional training) are developed appropriately and safeguarded. In this context, in 2000 Youth Music commissioned a research study into "The Funding Systems for National Youth Music Organisations". The report was published in April 2001 and it

highlighted 10 organisations principally serving England which were considered to be “flagship” national youth music organisations (NYMOs). These were:

- British Youth Opera.
- National Children’s Orchestra.
- National Youth Brass Band of GB.
- National Youth Choirs of GB.
- National Youth Jazz Orchestra/Association.
- National Youth Music Theatre.
- National Youth Orchestra.
- National Youth Wind Orchestra.
- Music for Youth.
- National Association of Youth Orchestras.

From our study it was clear that this sector of flagship NYMOs lacked, *inter alia*, a secure basis on which to try and achieve greater financial stability in an increasingly difficult and highly competitive environment for fundraising. In its advocacy role, Youth Music therefore initiated a fund to support the NYMOs in 2001–02. The fund comprised £250,000 from Youth Music with a supportive contribution of £50,000 from the DfES. Subsequently, Youth Music and the DfES increased their allocations and Arts Council England gave additional funds from their Treasury money in recognition of the importance of this area of work in the NYMOs sector.

Since this study was undertaken, by mutual agreement, British Youth Opera (with its higher upper age range—up to 30 rather than 18–19 years) is now funded separately by Arts Council England. Other potential flagship NYMOs, particularly representing a wider cultural field, is being explored—to date, SAM-YO, the National Youth Asian Orchestra, has been added to the list.

NYMT is considered the leading organisation for musical theatre in the “family” of NYMOs. NYMT has a recognised track record of providing high quality experiences for many thousands of young people across the disciplines incorporated in musical theatre. The number of alumni who have progressed successfully into the profession is testament to NYMT’s role as an effective vehicle for pre-professional training in musical theatre. Through its outreach programme NYMT has also shown a commitment to providing activities which aim to stimulate creativity within the wider educational scene and inspire youngsters both in and out of the school environment.

Youth Music supports all types of music. In musical theatre and opera, Youth Music has given over 80 awards totalling £2 million to organisations including Derby Playhouse, Greenwich Theatre and Chicken Shed Theatre Company. However, in the not-for-profit sector, within the field of musical theatre, NYMT appears to have the most extensive operation of high quality activities for engaging participants of various levels (including pre-professional training) regionally and nationally.

NYMT—MEETING OBJECTIVES AND MANAGING FINANCES

The objectives of the NYMOs fund administered by Youth Music include increasing access to wider range of young people, demonstrating ambition and high standards in the musical activity provided, and building management capacity. In our view NYMT has met its own objectives as well as those pertaining to the NYMOs fund.

From the NYMOs fund, NYMT has been awarded £261,000 to date—£20,000 (plus £35,000 emergency grant in 2001–02) and £136,000 (plus a supplementary grant of £70,000) in 2002–03. The emergency and supplementary grants were towards managing the deficit and cash flow difficulties of the organisation.

Following the loss of a large annual grant from an individual sponsor and the ending of an Arts for Everyone grant from Arts Council England, totalling over £300,000 NYMT was unable to replace this level of funding support. Indeed, the NYMOs fund was unable to support one organisation at this level. Accordingly in 2001, Youth Music advised NYMT that the NYMOs fund would not be able to replace funding at the £300,000 level (ie one third of the total fund available for all NYMOs) and that they should look carefully at their future plans and make adjustments as appropriate (eg scale down operations) in order to manage their finances prudently.

NYMT complied fully with the conditions of grant received from the NYMO fund in 2002–03. However, subsequently, NYMT indicated continuing financial difficulties, despite the increased NYMO grant from Youth Music. Having reviewed the situation, NYMT decided to close its office and stop further spending pro tem. The Chair of NYMT has kept Youth Music well informed throughout about the recent difficulties. Youth Music is continuing to work closely with NYMT’s Board, through its Chair, to agree the best way forward.

YOUTH MUSIC—BASIC STATISTICAL REPORT 1999—7/11/2003

General Summary

Total awards	£36,169,103
No of Grants	1,172
Local Authority Districts Covered	93%

Grant Awarded by Music Programme

<i>Open Programme</i>	
First steps	£1,603,554
Music Maker	£5,388,361
Plug into Music	£2,038,523
Singing Challenge	£1,638,292
<i>Solicited</i>	
CPD	£170,000
Dynamo—Looking for Energy*	
Dynamo—National Grid*	
Dynamo—Regional Connection*	
Making Change (SPNM, KCN)	£1,559,130
Partnership Programme	£3,633,284
YMAZ (inc. Welsh YMAZ)	£12,829,893
<i>Other</i>	
Early Years Zones & Research	£343,619
Instrument Amnesty*	£24,130
Instrument Purchase Prog*	£240,313
Instrument Swap Scheme*	£288,814
NYMOs	£797,900
Singing Zones	£620,000
Wider Opportunities	£147,313
	£36,169,103

* = Closed Programme

Participant, Trainees & Musicians Statistics

Average % of First Timers	80%
Total Participants ages 0–2	17,870
Total Participants ages 3–5	33,032
Total Participants ages 5–7	55,538
Total Participants ages 8–11	135,326
Total Participants ages 12–14	147,163
Total Participants ages 15–18	134,902
Total Participants Special Needs 18–25	903
Overall Total Participants	524,734
Total Trainees	1,647
Total Musicians	1,896
Overall Total No of Beneficiaries	1,574,202

Music Type by %

Classical	16%
Contemporary Classical	4%
Culturally Diverse	16%
Jazz and Roots	10%
Popular	21%
All	1%
No code specified*	32%
	100%

*Includes 361 Instrument Awards

<i>Funding Per Regional Arts Council Area</i>		
<i>Region</i>	<i>Total Grants Approved in £'s</i>	<i>Total No of Grants</i>
East	£2,676,794	65
East Midlands	£2,712,363	84
London	£6,301,101	235
North West	£3,994,223	124
Northern	£1,847,993	51
South and South East	£4,464,631	130
South West	£5,195,970	167
West Midlands	£4,200,620	125
Yorkshire	£3,973,897	145
Wales	£413,904	18
Scotland	£290,794	19
Northern Ireland	£86,814	8
Republic of Ireland	£10,000	1
Total	£36,169,103	1,172

<i>Age Range</i>	
0–5 (First Steps)	9%
5–7	11%
8–11	26%
12–14	28%
15–18	26%

Memorandum submitted by The Really Useful Group Ltd

As Lord Lloyd-Webber has pointed out in his personal letter to you, he has deputed me to send this submission on his behalf. I was appointed a director of the NYMT for the period of Lord Lloyd-Webber's donations and attended most board meetings and therefore got to understand a great deal about the workings of the NYMT and all its funding problems.

Long before Lord Lloyd-Webber became involved financially, he had been an admirer of the NYMT and all it achieved. He had seen one or two of their productions and had been hugely impressed by the company's professionalism. There are a number of features on the way the company runs its affairs, which struck me as a perfect manifestation of how to be a national institution.

The first was the fact that none of the children missed a single day of school. The second was that with only holidays, half terms and some weekends that they were able to achieve such high standards in their productions. The third was the company's ability to seek talent for their productions from throughout Great Britain. Their regional audition sessions were all embracing and the amazing number of applications was a reflection of the company's reputation. The fourth was the way, as they presented their productions around the regions, they managed to include in their casts as many local children as possible.

Finally, the company's impressive record in developing the talents of their young aspirants to the point that they began appearing for auditions for some of Lloyd Webber's musicals.

The breadth of opportunity provided by the company was impressive. They took just as much trouble to teach their musicians as their leading parts; with their sound managers as their understudies and their wardrobe managers as their stage managers. No theatrical skill was left out.

When Lord Lloyd-Webber committed significant funding over some years to the NYMT, he was very much aware that an organisation like theirs would normally readily be able to raise sponsorship for particular productions, but always have difficulty funding the cost of management. In providing the funding, he hoped that a proportion of it would be spent on commissioning new work. He would have liked some young composers and writers to be seen and heard through the NYMT and to have given the students the opportunity to work with leading artists and writers.

In this respect I do not believe that his funding achieved that objective.

I have always wondered whether the market could support an NYMT and an NYT and consider the two should co-exist under one management for their reputations are equal.

There is no question whatsoever that there is an enormous amount of talent for music and musical theatre in our teenage population and that institutions like the NYMT, if they are run well, are right for exploiting it. However, no donor is likely to be generous towards paying the salary of the artistic director or that of the company secretary. They will want the glory of sponsoring a named production.

From this it is my view that public funding is required to pay for the institution to enable it to continue its nationwide search of and training of potential theatrical ability.

I also feel very strongly that the best way forward would be for the NYMT to merge with the National Youth Theatre.

I have discussed this letter with Lord Lloyd-Webber and send it with his full approval.

20 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Robert Longden

The London Fringe benefits no-one but the breweries and the landlord. The extortionate rent required to secure these scrubby little venues does not reflect the absolute certainty that it is impossible to recoup any form of investment. To stage a laboratory production of a brand new musical is a money pit. As a landlord you are basically in the business of feathering your own highly lucrative nest and encouraging one hapless producer after another to flirt with bankruptcy. The amount of money and effort you have to spend in order to articulate a London Fringe project is not that much different to establishing a commercial production. You still have to market it, build some sort of set, rehearse, pay for band parts but there are so few benefits from the exercise. In my day, a fringe theatre was free. The pub was happy enough to exploit thirsty actors and a welcome swell of new visitors called audiences. Those days are over and reckless experimentation comes with a very heavy price tag.

Creating a new musical is all about capturing the imagination of the public and forging that special alchemy on stage between the elements of writing, design and staging is a difficult operation. But make no mistake, ALL the elements add up to a musical not just the score. When I was in *Me and my Girl* and rehearsing out of town in Leicester, I heard that the producers could not sell the idea to prospective investors from the script and cassette made available to them. People thought the whole idea as a duff, creaky piece of old hat. It was only when we opened and people were able to see and enjoy the delights of the high energy production sporting wonderful, inspired performances and fresh musical arrangements, that the investment money materialised to secure a London transfer. You can never underestimate the visuals, personality and illogical magic of a new piece. Script and score are the starting point only. The magic of a musical involves countless ingredients and attempting to rally that magic within the rear end of pub or swimming pool is not going to get anyone anywhere. It never has and it never will.

Establishing a rare successful admixture in the back room of pub and then expanding it for a West End stage is a recipe for disaster which will inevitably involve rebuilding the set, improving production values, and probably recasting with well-known faces to maximise the commercial adventure of the product. All of those changes can collapse the cake. Start as you mean to go on is my advice. Leave the fringe to new plays.

Bearing in mind a top London Fringe venue can cost over £3,000 a week, that same innocent producer would be better off co-producing a project with a regional theatre and reaping benefits instead of wandering into a financial thornbush. That way, the show would be designed, cast and staged in a fashion corresponding to a West End venue which would all add up to a simple transfer if the show succeeds. You would also only have one or two local newspapers to advertise in as opposed to the 30 or 40 newspapers and magazines in London. And if the show evolves to be not as commercial as you thought it might be, then the losses are kept at a minimum and it is even possible to recoup. You will also benefit from playing the piece in front of a real audience.

Unlike Off Broadway in New York, where there are non-union theatres of equal size and technical capabilities to complement the commercial sector, the London fringe has nothing whatsoever to offer in terms of that equal. Despite the fact that I have personally created, pioneered, and run several London Fringes, if I wanted to try out one of my own new shows nowadays I wouldn't go anywhere near the Kings Head or the Bridewell. I see these venues as a completely unhelpful obstacle course. There is a big difference between table magic and full dress illusion and if you have the courage and acumen to project a new musical project do not be seduced by the small available joys of the London fringe. It's very unlikely that a spoilt, overindulged millionaire will be turned on by a pygmy production of your big idea. There are of course, a handful of exceptions. I staged my own musical, *Moby Dick* at the Oxford Fire Station and it transferred to the Piccadilly. But I did have a budget of nearly £25,000 and since I was long practiced at creating fringe shows on the cheap, this exercise looked pretty special. The Royal Court Theatre Upstairs staged the original *Rocky Horror* which hop-scotched from one cinema to another down the Kings Road but that show was created in a theatre, not a pub and it was backed by an impresario who guided it into its 25-year life span. I can't think of any other new musical shows (as opposed to revivals) that transferred from the London fringe which didn't go under very quickly. The great reviews for *Moby Dick* enjoyed at the postage stamp Oxford venue turned sour at the barn-like Piccadilly because the show had changed so much. It lost its identity. You certainly can't say it didn't have money spent on it and the marketing was flawless. Sadly it

became a play thing that eventually was broken. If its format had been established in a venue corresponding to a standard medium sized West End venue then it would have involved a straightforward transplant without the interference that eventually depressed the exercise.

In America, there is more creative interest in this art form. Shows like *Grease* were first performed in a garage and *Rent* started in an off Broadway venue that didn't create problems for its own transfer to Broadway. New musicals are sometimes established way out of New York and road tested on tours. If you feel strongly about a show then give it your best shot. Opportunity is not lengthy visitor. If you don't get it absolutely right then the gold will turn to beans. It is therefore not the best idea to present a new work in a venue that is actually a friendly death trap. Three thousand pounds a week to rent a back room in an uncomfortable pub is a great deal of money and the fact is, the landlord will say anything to anyone to secure that rent without any concern whatsoever for the continuing success of a project. This will sound cynical but I am attempting to defend writing teams who do not have entrepreneurial talents to promote their work and often find themselves in a situation where a fringe try out seems a great idea. It is often the blind leading the blind and it is important to analyse these factors so we might move things onwards and upwards.

British musical Theatre has no laboratory space the length and breadth of the country. There are several alliances that are bound together by their generalised failure and several well meaning hire companies who like to think they are championing the new musical cause but, again, frankly, unless they can offer a free 24-7 recording studio to create demos or a 600-seater theatre devoted to the art form, then to my mind, they are each monarchs of hot air.

Then we have the gruesome Musical Competitions encouraging already impoverished writing teams to pay to enter a meaningless competition where only three writing teams benefit. That's an insult to the rest of the other countless writing teams. For who among the so called judges has the Midas touch to decide which show, from the competition entrances might be regarded as a sure fire winner? Even the Captain's of our industry consider the secret of a musical's success a never ending puzzle. The general public can be the only real judge in these matters. There are all manner of musicals feeding all manner of very different tastes. The head of a big theatre hire company said to me about the sell-a-bility of musicals once; give me "Forever Plaid any day. People can do Forever Plaid." He didn't want to know about the more pretentious and plainly better composers and lyricists. His view had been educated by the response of the public. To see a necklace of 10-minute excerpts from a complete new musical is more likely to put a potential producer off not on to a project. It's a depressing spectacle promoted by people totally unconnected with the stark reality of these things and probably performed by exhausted volunteer performers, possibly not quite right for the multiple roles they will have to play, accompanied by an Oxfam band condemning the composer's full musical concept to "will I ever hear it played properly land?" The whole exercise conspires to misrepresent every element involved in creating something that has to be unique and special. To persuade a "cheque book" to open and gamble good money on an unknown title requires overwhelming evidence and assurance of pedigree and that won't surface in a shoestring production.

This debate is about how to encourage, nurture and educate writing teams. Dickering with 10-minute excerpts tells a prospective producer nothing other than if he vaguely likes it he will, after all that, need to see it all anyway. I know of one writing team who won top prize at one of these competitions and when they were asked to present the full work, it transpired they had only written the 10 minutes. What a waste of everybody's time.

Some fringe spaces aspire to be champions of new musical theatre but actually their output consists largely of revivals. If you are out to offer a platform for new musicals you do not contaminate that conceit by contrasting new writing teams with long established ones. The old battles of successful ideas have long been fought and their history of success is not helpful to modern day invention. The existence of revivals in a venue purporting to celebrate new voices, betrays a vital lack of courage all round. The safety net remains and the safety net has to disappear to release new writers from the brace of comparison and inhibition.

What this art form badly needs is oxygen. Opportunity to stage full dress productions of new work in a purpose built set of venues. That is the only way a writer will ever learn anything. Actors have the opportunity to make mistakes behind closed doors at drama school so why can't new writers be supported in this fashion. A series of venues, in a protected environment (ie no press), where a cosmopolitan audience supports a never ending programme of new work. Work that can be auctioned to Hollywood, Broadway or any other form of media as a matter of course. It may be just one song out of the piece that can be exploited but that would be something. Identified and graded by weekly public read-throughs and experimentation, new choreographers and designers would be hooked up to new musical teams ambitious enough to risk failure. Most new musicals enjoy previews in the West End. All previews, (ie public performances of shows undergoing day to day adjustments) are packed to the gills with enthusiastic audiences. People love this period of potential magic and disaster and so, maybe a venue dedicated to persistent previews would be a commercial winner itself. I would love to run something like that. Maybe a high camp dinner theatre where the meal reflects the topic of each different show. Suddenly, this new education facility enjoys cult status where new material is presented in an environment of fun. If it was big enough to recoup modest investment and if the venue has a paint and build shop, wardrobe, and a resident Fame academy (ie a permanent free chorus!) plus enough studios to rehearse several shows at once (with side rooms for dance and vocal study) then this would provide a genuine oasis for new writing, functioning

side by side in an early relationship with commercial considerations. I am assuming that we are in business of encouraging people to write shows people actually want to see. The link with commercial accuracy is very much part of the learning curve.

So what about Regional Theatres and their relationship with new musicals? If they are offered a co-production situation many will pretend to be interested but in the end they naturally prefer to sleep with the certainties of revivals and song book shows. Shows of which, normal people know what to expect. For the General Public's purse is light and they prefer not to gamble. A show they know nothing about is probably the one they will miss within a season. Radical experimentation can only flourish in particular cosmopolitan communities. I had long imagined suggesting to the Art Council that they commandeer failing repertory theatres to create some sort of independent experimental theatre circuit but, again, I think new shows need to be evolved in lusty fertile communities where new babies are appreciated. Having to drag people to these events isn't quite the right recipe for advancement in this art form.

In reality, most new work is created by the Captains of the industry but the fact is they run fragile empires that can be destroyed by the emergence of new voices, and their natural tendency, unfortunately, is to depress anything that might show them up as old fashioned. They produce new shows on their own terms and to satiate their own interests. There's not a great deal of convincing support for true progress in this field. It's all a bit guarded or comes with strings. It generally has to be the Big Producer's idea in the first place. Even, if you are wealthy enough to be able to make a full recording of your new musical the fact is, unsolicited new work enjoys the most reluctant consideration. At the same time, be in no doubt, occasional philanthropy in this field is token. Funding will doubtless be withdrawn if a participating faction refuses to kow-tow to their own agenda. There is also the black art of optioning new shows to bury them. To get it out of the way. My own negative experience of this kind of alarming competitiveness in the musical theatre world involved my recording a cast album of one of my shows for a record company. A quarter of a way through the recording, a famous composer bought the controlling rights of the record company so he could close our recording down. And that is what he did. It is no accident that many writing teams end up producing their own shows.

We are also experiencing a depression in the West End at the moment concerning the buildings themselves. For £3.50, the general public can remain in the comfort of their luscious armchairs, enjoying their supermarket booze whilst watching a Hollywood Blockbuster. The prospect of bruising one's knees wedged within an undersized Victorian theatre seat, after sidestepping the winos and rent boys of Soho, is not the most attractive prospect for a family. Having neglected home audiences with long running shows depressing once regular forays to the West End, the established theatre owners have created a problem for themselves. Once you have seen the helicopter, or cat litter show or the barricade opera then you can easily get out of the habit of commuting into the West End. Long runs can be a curse as well as a boon. Some brave theatre owners are attempting to redress this by building new venues but until they are given carte blanche to upgrade the West End fully, we are talking about a Victorian heritage site not a state-of-the-art theatreland.

The current crop of Captain's of musical theatre industry have no interest in television (unlike the old guard who pioneered it) and they have marooned themselves. It is, in my mind, vital to make television serve theatre by every means possible. Television should be the theatres' calling card and, in that regard, the West End has fumbled the ball somewhat. It's extremely rare you see a professional musical theatre singer or dancer on television anymore. That amounts to a great deal of poor vision. Shows should be videoed and available to buy like anything else.

To celebrate new musical theatre, the Government may like to imagine the idea of establishing a new (gated) theatre village (state owned and protected) and well away from influences of the powerful and self obsessed. That village, with shops and restaurants, Fame academy, TV and recording Studios and a circle of state of the art theatres, can play host to new writing teams who can busy themselves creating material for when the big boys get their act together.

26 November 2003

Supplementary memorandum submitted by Mercury Musical Developments

As Executive Director of MMD I have been actively involved in the arena of new musical theatre writing and production for seven years, and prior to that as a general manager and fundraiser in commercial and subsidised theatre for over 20 years. I was awarded an MA degree in Arts Policy and Management (City University Business School) in 1996, since when I have also researched and consulted on issues of arts funding, policy and management.

I consider that my experience and engagement with the issues under discussion enable me to comment with some authority on the current state of musical theatre in the UK and its possible future. Much has been said and written recently about the importance of musical theatre as an art form, its popularity, and its unique role in providing entertainment, education and social benefits to a wide range of participants and audiences. Although these arguments are fundamental to this discussion, I do not intend to repeat them here.

The purpose of this submission is to:

- (1) present an overview of current activity in new musical theatre development;
- (2) describe the current national funding situation for new musical theatre development; and
- (3) present a case for increased and broadened funding for new musical theatre development.

1. AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT ACTIVITY

Neither qualitative nor quantitative research has ever been undertaken to gather information about new musical theatre activity taking place in the UK.

There follows a brief outline of the organisations and industry sectors currently involved with new musical theatre writing and production:

The Bridewell Theatre—Has received limited, project-based, ACE funding. Produces new musicals and provides support and facilities for writers.

The Caird Company—Receives no ACE funding. A new company formed in 2001 principally to develop and showcase new dramatic writing but with an artistic policy that also covers musicals. In its first two years has showcased one new musical and held two new musical readings.

Greenwich Theatre—ACE funded. Holds an annual three day festival of new musical works to which writers are invited to present work at their own cost.

International Festival of Musical Theatre in Cardiff—Not ACE funded. Launched in 2002, the second festival will be held in 2005. In 2002 the Festival mounted UK premieres of new (American) musicals. Mounted a competition for, and showcased, six new musicals, five of which had American authors.

MMD—Receives no ACE funding. Provides writer training, support, resources, development, workshop and showcase opportunities.

National Theatre Studio—NT receives ACE funding. Mounts occasional new musical workshops.

The National Youth Music Theatre—Youth Music (ACE) funded. Provides training and experience for young people in musical theatre. Occasionally produces new work.

Nitro—ACE funded. New musical production involving black writers.

Theatre Royal Stratford East—ACE funded. Provides writer training, workshops and some new musical production, all involving black and Asian writers.

Regional theatres—Most are ACE funded. Limited new musical production.

Fringe and small-scale theatres—Most are not ACE funded. Some new musical production and some experimental/developmental work takes place.

Commercial and independent producers—Not ACE funded. Development and production of commercial product, principally mainstream “populist” musicals. Occasionally new work is produced, but more common are revivals and compilation (ie back catalogue) musicals.

Music/drama colleges—There is a growing interest in new musical production and workshopping.

2. THE CURRENT NATIONAL FUNDING SITUATION

Musical theatre, apart from a handful of populist productions mounted by commercial theatre producers, is not self-financing. The costs for producing even a small-scale musical are high and cannot be reduced through cost-cutting exercises—actors, musicians, sets, technical expertise, are all fixed costs within a musical budget, even one with modest production values. These high costs put musical production beyond the means of many regional theatres. Some however do produce musical theatre and even, occasionally, new work, but invariably are obliged to “play safe” and select well-known, popular musical works in order to ensure audience capacity and box office income.

This low-risk producing policy permeates musical production across the UK—from the smallest fringe theatre to the National Theatre, and as a result the artform is stagnating—very little new work is produced and there is no incentive for British writers to embark on a musical theatre writing career or for those committed to the artform to try out new ideas within the genre.

In the USA, where substantial development and production opportunity exists for new writing, one can see a raft of successful new work being produced—*“Rent”*, *“Ragtime”*, *“Urinetown”*, *“Hairspray”*, *“Thoroughly Modern Millie”*, *“The Producers”* to name just some new musicals which have enjoyed Broadway success in the last few years, many of which originated in US regional or fringe theatre. In addition there exist many more touring and regional productions of new musicals which generate healthy income for their producing theatres and writers. This successful model presented in the USA is a result of long-term commitment to writers, development and new production which in turn has created new and receptive audiences for new musical theatre. (See Annex A for an overview of organisations involved in new musical theatre in the USA.)

Whilst comparing the USA situation with that of the UK, a snapshot of musical theatre on Broadway and the West End proves useful. In October 2003, of 22 Broadway theatres then open 10 were occupied by new musicals with music and script created specifically for them (45%). In the West End's 41 theatres there were two such musicals less than 10 years old which began their life in the United Kingdom (5%). These statistics are particularly meaningful when the economic argument for successful commercial theatre as a key element of tourism and as a contributor to the UK economy (an argument well-documented elsewhere) is considered. Invigorating and attractive West End theatre which attracts tourists relies heavily on writing and product nurtured in regional theatre.

Until this year, musical theatre has not been recognised or dealt with as a discrete artform by the Arts Council of England (ACE) and no funding has been available specifically for musical theatre projects. Some established theatre companies, under the category of “music theatre” which includes classical opera, contemporary opera and music theatre, that met specific ACE criteria, received core funding. None of these were musical theatre organisations.

In the seven year period 1996–2003 ACE granted funds to national touring of musical theatre totalling £517,470 for five productions, of which three were new musicals (ACE report to the Select Committee, Appendix C).

According to figures given by ACE in oral evidence to the Select Committee, in 2003–04 ACE will distribute £41.6 million to the category of “music theatre”. Of that figure £38 million will go as core funding to the large-scale opera companies “which leaves £3.6 million for musicals”. It should be noted, importantly, that this statement is misleading—this £3.6 million will not in fact go to musicals, but as earmarked “music theatre” funds, will go to medium and small-scale opera and music theatre, and as funding to companies who may produce musical theatre as part of their overall policy. It would be helpful to have clarification from ACE as to how much funding, if any, will go to new musical development or production.

A quick survey of the written report “Musical Theatre” submitted by ACE to the Select Committee reveals that:

- Of the 28 key theatre organisations funded by ACE across the UK (Annex A)⁶ that produce musical theatre, only three, to my knowledge, occasionally undertake musical theatre development. Very few produce new musicals.
- None of the large-scale opera companies (Annex B)⁷ supported by ACE have ever mounted a new musical theatre production.
- Of the 10 companies and agencies that are listed as having identified musical theatre as a specific area for development within their broader artistic programmes (Appendix E), seven have been supported in some way by ACE. Of these seven, three have received funds for performer or producer training, two for new musical theatre work involving diversity and ethnic groups and one for a new opera programme. Only one of these companies (The Bridewell Theatre) has received funds to support new writing intended for a wide audience.
- The seven higher education institutions listed (in Appendix F)⁸ which “offer accredited professional training in musical theatre” all offer performer training, none offer training to writers.

The funding situation for new musicals compares unfavourably with that for new drama. ACE has funded for many years numerous writing programmes and development projects and provided specific funding for new dramatic writing via writer organisations and theatre companies in London and the regions. No such support has been provided for musical theatre writing. Similarly, film receives seed money, development and investment funding from the Government funded UK Film Council and ACE National Lottery Funding.

Under the new ACE “Grants for the Arts” scheme launched in 2003, musical theatre writers (and directors, producers, companies, etc) may apply for one-off project grants in competition with all other artforms—performing, visual and media-based. It is to be hoped that ACE will now be supporting new musical theatre and that new writing particularly will benefit from this change in funding strategy.

3. THE CASE FOR INCREASED FUNDING

The evidence of this report shows a historic lack of funding to musical theatre at its creative grass roots, so it is hardly surprising that the result is stunted growth and a dearth of new work reaching UK stages. New musical work that is produced in UK theatres, as The Bridewell Theatre will be the first to acknowledge, has originated principally in the USA, not in the UK.

⁶ See p Ev 29.

⁷ See p Ev 29.

⁸ See p Ev 32.

Musical development is by its very nature a private activity which involves the trying and testing out of new work behind closed doors, and occasionally in front of a small invited audience. This usually makes it ineligible for most forms of funding. MMD for example has so far been unsuccessful in securing ACE project funding (under the 2003 Grants for the Arts scheme), grants from major arts trusts and foundations or from quasi-government bodies such as Arts and Business because of the perceived lack of “public” benefit. Equally sponsorship is difficult to achieve because of the limited audience for development events and the accompanying lack of publicity and promotional opportunity for sponsors and their products.

New musical theatre urgently needs government support through ACE. The new young writers that could provide the musicals of tomorrow are abandoning the artform for more secure and certain careers in film, television and new media. In the USA, by contrast, where musical development opportunities exist in a range of organisations and more importantly a culture of development exists in regional theatre, new writers and new musicals are being encouraged, supported and given development and first performance opportunities.

Support for new musical theatre is not costly, for example:

- a reading of a new musical costs in the region of £2,000;
- a series of six writing seminars/masterclasses costs in the region of £3,500;
- a two week workshop of a medium size musical costs in the region of £15,000;
- a showcase festival of five new musicals costs in the region of £50,000.

With modest funding available, regional theatre, independent and fringe producers can be encouraged to champion musical development and offer in-kind support. Studio theatre spaces for example, which are often not used to full capacity, could be used to try out new work and mount readings and workshops. This would provide a significant development opportunity for writers.

What is urgently needed, in popular parlance, is a joined-up strategy for the future development of musical theatre:

- support for musical theatre writer training;
- support for writer/musical development—labs and workshops;
- support for first platform performances (in fringe, studio and regional theatres);
- support for medium-scale performance (The Bridewell and regional theatres); and
- an investment/payback scheme similar to that operated for film by the UK Film Council.

The potential outcome of such a strategy is evident:

- writers will be motivated, energised, and develop their writing skills;
- there will be an increase in the quality and quantity of new works;
- works will be developed to a high standard and made ready for production;
- higher quality work will mitigate against the financial risk of new musical production;
- regional producers will become more confident and active in producing new musicals;
- audiences for new musicals will be developed; and
- some new work will achieve regional and West End success, with accompanying economic benefits.

Annex A

AN OVERVIEW OF COMPANIES AND ORGANISATIONS IN THE USA INVOLVED IN NEW MUSICAL THEATRE

In the USA there are:

Three musical theatre networking consortiums:

National Alliance of Musical Theatre (NAMT)—a consortium of 133 musical producing theatres and musical theatre organisations across the USA. The NAMT holds conferences, showcases, provides funding and resources. A significant part of its operation is devoted to new musical theatre;

National Music Theatre Network (NMTN)—funding and resources for writers and musical theatre organisations;

New York Round Table—networking and support for New York musical theatre organisations;

Sixteen musical theatre training, workshop and development organisations:

Academy for New Musical Theatre (Los Angeles), ASCAP Musical Theatre Workshop (New York), BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop (New York), Dramatists Guild (New York), Genesis Guild (New York), Graduate Musical Theatre Writing MFA Programme, New York University, Harold Prince Musical Theatre Program (New York), Lincoln Centre for the

Performing Arts (New York), (New York), Playwrights Horizons (New York), Theatreworks/USA (New York), Musical Theatre Works (New York), Theatre Building Chicago, Boston Music Theatre Project of Suffolk University, Musical Writers' Playground (New York), The York Theatre Company;

Twenty-four dedicated musical producing theatres (some of which produce new musical theatre):

AMAS Musical Theatre (New York), Inneract Productions (New York), Wings Theatre (New York), The 5th Avenue Musical Theatre Company (New York), American Musical Theatre of San Jose, Cabrillo Music Theatre (Thousand Oaks CA), California Musical Theatre, Casa Manana Musicals (California), Contra Costa Musical Theatre (California), Dallas Summer Musicals, Goodspeed Musicals (East Haddam CT), Maine State Music Theatre, Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre (Allentown, PA), Music Theatre of Wichita, Musical Theatre West (Long Beach, CA), North Shore Music Theatre (Beverly, MA), Seaside Music Theatre (Daytona Beach, FL) Starlight Musical Theatre (San Diego, CA), Theatre Under the Stars (Houston, TX), TheatreWorks (Palo Alto, CA), Utah Musical Theatre Woodminster Summer Musicals (Oakland, CA), Broadway Bound Inc (New York); and

Many regional theatres that occasionally produce new musical theatre (number not available).

Annex B

MERCURY MUSICAL DEVELOPMENTS

(MMD) is a non-profit organisation and registered charity which exists to encourage and promote musical theatre writers and development in the UK. The organisation was formed in 2002 from the merger of The Mercury Workshop (formed in 1992) and New Musical Alliance (formed in 1992) which had similar mission statements. MMD is the only UK organisation specifically committed to and active in new musical development.

GEORGINA BEXON MA FRSA

Georgina trained in theatre production at RADA and started her career as a stage manager with theatre and opera companies. She has experience of the classical musical business as a chorus manager, orchestra manager and festival director and of both non-profit and commercial theatre as a producer, fundraiser and management consultant. Georgina has worked for a range of theatre companies in an executive role including English National Opera, the Winter Gardens/Elgin Theatres in Toronto, the Theatre Investment Fund, The Actors Centre and commercial theatre producers. She has been working in musical theatre development since 1997, initially as Executive Director of the former Mercury Workshop and now with Mercury Musical Developments. She has published articles on musical theatre development and education and has served as a Member on the Boards of Salisbury Arts Centre, The Mercury Workshop and the Actors Centre.

26 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mrs Sandra Wasserman

SAVING THE BRIDEWELL THEATRE

I am writing to you to ask you to help save one of London's fringe theatres—the Bridewell, which is located just off Fleet Street. I understand that representatives of the theatre have been in touch with your Committee and presented their case for emergency funding, so that the theatre will not have to close in April.

I am not a representative of the theatre and I have no affiliation with the theatre or with any theatrical organisation. I am writing to you since I am only a member of the public and a theatre fan.

My husband and I have been attending the Bridewell, not only because of its wonderful productions, but because it is far more affordable for people on small incomes who cannot afford West End ticket prices.

I have been attending the theatre for some 40 years and the standard of the productions presented by this little theatre are as good, and in some cases, better than I have seen in the West End and on Broadway. Their productions have won great acclaim and awards and besides presenting evening performances, the Bridewell has also:

- Established The Lunchbox Theatre, which offers 50-minute comedy, drama or musical theatre to stressed out City workers during the lunch hour period, which is in itself unique for London.
- Instituted The Bridewell Youth Theatre, which has helped young people gain experience before going on to a professional career.

- Premiered several programmes, ie in 1997 it presented “*Saturday Night*”, the World Premier production of a Sondheim musical and it also premiered “*On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*”.

The Bridewell is also the only theatre in the City with a resident producing company. Because of its uniqueness, it would be a shame to see this theatre close.

I know that preserving a theatre may not be PC these days, but community theatre should not be neglected as it has a lot to contribute, and can do what the West End is unable to do—offer affordable and first class productions.

I would appreciate it if you would give the Bridewell Theatre a chance to survive, and give it some funding and breathing space so that it will not have to close.

10 December 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr Warner Brown

I wish to endorse most strongly the submissions given to you on behalf of the Bridewell Theatre and Mercury Musical Developments in the context of your inquiry into “Arts Development: Musical Theatre”.

I am the author of three West End musicals and other musical productions around the world, written with a variety of collaborators from David Heneker (“*Half A Sixpence*”) to Jim Steinman (“*Whistle Down The Wind*”/“*Dance Of The Vampires*”). I work extensively both here and in the United States and am, therefore, in a way, in the ideal position to judge the value of the Bridewell in relation to its policy of exposing new American work to writers and audiences in the UK. It is impossible to overstate the value of this unique function of the Bridewell Theatre. I say “unique” advisedly. In my experience, no other institution in this country works in the way the Bridewell does with reference to the “international” aspects of musical theatre. Were the Bridewell not to exist, this development link would disappear in a single stroke. I speak from experience when I say that it is vital that the Bridewell’s form of cross-fertilisation exists between the two territories. Without it, much progress would be lost and it is virtually impossible to see how this could be made good in other areas.

With regard to Mercury Musical Developments, I recently attended their series of musical showcases entitled “*The Works*”. I have been present at countless of these events throughout the world, but I have to say that “*The Works*” was the most professional and useful example of the kind I have ever witnessed. If on a relative financial shoestring, this level of developmental work can be produced, it is not too great a stretch of the imagination to envisage what could be achieved with some form of regular national funding.

Indeed, I would wish to open up the debate into a wider context about the general funding of musical theatre in this country. The so-called “commercial” sector could not exist without the various theatres and companies throughout the country which make the showcasing and development of new work possible, given the chance. This is surely another vital area where the Arts Council should be providing funding because this is where it is (a) desperately needed and (b) extremely effective. At this level of development, so much can be achieved with relatively small sums of money. With no money, however, nothing is possible but thwarted aspirations and unfulfilled promise.

24 November 2003

Memorandum submitted by Mr P T Wood

I am writing in regard to the financial crisis facing the Bridewell Theatre.

I ask that the Theatre is urgently funded following its loss of support from the Corporation of London. I believe that £100,000 a year is not a large sum to find when compared with the excellence offered by this Theatre.

I write as one who has travelled from Hastings on four occasions to see shows at the Bridewell.

As I am currently unemployed I can only offer the Theatre my support in the form of this letter, which I trust receives your earnest consideration.

8 January 2004

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Corporation of London

ARTS DEVELOPMENT: MUSICAL THEATRE

I thought it might be helpful if I were to provide the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee with details of a significant development in relation to the Bridewell Theatre following the Corporation's submission to its inquiry *Arts Development: Musical Theatre*.

In December, Arts Council London indicated to the Corporation its intention to allocate £30,000 to the Theatre, expressing the hope that the Corporation might make available a similar sum so as to help secure the Theatre's survival of the financial year 2004-05.

Mindful of the Theatre's valuable work, the Corporation's Finance Committee has agreed to match the proposed Arts Council London grant. I must emphasise that this is a one-off payment and the Corporation maintains the position that it is unable to give organisations like the Theatre substantial recurrent funding at the present time. The Corporation hopes that the £30,000 payment will give the Theatre time to investigate longer term solutions to its funding difficulties.

I hope the Committee will find this information helpful in preparing its report.

9 March 2004
