

Morton Smyth



'Not for the Likes of You'

PHASE TWO FINAL REPORT

Document B

SUCCESS STORIES

Produced by
Morton Smyth Limited

May 2004



Contents

	Page
▪ City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra	3
▪ Theatre & Dance Cornwall	6
▪ Eastern Orchestral Board	8
▪ Fierce Festival	10
▪ Macrobert	12
▪ Manchester Art Gallery	14
▪ Stevenage Museum	16
▪ Tyne & Wear Museums	18
▪ West Yorkshire Playhouse	20
▪ Wolverhampton Art Gallery	22



In 1998 Simon Rattle left CBSO after 18 years at the helm. Up to this point the CBSO had never really taken a strategic approach to marketing and to be honest Simon was our message. He was widely known as the chirpy curly haired conductor who had changed the face of CBSO from a provincial ensemble to a world-class orchestra. Simon was replaced by the young Finnish



CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

conductor Sakari Oramo who was brilliant, but unknown in the UK - and a totally different personality to Simon. Sakari was initially described by some as 'aloof' and 'foreign' and the perception was that quality had slipped - think of Virgin without Richard Branson. We were faced with a major gap in our identity and to add to that, an impending financial crisis. Serious action was required.

A year later, the CBSO was invited to apply to the Art Council's Stabilisation programme, we had a new Chief Executive in Stephen Maddock, and a new Director of Marketing and Development in Sarah Gee. Both had a clear idea of what needed to happen: we needed a solid strategic approach to marketing and communications, based on audience research but with the addition of a healthy dollop of instinct! We wrote a proper business plan and communications strategy, and increased the size of the marketing, press and income generation teams under the new title of the Communications department.

By 2001 we had re-branded the company. We chucked out anything stuffy, snobby and dull and brought our image into the 21st century. We wanted to be seen as friendly, approachable and passionate about our music, whilst still adhering to our international reputation for high-quality performances and pushing at the boundaries of music making.

We changed our identity. To do this we:

- Created a single CBSO brand (we used to have separate logos for the choruses etc)
- Changed a heavy, static 70's looking logo to a lively, colourful, 'splash'
- Clarified our core value as 'a passion for music'.
- Made our copy informal, chatty and unashamedly enthusiastic and emotional
- Created a series of billboard ads featuring provocative statements such as 'Take the wife out and face the music', 'Are you a goer?', 'You never forget your first time'.

We changed the audience experience by creating several new programming strands aimed at non-traditional concert goers, including:

- Sunday afternoon family concerts - fun events that dispense with the usual traditions. We employ presenters, either from TV/radio or from the Orchestra, to create a relaxed atmosphere: they introduce each piece, make it fun and offer information on unusual instruments. We've had children conducting the orchestra, lighting effects, magicians, players dressed up as wizards etc. At the start we got a



lot of subscribers bringing their grandchildren but now c.60% of attenders are new to us. Although it's targeted at families, other adults come without kids because they like the informality and low-key educational presentational style. These have been our most successful venture and are almost always sold out, introducing a new generation to the CBSO.

- Rush Hour concerts where people can skip the traffic and chill out for a pleasant hour from 6.15pm. We play all sorts of music, from Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* to the theme music from 'Babe'. This is a buzzing audience prepared to risk a cheap hour of their time (tickets are deliberately priced along cinema lines -£5, £7.50 and £10 for the 'Gold' seats, which are often bought by blokes trying to impress girlfriends on dates!). It's also a great time of day for schools - no lessons missed and teachers still have an evening left. The crowd is younger and more culturally diverse than our usual audience.

We also:

- Made the ticket prices cheaper for families and students (cheapest tickets from £1.50)
- Set up media partnerships to support these strands, e.g. Heart FM and family concerts
- Highlighted the non-trad aspects of our brand, for example via a festival of new music and a co-presentation with IKON Gallery involving a performance artist and amplification.

We still offer the more formal elements of the concert-going experience for those that want it, but we've broken down the barriers for those that find it intimidating. There's a first-timers guide on the website, we compiled a CD of music which was given away free with *The Birmingham Post*, and all first time attenders are sent a 'welcome pack', with loads of information and offers to entice them back for another performance during the same season.

Education is also key to getting our message out there over the long-term. Keith Stubbs, our Education & Projects Manager, has expanded our community links so we are truly involved in life-long learning. We are now considered to be more approachable - for example, we responded to a request from Black community leaders in Aston (an area of deep disaffection, best known as the scene of the fatal shootings at New Year 2003) to help set up Aston Youth Orchestra. With the help of local sponsors, we've coached young musicians at a very early stage in their training, organised a visit by Jamaican opera star Willard White to a school in their area, and encouraged musicians and their parents to come to concerts regularly.

We've invested in audience profiling and analysis, employing a Sales Manager who does the audience number crunching/database cleaning so we can keep track of how we are doing.



All of this has resulted in:

- A 17% increase in audiences in the last year (the first full season since rebranding)
- Fundraising income has risen by 25% over the same period
- The creation of links to segments of the market that are usually 'lost' to us for long periods of time, i.e. young families and young career builders.

Recently we've been working on an organisation-wide cultural diversity project, with artistic vision at its heart but including audience development, training, and community outreach. A tall order but one we're keen to address, as the demographic changes in this city (likely to be the first non-white majority city by 2010) pose huge challenges for an organisation playing mainly western classical music for a largely white, middle-class, middle-aged audience.

Key factors for success were:

- We were supported by Stabilisation Funding . It enabled us to pull through a difficult time and to increase our marketing budget so we could try new things.
- Stephen is market aware as well as artistically driven, and Sarah's background is in music so she understands artistic imperatives, whilst tasked to increase income.
- Strong market research into perceptions of our message and audience's core needs
- An integrated communications strategy which ensured consistency of the CBSO message (particularly effective with the Birmingham business community)
- Managing the changes so that neither new or core audiences felt alienated.

Contacts:

Stephen Maddock, Chief Executive
Sarah Gee, Director of Marketing and Development

sm@cbsoc.org.uk
sg@cbsoc.org.uk



EOB was set up in 1965 with a brief to develop the orchestral programming presence in the Eastern and East Midlands regions - a largely rural area, although with significant towns and cities, containing many small and few large venues.

Although it was an association of promoters, for many years it was devoted to helping orchestras sell their work - it was *producer-led*. Over the years, however, both a need and an opportunity was spotted to reposition the organisation as *audience-led* and to focus activity around varied programmes defined according to community needs.



Whereas until 1990 EOB helped place concerts with promoters, we now describe our overall role as being 'to create equality of access to orchestral music'. This means we:

- are proactive in helping to define and develop the market for orchestral work in the region, based on knowing a detailed understanding of local priorities and knowing the decision makers;
- facilitate the process of obtaining relevant work from orchestras, including a greater range of musical styles beyond the western classical tradition; and
- initiate new schemes, help promoters present orchestras successfully to a wider audience, put together partnerships to mount wide-ranging projects and raise funds from external sources.

This has created a 'virtuous circle' - as people begin to see what is possible their expectations are raised, they demand more and we can help to create even higher quality programmes. Although many evening concerts in traditional format still take place, these days a programme commissioned by a local authority might comprise:

- small recitals in villages or housing estates followed by tea with the musicians
- workshops with schools or youth groups
- a family music day at a school, community hall or leisure centre with an orchestral performance in which workshop participants perform their work, local musicians play alongside professionals and the musicians mingle with the audience, many of whom they will know from the outreach activities.

This model works especially well in rural areas or smaller towns where there is a lack of orchestral tradition and in larger centres where, for many people, there are social or economic barriers to attendance at more traditional types of concert.

It's hard to say exactly when the repositioning took place, as the process was gradual and evolutionary, but the key changes that hastened things along were:

- the appointment of Stuart Bruce to introduce education and community work in addition to concerts (1990)
- the arrival David Richardson as Director, and the development with his colleagues of a clear vision for change (from 1994)
- the appointment of Jan Ford to create a marketing and audience development programme (including training and research) to help promoters achieve better results (1997)



- The arrival of Julia lent in a new funding development post in 2002, to help partners raise money as well as to raise it for EOB

In terms of results, we aim to be open minded about what constitutes achievement - it isn't necessarily always about getting people to attend concerts. However, we have evidence (mainly anecdotal) that the composition of concert audiences has changed and broadened. We also know for sure that a wider range of people have become involved in education and community projects - and of course many projects have been designed for specific under-represented groups. Over and above this, the promoters and orchestras we work with are now much more conscious of the range of needs that can be met through the work of orchestral musicians and the variety of opportunities that exist to take this kind of work further.

At the start of our involvement in *Not for the Likes of You* we stated that what we wanted to do next was to improve our profile to enable us to raise more funds to do more audience development work, introduce professional development for promoters and musicians and to advocate EOB-style agencies for other parts of England.

In January 2004 one of these core ambitions was fulfilled when Arts Council England appointed us to create and manage a new national touring circuit for chamber orchestra concerts with a focus on area of under-provision (such as East Kent, parts of Yorkshire and Humberside and the Welsh borders). Some of the key reasons they gave for choosing EOB for this important new task were our strong audience focus and our track record in long-term development of relationships with promoters.

As Hilary Boulding, Director of Music at Arts Council England put it:
"Eastern Orchestral Board is widely respected for its work in bringing orchestral concerts to communities that have little access to live music. It is absolutely dedicated to building audiences and helping local people to plan and promote ambitious and high quality music making. I believe that this initiative will enable many more chamber orchestras to present their work to a wider audience".

The key factors that have enabled success at EOB are:

- A clear, simple vision
- David's management style (fair, straightforward, direct, not controlling, listens, open to and encouraging of new ideas and gets his hands dirty), which promotes:
- An inclusive, team-based and non-hierarchical management system
- A culture of trust
- A 'can do' attitude, never content with the status quo
- A feeling in staff that they have freedom to achieve ('we fit the post around the people, not the people round the post') that breeds loyalty (4 people have 38 years service between them)
- Our approach to promoters, orchestras and other partners, which is:
 - targeted ('what will inspire that particular person?')
 - honest, truthful and unafraid to criticise (which inspires their trust)

Contacts:

David Richardson, Director david@eob.org.uk
Jan Ford, Marketing Manager jan@eob.org.uk



FIERCE! FESTIVAL - Our story

In 1997 Mark Ball set up Queerfest. The festival originally profiled lesbian and gay work but gay and lesbian audiences were coming to see work about sexuality and much of the work didn't strictly address those issues. Many of the artists didn't necessarily want to be identified only as lesbian or gay. Straight audiences didn't attend as they thought it was 'not for the likes of me'. The press always covered the festival in their 'lesbian and gay' sections and it was difficult to get coverage outside specialist press anyway. Plus, the word 'queer' was problematic for all markets in Birmingham.



It became apparent that this identity wasn't working anymore. Consultation with artists, funders and venues confirmed this. We wanted to develop a wider audience and carried out some research. We saw that the potential market was young and interested in club culture and alternative lifestyles.

In 2000 we re-branded as a contemporary performance festival and became Fierce! The transition was quick and smooth. We simply wrote to our core database explaining the change of name and broadened our distribution base to attract new audiences.

We changed:

- Our name and identity
- Our programming style to emphasise the avant-garde nature of the work rather than a sexuality identification. The work we present is not easily labelled, it's cutting edge, controversial and challenging.
- Our copy style and dropped the 'fine art speak' of Queerfest and starting using plainer language
- To a 'club' style of print that had a deliberately cheap and tacky feel
- The venues we used and started to present work in clubs etc

However, we continued to deal with issues of sexuality and alternative sexualities

To do this successfully we've:

- Relied on Mark as a vital part of the brand: he's innovative and maverick, like the work itself. He is also single-minded and highly market aware.
- Relied on strategic partnerships
- Kept our prices low: aiming that nothing should cost more than 2 pints. We are directly competing with people spending an evening in the pub.



All of this has resulted in:

- Our audience doubling
- More non-mainstream, committed arts goers who are not necessarily lesbian or gay
- More young people

More recently we've been exploring presenting work in unusual sites and direct targeting of club attenders through presenting work in clubs. We also want to hone the relevance of our messages and improve our web marketing, as it's so important to the people we're trying to reach.

Contacts:

Mark Ball, Director
Anne-Marie-Pope, General Manager

markball@fierceedearth.com
annemarie@fierceedearth.com



The MacRobert Arts Centre was built as part of Stirling University in [date]. It suffered from being rather hidden away in the campus and, although it was good at attracting students and other similar young adults, it wasn't really serving the local audience.

macrobot



The population in and around Stirling is a broad socio-economic mix, with a high proportion of young families. In January 2002 Liz Moran joined the arts centre as Director, from a background in community arts near Glasgow. She had long held the view that most arts organisations are not accessible to children and families, and that great swathes of the population are excluded as a result. The arts centre seemed an ideal place to focus on this issue.

However, the University - which governed the arts centre - were quite happy with the way things were. Except the fact that the centre was running a deficit. Liz first got rid of the deficit and only then (i.e. from a position of achievement and a track record in managing things well) did she propose her new vision.

The new vision was to make children and adults equally welcome at the arts centre. And there was huge resistance to this. People (including the University) thought it was 'just a woman's thing', that it would be too noisy, that you can't do cutting edge work and kids work, that it would alienate the existing audience and bankrupt the place.

It took years of plugging away at it, but eventually the stakeholders were won over. Liz's strategy for winning people over was to:

- Ensure she was on the right committees (especially at the Scottish Arts Council)
- Make arguments her audiences could relate to (e.g. to the University: responsibility to the community, a source of students long-term, students have children, students *are* children still)
- Use outside consultants to objectify the case
- Recruit champions (like the arts centre's chair Diana Rigg) to support her
- Always listen, but always stay firm

And her strategy for keeping going personally involved:

- Really believing in the vision in the first place
- Recruiting a deputy who shared the vision and could complement her managerially
- Not trying to be too strong - admitting it when it all felt too much (and crying on the shoulders of close colleagues when necessary)

Perhaps the most important thing we did was directly to involve children and young people in deciding what to change about the arts centre. We recruited 'Young Consultants' aged 8-14 who worked with us over a period of several years to give us their views on all aspects of the operation from the building to the artistic programme to the price of sweets. And we took their views seriously.



With the Young Consultants, we devised a plan for the arts centre that involved:

- Changing the mission - from being about art to being about people's experiences)
- Changing the name from Macrobert Arts Centre to simply 'The Macrobert' (on the basis that non-attenders are put off by the words 'arts centre')
- Restructuring the building (giving it its own entrance, creating a dedicated children's auditorium as well as the main house, an art gallery space for children's work and 'Wallace's den' - a chill-out space for Young Consultants and teenagers)
- Revising the programme to cater for both children and adults
- Adding family-oriented ancillary services (crèche, a place to park buggies, activity spaces and materials, small tables and chairs in the café, proper kids' menus etc)
- Creating an environment in which families and children are safe and feel at home
- Simplifying and freshening up our print
- Creating a new strand of communications aimed at children: WOW
 - a mag whose first issue was distributed (via the LEA) to *all* kids in the region
 - a website www.macrobert-wow.org

Obviously some of the things we changed were big things (like the building) but others were small and easy to implement, for example: putting safety covers on all sockets and attaching fold-down toddler-seats to the walls of the adult loos.

The newly designed Macrobert opened in October 2002. It's early days, but so far the quantitative results have been:

- An increase in attendances
- Many more families
- People coming from much further afield than they used to
- Anecdotal evidence (to be ratified) that people from different socio-economic groups are starting to attend

The qualitative results are also very encouraging. Audience feedback is very positive and a real feeling of delight and relief is palpable amongst the people who come, whether to see a show or just to hang out and use the facilities.

It costs about 20% more to involve kids as we do now, but the benefits have been manifold -e.g. as well as attendances we now have profitable income from kids' parties.

Recently we've been working on increasing our profile locally and rationalising the programme (we've tried to do a bit too much so far)

The key factors that have enabled success at Macrobert are:

- A clear, simple vision
- Liz's management style (inclusive, accessible, always listens and explains but is also very firm (even strict) and sets high standards)
- The involvement of the target group in decision-making
- A 'can do' attitude
- Attention to detail - especially in terms of facilities at the venue.

Contacts:

Liz Moran, Director

e.a.moran@stir.ac.uk

Suzanne McGarry, Marketing Manager

suzanne.mcgarry@stir.ac.uk



MANCHESTER ART GALLERY - our story

In the mid 90s a market survey revealed that the gallery was seen as being daunting, unfriendly and unwelcoming. It also showed that a group of approximately 30K of 'die hard' visitors accounted for most of the 130K visits each year, reflecting our low penetration of even the wider gallery going market.



Manchester Art Gallery

In June 1998 the gallery was closed for expansion and refurbishment, with the intention of making it more accessible both physically and psychologically, increasing the number of visits and widening the audience, especially people who don't traditionally visit art galleries. A new director, Virginia Tandy, was also appointed at this time.

We used the closure period to research, plan and develop new ways of presenting art and new ways of working. The gallery reopened in May 2002.

The key things that we did were:

- We changed our management structure so that education and marketing are now represented on the management team and involved in the decision making process. We involve marketing and education staff right at the beginning of planning each new exhibition. This helps us to make sure that we get the interpretation right and that we can use exhibitions as part of education and audience development work in the most effective way.
- We did audience research and consultation and used it as the basis for our planning
- For the first time, we created our own brand and visual identity - the gallery is no longer just part of the City Council's brand. Our visual identity includes images of people as well as images of art, and the brand plays a part in making us friendly, high quality and inclusive as a gallery and an organisation.
- We redisplayed our permanent collections in new, more accessible ways. For example, the CIS Manchester Gallery shows the history of creativity in the city in a wide variety of art forms and the Clore Interactive Gallery is a lively interactive space for visitors with children
- We made interactivity a principle throughout the gallery, not just in the areas aimed at children. This includes drawers and flaps that people can open to find out more about a particular work or theme, computers and feedback walls where visitors can add comments or create their own art in response to an exhibition
- We provide interpretation at several levels of depth to suit different visitors, including more interpretation for people with disabilities. Curatorial staff took part in a two-day session on interpretation to help with this change.
- We've made the gallery physically accessible to disabled people for the first time



- The people who have direct contact with visitors are no longer invigilators or security guards - they're called 'visitor services staff', they wear a softer looking uniform with an open necked shirt and they interact with people by talking to them about the art and guiding them through the gallery
- Our education work has increased and we now do much more outreach work and long-term relationship-building with the local community
- We've continued to do audience research and have several more studies commissioned

It's still early days (and we're probably only just reaching the end of the 'honeymoon' period when lots of people come to visit a reopened venue out of curiosity), but the signs so far look good:

Of both previous and new visitors:

- 98% agreed that the gallery is friendly and welcoming
- 91% agreed that it's a gallery to be proud of
- 77% agreed that it makes art accessible

And, in the first 8 months after reopening:

- 116K people made 248K visits (in the 12 months before closure 23K people made 128K visits)
- Visits by older and younger people increased
- There was above average growth in C2, D and E groups of visitors

Recently we've been working on:

- Reviewing our whole visitor services programme, especially looking for ways to make newcomers feel really welcome
- Integrating the friendly, high quality and inclusive brand values into every part of the organisation

The key things that have enabled success at Manchester Art Gallery are:

- Changing our focus from 'art' to 'audience'
- Constantly looking for ways to make it easier for people (whoever they are) to understand and interact with the art
- Giving marketing and strategic communications a much higher profile - including marketing representation on the management team and increasing budgets and staffing
- Integrating marketing and education into the exhibition planning process

Contacts:

Virginia Tandy, Director

v.tandy@notes.manchester.gov.uk

Kate Farmery, Head of

Marketing & Business Development

k.farmery@notes.manchester.gov.uk



Over the past 15 years we've built a reputation for excellence in our temporary displays. In 1998 Lynn Forrest, one of our front of house staff, suggested that we re-display our permanent collection (which was, frankly, an embarrassment) in the same way and use the temporary exhibition budget as seed funding to enable us to do this.



This idea was taken up by Maggie Appleton, the then Arts and Museums Officer, who embarked on a series of consultation and fundraising events. These resulted in the first new gallery - telling the story of Stevenage from 1700 to 1945 - opening in 2001, and the second - taking the story back to pre-history - opening in 2003.

To make this happen Maggie did the following:

- Built on the relationships that already existed with local businesses (they already sponsored temporary exhibitions) and held an event, fronted by the mayor, where she unveiled her plans and asked for sponsorship. She found a local businessman who was willing to stand up and pledge money on the night.
- Went along to all the local area committees (community consultation groups run by the local council), showed them plans and options and asked them what they wanted. This had the advantage of reaching non-visitors.
- Ran similar consultation events for regular visitors.
- Used the information from these activities to plan the new galleries.
- Facilitated the writing of the local story using local people's words, rather than a curator's.

There were some really important things about Maggie's style as a leader that made this process a success:

- She included everyone, listened and recognised their good ideas.
- She set high standards and expected the best, but was fun, lively and friendly.
- She put the visitor and the local community first and expected everyone else to do the same.

There are lots of other things that we've done over the years that have made the changes possible. Some of them are simple, some bigger, and some were lucky breaks - the way things had to be that turned out to be incredibly useful and important. For example:

- Jo Ward, Maggie's replacement, has continued the ethos and management style, which includes no blame for mistakes, a lot of delegation and being relaxed at the same time as having high professional standards.
- We work as a team where everyone has a say in everything - all ideas are listened to and respected. The focus of the team is always on putting the visitor first and we have visitor comments as part of every team meeting.
- We only employ people who like people and are interested in serving the local community. All our front of house staff are locals. Everyone is greeted as they come in and offered activities to suit them (e.g. spot the object trails for children).



- All the senior staff who work behind the scenes must (because of their council employment contract) work as duty manager on a Saturday on a rota basis. This means everyone has to cover front of house for 2 hours - we all have to interact with the public and so are kept in touch with what they want and need.
- We have to walk through the public areas to get from office to office, so, again, we're in contact with the visitors.
- Because we're only a small team everyone has to muck in to put up and take down exhibitions. This means we all feel ownership and get to use more of our skills than are part of our job descriptions.
- We have an in-house designer, Neil Evans, which is unusual for a small museum, but has proved absolutely invaluable - we can create exhibitions to suit our space and audience and make them much more interactive. We hire our temporary exhibitions to other museums, which is also a very unusual thing for a small museum to do and shows just how good they are!
- We have something for all ages, but all in the same place (this was a suggestion from someone during the consultation - 'I want to be able to be in the same room as my kids, rather than there being a separate room for them'). Exhibits are at different heights so that an adult can look at something while their small child is, for example, trying on a hat and looking in a mirror that is at his or her eye level.
- We're always thinking 'what next?' and 'how can we do this better?'. This includes things like: creating a sensory garden (1998); a new education pack (2001); making a small café area (where people are welcome to eat their own packed lunches) (2001) and Sunday opening (2001).

All of this has resulted in:

- Visitor numbers growing from less than 24K in 1990/91 to over 42K in 2002/03.
- 20% of the local population using the museum.
- Children and young people using the museum as a place to hang out - 60% of visitors on a Saturday are unaccompanied under 14s.
- Winning an Interpret Britain Award in 2003 for our new permanent galleries
- Achieving a Chartermark for excellent customer service in 2003.

Recently we've been working on improving the relevance of the messages we put out to key target groups and raising our profile so that even more people know about us and know how good we are.

The key factors that have enabled success at Stevenage are:

- An unwavering focus and commitment to serving the local community.
- A 'can do' attitude.
- Working as a team and sharing all decisions and ideas.
- Seeing the front of house staff as the most important link with the visitor.
- Having something for everyone.
- Always changing, improving and looking for the next idea.

Contact:

Jo Ward, Cultural Services Manager

jo.ward@stevenage.gov.uk



THEATRE & DANCE CORNWALL: THE WORKS - Our Story

In 1997 Antony Waller started as the new director of a dance agency based in an isolated caretakers hut in St Austell. At that time work was programmed by venues purely because it was cheap; the agency print was messy, boring, assumed that everyone understood dance jargon and the message was ‘community’ in the worst possible sense of the word. Visiting artists would make the long journey into Cornwall only to arrive at school halls with no one to greet them and sometimes no audience either. It was not a programme anyone could really feel proud of.

So we decided to:

- Do less programming and make sure it was professional and of top quality
- Broker relationships between the promoters
- Get rid of the notion that dance is for the intellectual few, or something that needs to be ‘understood’. We wanted people to feel about dance the way they do about cars or going to the beach.

We re-launched as Dance Agency Cornwall. 5-year New Audiences funding a year later enabled us to create ‘Six-Pack’: venue development via 6 dance projects. We took on a part-time Marketing Manager and carried out some general audience research that showed us we needed to communicate in a different way with audiences. Incidentally, this eventually led to a colleague organisation (ACT) putting in a bid for what is now Cornwall Arts Marketing.

At the same time as the relaunch, *A Hall for Cornwall*, a major new venue opened. Prior to this there was no decent middle-scale venue in Cornwall and everyone went to Plymouth. Now more high profile companies would now consider crossing the Tamar, and we had our first central box office in Cornwall.

In 2001 we became the new strategic development organisation for dance *and theatre* and this year we re-branded as *Dance & Theatre Cornwall: The Works*. We’ve now taken on theatre in response to the needs of the area (and there are still no resident dance companies here). We moved into bigger offices, and will take on 2 new development officers later this year. It’s been hard work getting to this point as we have been a small team, Cornwall is a big area to travel round, and it’s often very personal work, going to see the shows and talking to audiences.

The main changes we made were:

We developed a collaborative approach. To do this we:

- Started thinking outside funder-created boundaries and encouraged the venues and promoters to do the same. We generated partnerships between the venues and encouraged them to have ‘joint ownership’ of the companies.
- To support this, we set up a subsidy scheme that recognised the interdependency of the local dance world ecology. We created a shared pot of money that all venues



could draw from at key points of risk: i.e. when a small or large venue took on a company new to them.

- We educated and re-energised the ‘champions’: We took promoters on visits to *The Place* dance venue in London to inspire them about dance and built relationships with community advocates.

We also re-positioned dance through shared print. To do this we:

- Went out and listened to dance attenders to get a feel for who they were and what they liked. We did focus groups and also just talked to people in venue bars.
- In our print we use the visiting company copy but we also add our own straight-to-the-point views too. We actually tell the audience why we booked the show. The company’s description of their work is not always accessible to audiences new to dance.
- We wanted our copy to have a ‘plug and play’ quality so we created a sign system in our brochure (based on ‘Loaded’ magazine) that codes the kind of experience you are likely to get. It’s fun, silly and irreverent. For example, ‘pants’ (kit might come off) and ‘ballet shoes’ (traditional ballet).

Once we even created a fictitious company when our real name, ‘Dance & Theatre Cornwall’ didn’t feel right, i.e. we called ourselves ‘Firewall’ for one event.

At the moment, the 5 year development funds have come to an end so we are taking a hands-off approach to see how the venues fare on their own without the specific Marketing post.

Results: Overall we have established a good attendance pattern for dance in Cornwall. A badly attended show is very much the exception.

The key factors that enabled our success were:

- Teamwork: we are all passionate (with a capital ‘P’) about dance and making it possible for others to share that. (Company motto: ‘we are the glue’).
- We maintain a healthy mix of risk taking innovation and ‘nuts and bolts’ doing.
- Strategic partners who support our vision: i.e., Cornwall Arts Marketing and Hall for Cornwall.
- Every season of dance was accompanied by associated education and community programmes.
- We also programmed large-scale participatory celebrations in partnership with bodies like the National Trust, English Heritage and the Eden project.

Contact:

Antony Waller, Director

antony@dtcworks.co.uk



TYNE & WEAR MUSEUMS - our story

Tyne & Wear Museums manages ten venues across a sub-region, on behalf of five local authorities and the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is also the leader of the North East Regional Museums Hub - one of the regions selected for Phase 1 status under the *Renaissance in the Regions* report. A seventh funding partner is the Department of Culture, Media & Sport which continues to provide grant in aid in recognition of the scale of TWM's operation, and in particular its work in the area of social inclusion. The venues are:

- The Laing Art Gallery, Discovery Museum and Hancock Museum in Newcastle
- Sunderland Museum and Monkwearmouth Station Museum in Sunderland
- Shipley Art Gallery in Gateshead
- South Shields Museum & Art Gallery and Arbeia Roman Fort & Museum in South Tyneside
- Segedunum Roman Fort Baths & Museum and Stephenson Railways Museum in North Tyneside

Our mission is to help people determine their place in the world and define their identities, so enhancing their self-respect and their respect for others.

The focus of the work on 'Not for the Likes of You' is on Discovery Museum.

In the early 90's the service was near to crisis-point - audiences were low and non-representative, which attracted criticism from the funding bodies (especially the local authorities). The Museums and Galleries Commission carried out a management review and a new structure was introduced. David Fleming became Director in 1991.

Five main things happened at this time. This was facilitated by David's leadership, but also to the appetite of the staff for change:

- We changed our whole mental orientation - as one of the staff put it 'we're about people, not about art'
- The marketing function was significantly enhanced and extra staff appointed
- Education was brought much higher up the agenda
- Multi-disciplinary teams were set to work on key issues and on exhibitions
- Managers delegated lots of responsibility (*and* authority) to staff

These last two created a big culture change:

The multi-disciplinary teams mean exhibitions and other projects benefit from a rounded view from the start. They also promote understanding, tolerance and respect between different specialisms.

The fact that there is lots of delegated authority makes us better able to deal with complexity and enables us to limit bureaucracy - critical in a large and diverse organisation. It also gives staff lots of personal opportunity - if you have a great idea you are encouraged to make it happen, even if it's not in your area of expertise. As a result, an education or marketing officer might end up curating an exhibition, or a curator might manage an outreach project.



This approach makes for real commitment - it's hard to leave so very few of us have and those who do often come back. For example, when David Fleming moved to National Museums Liverpool in 2001 he was replaced, in 2002, by Alec Coles who worked with David from 1991 to 1999 and shares the vision.

Key features of the changes we've made to our venues and programmes include:

- Development of the buildings themselves with a particular focus on:
 - opening up the entrances
 - making the internal spaces more like other spaces people are familiar with (for example, the model for the Discovery Museum is a shopping mall)
- Renaming/repositioning entire venues where necessary - for example the Museum of Science and Engineering is now 'the Discovery Museum' and explores the whole history of the region, including but not limited to science and engineering
- Designing every exhibition, project, programme and facility with the audience in mind from the start. The multi-disciplinary approach enables this to work because, for example, education and marketing are 'in there' from the beginning
- 'Mainstreaming' - demonstrating our worth in social, economic and cultural terms
- Being true to our mission and not being deflected by the agendas of others. Intentionally programming occasional big exhibitions/events that get us onto the mainstream map - for example the Laing's 'Art on Tyneside' exhibition which was pilloried in the arts press for being 'populist' but doubled attendance figures
- An emphasis within the marketing department on achieving everyday (as opposed to specialist) press coverage. This helps us to reach non-traditional audiences who may not be reached by more conventional, and often expensive, cultural marketing methods. A drip-drip approach is more effective regionally than occasional splashes: doing both together is of course, preferable

As a result of all of this, we have successfully attracted a broad local audience, many of whom are non-traditional museum attenders and 40% of whom are C2DE - twice the national average for museums.

Recently we've been working on improving our internal communications, which were still inadequate.

The key factors that have enabled success at Tyne & Wear Museums are:

- A clear vision and mental mindset about being *for people*
- The arrival of a new, strong and inspiring leader
- The embodiment of the vision in a people-centred culture and the empowerment of individual staff
- The creation of multi-disciplinary teams
- A 'can do' attitude
- The 'mainstreaming' strategy (which gives focus to the vision and access points for non-attenders)
- A willingness to be bold and take flak (there *will* be resistors)

Contacts:

Alec Coles, Director

alec.coles@twmuseums.org.uk

Deborah Anderson, Director
of Development

deborah.anderson@twmuseums.org.uk



West Yorkshire Playhouse moved to its current home - a new purpose built theatre with two auditoria - in 1990. In 1998, as part of the Arts Council Stabilisation programme, we had the opportunity to look at our marketing (and subsequently our visual image in 2000). In early 2002 Jude Kelly, who had been our artistic director for 14 years and was both the driving force and the public face of WY Playhouse, announced that she was leaving.

**WY PLAY
HOUSE**

These events led us to make the following changes:

- We created a new visual identity which has a much bolder logo, and uses colourful and vibrant photographs and much less text
- The café and foyer area were refurbished to be lighter, brighter and more contemporary and to include a cyber café.

These changes mean that our 'look' is now much more in keeping with the way we are. They also gave us the opportunity to have an opening and launch which raised awareness of West Yorkshire Playhouse.

- We created the £3 ticket for under 26s
- We changed our programme so that we present more new writing and more variety (including Asian and African-Caribbean work)

We now attract more young people, but have still kept our older, more traditional audience - in the first 8 months of the £3 ticket programme 5000 tickets were sold, 20% of them to people who were visiting for the first time.

- A producer was appointed and the production department restructured
- A new chief executive, Ian Brown, was appointed. Ian created a simpler, clearer management structure with more emphasis on people working in teams and across functions.

These two changes have resulted in everyone having a much better understanding of what their jobs are and have led to people taking more responsibility and working more flexibly than before.

These recent changes don't tell the whole story, though. Much of what we do builds on what we've been doing successfully over the years - for example:

- It's always been part of our ethos to be welcoming, friendly and relaxed - this is reflected in the feel of the refurbished foyer and in the way we interact with our customers, which includes front of house staff seeking, and acting on, feedback and being lenient about returns.



- We work hard at creating relationships and partnerships - with audiences, the local community, theatre companies and sponsors. Because of this we attract theatre companies and actors who would not normally come to a regional theatre. They like the audiences here, they like way they're treated by us and they like the fact that we're prepared to take creative risks. Attracting these companies and actors is, of course, also good for attracting audiences.
- Our Arts Development team works with people of all ages to give them access to a broad range of creativity, not just theatre. More than 400 people a week attend Heydays, our arts programme for the over 55s, and 42 schools have been involved in the SPARK project which combines visual arts, performing arts and sport. As well as providing a service to the community this work also develops audiences 'by stealth' - people get used to coming into the building and children bring their parents to see the work they've been involved in.
- To some our building looks more like a supermarket than a theatre, perhaps making it more welcoming and familiar looking than most theatres. The foyer and café area is very large and is used as a restaurant and place where people come to have meetings without necessarily seeing a performance.

Recently we've been working on creating more consistency across areas (for example the food in the café doesn't always match what the audience wants and needs 'when we sell £3 tickets we don't sell £3 food') and improving our understanding of our audiences

The key factors that have enabled success at West Yorkshire Playhouse are:

- Everyone's friendliness, approachability and focus on building long-term relationships
- The commitment to 'something for everyone' and high quality - in productions and the arts development programme
- A clear attitude of being part of, and for, the local community
- A 'can do' attitude, which includes being willing to make mistakes, put them right and learn from them

Contacts:

Dan Bates, Executive Director

daniel.bates@wyp.org.uk

Nick Boaden, Marketing Manager

nick.boaden@wyp.org.uk



WOLVERHAMPTON ART GALLERY - our story

Around 12 years ago we took the first of a series of radical steps to improve accessibility (automatic doors, wheelchair/buggy ramp, visual strips on stair treads, induction loops etc.) and we have been working ever since at becoming more accessible in every way.



Over the last 6 years we've undertaken a series of in-depth audience research projects. A key insight was that our approach to access and interpretation was highly valued by *all* our audiences, so in 1997 we created our 'First Impressions' policy. This was a commitment to building life-long relationships with our audiences and we knew that to grow their interests, we had to get their first-time visit right.

At first we concentrated on targeting families, especially first-time attenders with not much arts knowledge. Later we also focused on non-attenders.

What we did was:

- We took a 'magazine' approach to showing the work: we mixed challenging work with more accessible work, or linked completely different shows.
- We changed the way we displayed the work. We created an 'amusement arcade' style of presentation in our 'Ways of Seeing Room', allowing people to have fun by using interactive methods, while at the same time learning about how to look at and interpret art.
- We changed staff uniforms to a more relaxed less traditional look

In 2000 we closed for 10 months in order to refurbish the building. We took the opportunity to rebrand and create a new visual identity, as well as creating new displays. We reopened in 2001 and relaunched with the new visual identity, which was aimed, as much as anything, at raising our profile and standing amongst our peers - we're pioneers in the field of making museums and galleries accessible, but this wasn't taken seriously by our peer group.

We also:

- Employed 'interpreters'. These are based on the Canadian model of 'greeters': they welcome visitors and engage with them to help them get the most out of their visit to the gallery - whether that's helping them understand the art, find things that they'll enjoy or just chat. They also play a significant role in working with schools groups.
- Developed 'Creation', a digital Art Centre where children young people can create their own digital art.
- Created a 'Sensing Sculpture' Gallery where people can feel and smell the art. While this is primarily aimed at visually impaired people, it gives everyone the opportunity to interact with sculpture in ways they may never have done before.
- Researched our market's needs thoroughly using focus groups and an audience development agency to inform new displays for the Georgian Gallery and the Modern Room housing our contemporary collection.



Fundamental to all this is having access at the heart of our policies and having absolutely no room for tokenism in our practice. We all have a genuine passion for audiences and we don't compromise on quality. Education has a high status within the organisation and is a vital part of our commitment to the community and to developing people who have art and creativity as part of their lives.

We organise our programming so that there's always an access point whatever your arts experience. At any time you can walk in and find something to relate to (e.g. historical, contemporary, educational, family) and when you are ready, there's a stepping-stone to somewhere else. We see taking programming risks as vital - some people won't like some of what they find in the gallery, but as long as there's a choice there's less potential of alienation. For example, when we reopened the major temporary exhibition was Fluid (which was about body fluids). Comments were equally divided between those who loved it and those who hated it. But even those who hated it said that there was something else in the gallery during their visit that they *did* enjoy.

Kate Brindley who was appointed in 2002 to take over from former director Nick Dodd has built on his legacy of good leadership and solid teamwork. This means:

- Ideas being welcome from any corner, in fact they're expected. There's healthy debate and testing of anything new
- Our working roles are flexible so staff have space for their personal interests to breathe, for example interpreters devise activities for visiting schools and front of house staff help take down exhibitions or cover in the café

We research our audiences and respond to their needs. For example:

- We've explored in-depth how visitors think and talk about the work in order to offer content, communication and interpretation that works for them. And we've tested and modified our approach.

All of this has resulted in:

- The proportion of visitors claiming to have general knowledge of art increased substantially to 56% in 1999
- Over 25% of visitors to two contemporary exhibitions felt they were more interested in contemporary art after their visit
- Increase in first-time visits/frequency and longer amounts of time spent in the gallery.
- An increase in Black and ethnic minority visitors
- Us winning five national awards for our methods of interpretation and access provision.

Recently we've been working on strengthening the brand particularly with local markets, experimenting with fewer exhibitions (we currently stage about 12 a year) but giving them added value, exploiting our Pop art collection to the full, Improving customer service and refining our methods of evaluation.



The key factors that have enabled success at Wolverhampton Art Gallery are:

- Our unshakeable commitment to access
- Having something for everyone in the gallery at all times
- Teamwork - everyone's ideas are sought and used, and people work flexibly across jobs
- Putting the audience at the heart of what we do - finding out about them and acting on what we learn

Contacts:

Kate Brindley, Head of Arts & Museums
Helen Large, Marketing Officer

kate.brindley@wolverhamptonart.org.uk
helen.large@wolverhamptonart.org.uk