

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

911
P4 P
Music

FROM: JM

DATE: June 10, 1955

TO:	CBF	JUN 13 '55	CPM
Copies to:	EFD	JUN 27 '55	
	CG		
	RWJ		

COMMENTS:

Special carding
JUN 20 1955

SUBJECT: Assistance to performing organizations

Since CBF's departure, the grant to the San Francisco Little Symphony has had the not unexpected consequence of renewed requests from a number of organizations which understandably felt that this grant made them eligible for RF aid. As these inquiries came across my desk, they seemed to me to provide a basis for a more or less systematic review of what organizations would be eligible.

I propose that in such a review we adopt the following criteria:

1. The organization must have demonstrated performance of the highest distinction
2. Equally distinctive must be its contribution to American culture in drama, opera, music or dance - distinctive in such senses as the following:
 - a. It enables Americans to hear or see work they would not otherwise see or hear
 - b. It presents new work in a way that nourishes the process of contemporary creation
 - c. It opens up new audiences for the performing arts
 - d. It offers upward mobility to talented performers

I should suppose as we went on to work with these criteria, we would find that some of the most engaging cases would represent several of them. In fact, rating on this score might, in some instances, be persuasive.

I assume that aid to such organizations would avoid the "continuing patronage" that we have agreed to avoid by being based on the one shot principle: financially, the formula would be that organization X with increased working capital over a finite term of years (usually three) could so much improve its position that after that

period it could maintain itself by its improved position on what it earned. I should personally still like to urge review at the end of two and a half years as to the progress an organization had made in this direction, with the understanding that if its progress was demonstrable, it might have outright as continuing working capital any balance remaining in the grant at its termination. Virtually everyone I have talked with about this provision seems to regard it as prudent and as advantageous. But I can see that for the RF officers to assume responsibility for such review might put them, in some instances, in a life and death position, which perhaps we should avoid. At the very least, I think we should keep the possibility of making this stipulation in view. But this needs to be debated.

In meeting the inquiries that have come during CBF's absence, I have almost invariably said that the Humanities officers were now glad to build up files on such organizations, covering the statement of the organization's purposes, an analysis of its current operations, its current operating budget, and some projection of its future. As a result, we now have a number of such files.

I would suggest that we begin our review on the basis of the best of them (with a notation indicating the criterion of which they seem most representative):

1. Pro Musica Antiqua (criterion 2a)
2. Portland (Oregon) Junior Symphony Orchestra (criterion 2b)
3. Young Audiences, Inc. (criterion 2c)
4. The National Music League (criterion 2d)

Having gone through these specific examples of each criterion, we should look at such materials as we have on other performing organizations, of which the following is a fairly complete list:

1. The Collegiate Chorale (2a)
2. The San Carlo Opera Company (2a)
3. The San Francisco Opera (2b)
4. The San Francisco Ballet (2b)
5. Punch Opera (2b)
6. The Chamber Arts Society, Catholic University of America (2a and 2d)
7. New Orleans Opera Workshop (2d)
8. Youth Symphony of the Pacific Northwest (2d)

Finally (or initially, if you prefer) we should deal with pending requests from the Ballet Theatre and the Ballet Russe. Reports from critics who saw the Ballet Russe last season are strong, even vehement, in their advice against any RF assistance. To me, a brief and, if possible, definitive declination is in order. Reports on file on the Ballet Theatre seem to me to call for a declination in some such terms as "We still find no basis for recommending assistance." But the files on both organizations should be reviewed to see if my conclusions regarding them find agreement.

If agreeable, MEN will take charge of seeing that each of us sees the files alluded to above in rotation.