

BLACK  
THEATRE  
CORRESPONDANCE  
405

29/3/13

Correspondance re: Christophe

Key words:

Play; Christophe; Correspondance

# Lucy Kröll Agency

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May 10, 1979

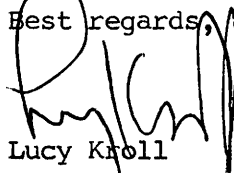
Mr. Maurice Rowdon  
5 Tamworth Street  
London SW 6, England

Re: CHRISTOPHE - James Earl Jones

Dear Mr. Rowdon:

By way of introduction, I represent James Earl Jones. Your script was given to Mr. Jones when he was doing PAUL ROBESON in London in August of 1978. We are very interested in it, and would have contacted you sooner but have had difficulty finding your address. Could we take an option on the play? Are the rights free? Has it ever been done or published? Can you tell us a bit about yourself? Also, if you have extra copies of the script, could you send a few?

We look forward eagerly to hearing from you.

Best regards,  
  
Lucy Kröll

LK/cm  
cc: James Earl Jones

2139 DERBY  
BERKELEY ~~CA~~  
CA 94705  
TEL: 8431213

Dear Tony,

I think CHRISTOPHE is NOT  
for a 99-seater but are showing it to you  
just the same,

ESKIMO TRANCE has had 2  
productions in Britain but CHRISTOPHE  
and the one-man BLACK BOBIN are  
clean. I would cut ESKIMO to one  
act now, and I would cut the political  
stuff in BLACK BOBIN.

I also have 2 one-act plays  
(3-handers) which would perhaps

make a one-interval evening.

On the best form

~~Maint~~

---

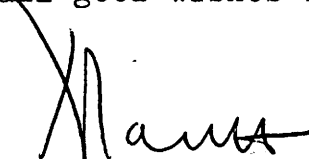
c/o Nilsson  
2139 Derby  
Berkeley  
CA 94705  
17.2.1982

Dear Tony,

I thought I'd better add a mini resume to those scripts of mine. I've had four or five productions hitherto, in Britain and Germany. My two London productions were at the Mercury and the Arts theatres. My MAHLER was (unwillingly) the basis of Ken Russell's film of that name. 1978 I was director of English-speaking productions at the Studio theatre in Munich. 1976/8 I was director at Britain's only Black ensemble The Dark and Light Theatre in London. It was there that I developed an interest in Black themes. I wrote CHRISTOPHE which as I think I told you James Earl Jones took an option on. .

I've published twelve or thirteen books--- novels, biography, travel, history and the latest on animal intelligence (ELKE AND BELAM, Putnams). I use my research extensively in my plays, and the one-man show BLACK BOBIN which you have is based on my book THE SPANISH TERROR (St Martin's Press).

With all good wishes from

  
Maurice Rowdon

## Memorandum on Play Publishing.

The idea would be to approach the theatres with the idea of taking off their shoulders a load they cannot afford and cannot cope with---the avalanches of manuscripts which pour in each week and have to be sent back, with the worthwhile material often lost among them, for lack of readers or literary managers, or the failure of either to influence the production side.

The interest of theatre people quickens when I mention the possibility of starting the German system here, whereby theatres receive small mimeographed play copies from the publishing house, a hand-full each week, or perhaps only one a month, chosen by the publishing house with their special requirements and commitments in mind. Some theatres might agree to having all their scripts diverted to the publishing house, leaving to the publishing house the sole discretion in the choice of new plays. It would save them a great deal of time, worry and the kind of resentment that rejecting hundreds of scripts a year necessarily entails. Most of the subsidised theatres would want to control scripts themselves, but they could still save themselves the labour and expense of script reading and script sorting by creating a close relationship between themselves and the publishing house. One would hope that eventually even if a theatre did take a script on its own initiative, it would natural to then find a publisher for it, as in Germany.

The theatres would, as in Germany, rent the play from the publishing house, on a percentage system. The percentage system in Germany is very complicated, and would take some learning. The struggling, subsidised theatres could be safeguarded by special clauses, giving them a lick off the West End and film rights. The Mermaid theatre put on Hadrian VII at great risk, with less than two hundred pounds in advanced bookings, compared with a usual thousand, and in spite of the fact that they had rejected the original script seven years before, and that it had been a flop in its previous production in Birmingham, and that the Mermaid production was precisely the same as the Birmingham one. Some of the reviewers who had panned it in the north praised it in London. But the Mermaid is receiving from the film, West End and Broadway rights just eight pounds a week, because those rights are in the hands of a West End impresario who put up some of the production money. Under the play publishing scheme all these rights would be in the hands of the publisher, and theatres might warm to this idea if they got specially advantageous results from a West End transfer. Naturally you could not have precisely the same system as in Germany because the theatre there is mostly subsidised and mostly provincial and the West End or

Broadway situation. But the Berlin theatres do go in for long runs, and there are special renting arrangements for them. And here in England something like the German situation will eventually arise, with the increase of Arts centres and subsidised provincial theatres operating on a repertory basis.

But impresarios also might be interested in availing themselves of the play publisher's service, and be prepared to siphon off their weekly scripts (which are a burden and a bore to them all except Bill Freedman) to the publishing house, so that the publisher can sift out the particular moneymaker he is after.

The thing to do would be to canvas the feelings of various theatres, beginning with an agreement with a few, and gradually extending the influence.

The advantage for the publisher is that he keeps an author as a total property, not simply for his book work. He can lay an immediate hand on his ~~film~~ film and play rights, and function really as the author's agent. Play agents are in my experience virtually disregarded in the theatre anyway. The impresarios are interested in ready package deals, on the basis of a try-out, and an agent with a script in his hand is really useless. And as for the repertory or subsidised theatres, they tend to pay the agents even less attention than the authors. Now the acceptance of a play by a play publisher will mean that the first negotiating stage will have been passed. The publisher's having advanced the author say a hundred or two hundred pounds will be a proof of his confidence in the script and a recommendation to the theatres which no agent's persuasions can carry. But still the agent will not be starved out: he would simply represent his author with the publishing house, as in the case of books. There are both play agents and play publishers in Germany, after all. The agents contact both theatres and publishers: if they get an acceptance from a theatre their next step is to take the script to a play publisher, whose man is already deep in deals for which the author's agent has no time or equipment. Knowing that a theatre is already interested, the play publisher knows that at his least his initial expenses are probably covered.

'Publication' here means paper-covered hand-size mimeographed copies on poor paper, produced at a minimal cost. Therefore the main outlay involved is in the advance to the author, and the posting of copies to the various theatres, and the travel and entertainment expenses of the head of department who hawks the plays and persuades. His travels would soon extend to New York and the Continent. Eventually the commercial-theatre department and the repertory-theatre department could be separate though overlapping often on rights. The readers would decide which department should deal with which script.

As a literary manager said to me desperately the other day, 'You see, we can't stop people sending in scripts. And we can't afford to pay a staff to look after them!'

Under play publishing it would become quite usual for a handful of theatres up and down the country to take a script for production, so that there would be a simultaneous premiere extending to a number of towns.

At present, the whole situation of script-submission in this country is in chaos. It is well nigh impossible for a serious writer to get attention for his scripts, 'because'---this was Bernard Miles's wife---'every actor thinks he can write a play'. More and more productions are coming from inside companies, and naturally---without the imaginative force of real writers any more---the audiences are dwindling away. There is a great chance for a publisher to do a lot of sorting out.

I feel sure he could get the Arts Council behind him, even to the point of money help in the first stages. After all, they more than anybody else created the mess. They made the mistake of subsidising writers directly. Years ago when their scheme started I wrote Goodman that this would create vast piles of scripts and no theatres to put them on in. This is exactly what happened. Now (incidentally just when I asked them for a direct subsidy) they have had to withdraw the scheme: it apparently didn't occur to them that you have to keep the theatres on their feet, and if necessary plant a man to see that new plays are put on, before you finance writers to make plays. The result of their mistake has been the creation of little enclaves where the director (who has no time to read) is the dictator. A friend of mine gets ten thousand a year from the Arts council for following his own personal whims purely and entirely. I've written a separate thing to the Arts council on this and will send you a copy another time.

The point about a publisher is that he is equipped to returning hundreds of scripts. Rejecting is second nature to him, and since he is maligned anyway, the resentment of hundreds of actors who think they can write plays would wipe off easily. A publishing house would re-establish the play as the product of a writer.

There would have to be some working-out of the author's relationship to the publishing, depending on whether he had an agent or not. If the publishing house acted as his sole agent it would take ten percent of his box office, beside its other renting fees.

The author's agent would be taking ten percent of your advance to the author, and ten percent of the subsequent author's earnings. In placing the play with an impresario, or a theatre, or theatres, you would not be treading on his toes but extending his income. The agents would even begin to send you material, in the same way that he now sends it to the theatre managements.

Of course you would have the added incentive that the dramatic and film rights would give you opportunities to promote an author in an all-round way. You would hope in the end to be able to promise a 'Constable playwright' at least one definite production.

I think the ~~steps~~ steps in laying the basis for a play-publishing department would be 1) studying the German system in detail 2) talking to the Arts council and 3) talking to the theatres. The Arts council is penetrating the West End production more and more, at least according to themselves.

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Postscript.

At present the theatre is in need of liaison people who produce package deals (the director, the actor, the money and the play) without being West End impresarios interested in just one play at a time. The point about the theatre now is that people do not get together. The director is far from the writer, and the impresario is unheard and unseen until an obvious provincial hit or a ready package deal comes up over the horizon. The play-publisher would be something of an author's agent, but his actually controlling his scripts (not simply taking ten percent of the author's box office) would give him much more of a hold on the theatres than any agent would have. In Germany for instance a play-publisher soon after the last war forced the TV companies to raise their playwright fee to the American level because he controlled the German language rights of everyone from Arthur Miller to John Osborne. The TV companies would have had to cut out nearly every play of importance from the Anglo-Saxon world. No author's agent would have achieved this; nor could a theatre manager;; nor could an impresario, however big.



~~with reasonable methods,~~  
~~professionally,~~

And  
~~At least to can direct, which is more than can be~~  
~~said of some other.~~ The Alderly would have a quite  
fabulous amount of money every year that they  
couldn't cope. But the job is always stopped -  
by the OTC Council. By way of the OTC Council, '16  
will never improve anything here - it will never underwrite  
a new idea. The thing has to be going already.

As long as it operates, the Council will stop it  
Sept. 1985. You haven't even begun. People + little  
do more really than waste it.

~~being do that to waste it~~ to become a  
best a shop window service. As long as you can see  
to something in the window, it is all right. Tell  
+ a plan, even the little pittance of have -  
about the sort of money ~~of~~ smaller town -

long developed to ~~the~~ the town ~~of~~ the ~~Bochum~~  
~~the~~ in Bochum is ~~the~~ the size of Stoke -  
Town - the local council puts down the

a sense for with its 1000-~~some~~ the best,  
to underwrite the performance). - something could  
be done to prevent the statue from becoming  
a private world + more + more hostile standards,  
until it has become ~~the~~ public ~~to~~ ~~the~~  
~~expect public taxation~~ → civilly dangerous,



usual British thing of supplanting the more status  
the prevailing taste.  
Now, when we talk is who to collapse, a  
new plan is the only thing possible. Perhaps it's  
poor. If you have, this is unnecessary. I've  
written because you outline writers as a matter  
of policy, & a letter is the only way of talking  
to you.

→ for the press & the politicians, ~~who deal in~~

I remember writing to Lord Crossman some  
years ago warning him that it was useless giving  
grants to writers, with a guarantee that they can  
see their writings published & performed. He wrote  
back to me saying that he doubted if a worthy  
piece of writing could fail to find a worthy  
day. Perhaps he knows better now. <sup>With these</sup>  
I can produce the predicted ones. <sup>His grants scheme</sup>  
~~realize that~~ <sup>As my eyes</sup> said to me of it, 'his unwell  
'The heart-felt publisher's letter, saying, 'his unwell  
had ~~you~~ to be published, & once it could have been

of the moment!

published, he now says, 'But perhaps even Lord  
Gordon knows now that we - publishers & writers  
& managers & ~~Jennie Anderson~~ & Lord Gordon, &  
~~we~~ Jennie Lee - have our backs to the wall,  
and we're going to do something about it, in the  
terms of the work we do. because - total  
collapse of society is the only alternative.

\***AB** Go to the Pinter plays at  
the Aldwych at his house, or the Mermaid  
show. Where does the audience suddenly  
relax, laugh, seem to join the stage  
spontaneously - like 'shit', 'hugger', 'arse',  
are being spoken. The Pinter plays don't  
even intend much of a joke. It's getting  
sexual & excrementary is enough for the  
British audience. ~~And this means is that~~  
~~Catherine Bell 'AB' & 'The Godson'~~  
Now audiences were hugger into his  
Hadrian VII audience is an diff for this  
a check for cheese. And, with the  
help, the theatres have hugger his into his  
in the last 10 years. ~~And~~ Simple people (is

In the 1st loc - mostly not used to  
the Latin - think this is where the loc  
supposed to lay w. ~~people like Jenkie~~  
~~See we telling the~~ } ~~the id is really~~  
~~v self-literary.~~ } ~~the id is really~~  
~~and make up~~ } ~~the id is really~~

I suppose my motives of writing this are  
 partly selfish. I want my plays on the  
 kind of theatre whose scripts are again read &  
 seriously judged ~~and do too~~. But nobody  
~~seriously involved in~~ But behind the writing  
 of plays, ~~behind all genres~~ there is always  
 .....

\* CX

~~And as for my plays, <sup>consideration</sup>, then as the~~  
~~Mermaid didn't waste a lot of time for me.~~  
 My experience on the Mermaid, of course, is the  
 playwright's usual one nowadays. And I was kicking  
 then. I was not being involved in months. I actual  
 promise <sup>preparation</sup> ~~of production~~, ~~which had finally to~~  
~~be the writing of all nothing.~~ ~~These~~ ~~are~~ ~~the~~ ~~line~~  
~~direction~~ ~~with~~ ~~diff.~~ ~~for~~ Miles, in his <sup>to</sup> know  
 they can get this thing subsidised, with the  
 Myatsi - the side. And ~~at last~~ they include

They start k we with wanting to, since

~~the whole of A Brechtian line, a success not the  
Ritchie Gita line, a Shavian~~

~~the theatre can afford not to go  
through the motions of receiving existing scripts.  
If you simply return them, or throw them away,  
the agents should come back of a time,  
you say~~

~~since, on the whole, the two directions  
have little time to read more than the daily  
paper, the whole we not always a serious~~

~~the whole we not always a serious  
theatre (by itself.) The two directors who regard  
himself as independent avant-garde because he  
has just by pick up Brecht's idea (distilled)  
apply the same~~

~~the whole we not always a serious  
theatre (by itself.) The two directors who regard  
himself as independent avant-garde because he  
has just by pick up Brecht's idea (distilled)  
apply the same~~

an we all know, power corrupts, absolute the absolute,  
in a lifetime of working out in various circles of  
the world, I don't think I've met more  
anymore dictatorial people than the English theatre directors,  
and the British subsidies. Perhaps some African artists,  
in Arab music line there...

which is the one in  
it's up to me  
could give.

said in a  
letter to  
Woodman  
about  
June

Dear Mr Andrews,

*[Handwritten signature]*

I am now in the middle of the play which the literary manager of the Mermaid asked me to write and which I asked you to commission, and which quite rightly you wouldn't commission without a definite guarantee of production from the theatre. Of course you don't want to finance ever bigger piles of new playscripts, unperformed and mostly unread, as you have been doing for quite five years. Which seems to show---as I was claiming when this absurd Authors' Grants idea started---that the problem is with the managements and the producers, and not the authors, whom only wild horses would drag from the writing of scripts.

How

five years ago

one of  
97

Isn't it time that the Arts Council left its carefully neutral territory, where it can only get neutral results, and entered the theatre boldly as what in fact it is, a producer/impreario? The Arts Council has by now (I imagine, anyway) a tremendous amount of knowledge up its sleeve, and knows which writers would get on well with which producers, and what kind of theatre both belong to. Isn't it time that the Arts Council became a participating body, as a theatrical producer, much as the BBC is a producer of TV programmes, without losing its status as a public corporation? It would mean perhaps renting theatres, even West End theatres. It might mean buying them. It would mean a staff on 'establishment' posts, in charge of the programming, the allotting of plays or playwrights to certain theatres, and above all the creation of producer-managers, on whom the whole future of our theatre depends, and indeed on whom all theatre everywhere has always depended. The scheme would combine several possibilities, precisely as the BBC does, with its producers and directors on permanent employment, its outside writers and outside directors on contract, its renting of studios and buying of studios, its BBC Enterprises for the sale of work abroad, its collaboration with outside bodies in joint-productions, its endeavour to make money and its disarming ability to throw it away on abortive schemes. Is such a thing a British Theatre Authority, controlling more and more theatres and managements up and down the country, difficult to visualise? It could start from a tiny beginning. The BBC did. It might only have one producer-management set-up, one say at the Arts theatre, and one programme department, in charge of it, but at least the money that went out into it would be live money, with a chance of coming back with a profit, instead of as at present being dead, like all charity money. At present you put your shirt on a production and make a condition that you have a claim on the rights, without looking in on how the thing is ~~run~~

theatre  
some?

it would mean  
creating a  
subsidiary  
organization

directly

with the  
companies

Just as the  
BBC has  
BB char

space

run

Some of the  
companies  
to tourist  
in the process of  
shared management

od be similar

theatre in the ad.

as

of what have  
you not seen  
from an

organises  
to outside  
trades

Should  
you subsidise?

But the BTA, having financed a 'Studio Theatre' performance

- 2 - 7 - play, could be the sole receiver of any proceeds from a West End transfer, doubly so

the money is spent or how the play is purveyed to potential foreign buyers. The BTA could arrange co-productions, on an expense sharing basis, not only with foreign theatres but home and foreign TV companies. One BBC producer who happens to know that Germany is a willing audience of English talent brings in a vast revenue every year in co-productions and sales, which example if followed through methodically, which it isn't, would be taken as a guarantee of production as the BBC's is in the matter of TV. In a short time it would build up a great know-how

if it also controlled the West End theatre

you share the production - with - in - return - for the rights

I have noticed in television that the directors who spend beyond their budgets are usually free-lance, and that the men who breathe down their necks are Establishment.

If you have no one from 'Establishment' you invite chaos. I don't mean civil servants, any more than you think of a civil servant when you think of a BBC producer, executive or otherwise. But you must have someone there whose mind has more than one project to occupy it, and who knows that who can judge whether to cut down on one project one rather poor project in order to help a good one. As it is, Arts Council money must go more and more to financing private whim, and bolstering whatever world happens to get the publicity, irrespective of its value or integrity.

The end result of this haphazard subsidising is the establishment of a number of private theatrical enclaves, and of nearly as bad a situation as there would be if all the theatres in the land were private commercial managements. The BBC too consists of little, and also rather private, empires. But the emperors decline and even sometimes fall at a terrific rate. If there is a really scandalous situation in any of the present private theatrical enclaves, it is difficult to expose it, because no one can look in from the outside. But little happens in the BBC without the press knowing about it sooner or later; and mostly because we think of the BBC as our own, the licence payers creation, but dispersed theatres have a look of exclusive independence. What goes on at the National, the Royal Court, the Aldwych is nobody's business.

But this is not the case - the theatre. For people outside realize that a man it is inside

What I am saying is that the Arts Council can produce new imagination or new audiences in England Britain, but that it can exploit the fact that both are there, by putting its money into the theatre actively instead of in the way of charity, which is, as we all know (and particularly you) know, paralyzing to the recipient.

What in fact the Arts Council has done, far from helping to create a new kind of theatre, or even a mild degree of theatrical life in England (though without it there would be none at all), is to put the clock back over fifty years to the bad old days of the actor-manager. That actors should never be in charge of theatres should be obvious to anyone who has worked with them for longer than one rehearsal. They are called to a very exacting

in the Arts Council

inevitably

almost impossible

in the theatre

(and give it)

enterprise

all

this is because

already

ever

time

~~HD Peter Bridge <sup>Chairman</sup>  
 other things to follow  
 when he gets back~~

file people should come in paper for the  
 way both had a bid and try to get up  
 & down the land, having taken the notes <sup>themselves</sup> ~~for~~ ~~all~~  
 the slightest interest of the place ~~regarding~~ ~~how~~

→ in one of these ~~you~~ ~~countries~~ ~~was~~ ~~important~~ ~~variable~~  
 exports & it always stays in the ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~of~~ ~~England~~,  
 which is quite ~~to~~ ~~see~~ ~~how~~ ~~an~~ ~~country's~~  
 external influence on people (despite the  
 defence by water 30 ~~million~~ ~~volunteers~~ &  
 - bank balance ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~red) -~~ ~~is~~ ~~spread~~ ~~widely~~  
 & left more ~~than~~ ~~keeps~~ ~~the~~ ~~value~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~sterling~~ ~~higher~~  
~~an~~ ~~important~~ ~~role~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~ ~~market~~ ~~and~~ ~~it~~ ~~will~~ ~~be~~  
~~written~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~report~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~state~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~country~~  
 Above all ~~of~~ ~~government~~ ~~and~~ ~~so~~ ~~far~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~  
 the feeling ~~the~~ ~~2~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~idea~~ ~~of~~ ~~Drave~~ ~~is~~  
 always & necessarily ~~2~~ ~~with~~ ~~down~~ ~~the~~ ~~drain~~,  
 in - ~~spirit~~ ~~of~~ ~~more~~ ~~or~~ ~~less~~ ~~liberal~~ - ~~2~~ ~~with~~  
 the pockets of West End ~~apartments~~

even if  
 early  
 1940s

what  
 caption  
 goes  
 with  
 the  
 council  
 of  
 1940s

profession, indeed, which requires <sup>needs</sup> total concentration, and while some of them may direct quite nicely now and then, they are not the best people to judge a play at its birth in script form, or to talk to writers on possible subjects for dramatisation, or to sustain (as a manager must) the right air of sympathetic scepticism towards <sup>actors</sup> the actors in their times of trouble (which is nearly always).

An actor's theatre is therefore never a writer's theatre. It soon loses touch with its public, for the very simple reason that actors have to lead a highly specialised life closed off from the rest of society (they really do live in the dark). And then, as we all know, they are given to dreams of grandeur, and to the emotional stimulus of fashion. A producer's theatre, on the other hand, has always been a writer's theatre. Granville Barker, Stanislavsky, Reinhardt, Antoine, Copeau, Baty were always in conversation with writers, and encouraging people to take a dab at writing for the stage. T.S. Eliot would never have written the plays he did without the invitation of a producer-manager, Martin Browne. And Browne was responsible too for the emergence of Fry at a time of dire moribundity in the West End theatre. The producer-manager must have new plays, he must have new life, and he knows that this can only flow from outside.

~~(INSERT OF ACTOR MANAGERS SHAW)~~  
Norman Marshall in a book on producing has an interesting argument that the law operating from 1939 to 1953 forbidding the building of new theatres or even the conversion of ~~buildings~~ depots, sheds, <sup>shops etc</sup> into theatre form, turned many able and enthusiastic young directors away from the theatre stage when they came out of the army, and put the whole initiative for theatrical life into the hands of the commercial combines. Hugh Hunt, Tyrone Guthrie, Gielgud, Brooke, Olivier, Glen Byam Shaw, Anthony Quayle, Michael Benthall---these were the directors who emerged or thrived on that state of affairs, namely men who concentrated on the classics because convinced that there were no 'good new plays', without realising that the responsibility for 'good new plays' rested entirely and absolutely on themselves. When a 'good new play' did happen, as it tended to at the Court under Devine's management, it happened because of a producer-manager (like Devine), and the above directors sat and watched it, and 'absorbed' the new material accordingly.

Now the Arts Council, instead of making it possible for something new to come about, by undoing the bad work of 1939-1953, simply got hold of the old order and stuffed money into it, though without wanting to consciously in the least. (to judge by the money it also stuffed into the provincial reps like Peter Cheeseman's). Since there were no established producer-managers (inevitably) the actor-managers had to be used, or rather created,

After

But the actor-manager was the nearly always the pattern of the manager.

this country's

at the Royal Court

apparently

actors

theatre history

Christoph

But the actor-manager simply looks for a director. He can rarely see who is really new & rev. in a script. He will see an idea. Etc.

*1000*  
*like Booker*  
*the*  
*by the*  
*the*  
*the*

together with directors who had shown the utmost contempt for the writer and who were clearly out to establish their own brilliance at the cost of everything else, even when they purported to have political or social consciences. Thus you put the theatre back fifty years at a time when England had the finest body of actors and actresses in the world, and perhaps the finest dramatic writers. You have therefore got a situation now where thousands of playscripts have been created, but not a theatre to put them in. You have therefore used your money to build up a quite impossible situation. And you confess this to be so by withdrawing the Author's Grants scheme, and replacing it with a scheme putting the entire control of the writer in the hands of the producer-manager, except that there are almost no genuine producer-managers, who are projecting more than a private policy and sometimes a policy of downright whim.

*which even you now know to be impossible.*

*OK*

*Continued*

The result is that the foreigner who comes to London for its theatre, having seen an English repertory company on tour, or say Joan Littlewood's OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR, are simply stunned to see something far below the standards of what their hometown would put on with a decidedly inferior troupe. No continental with the smallest respect for the theatre could fail to be appalled say by the tawdry, mocking, old-fashioned but above all utterly wrong production of THE DANCE OF DEATH at the National. An actor alone simply cannot place a play in life, he can't weld it, by means of a production, to the expectant outside world, because he is necessarily rather ignorant of the outside world. When he reads a script he invariably approaches it in the worst possible way, as a vehicle for actors and actresses, rather than a dramatic vehicle for the expression of the truth. Only the born producer, with one foot in the theatre and one foot out, can put him right about the degree of truthfulness, and even sometimes the degree of craftsmanship. Actors are astonishingly blind to the overall meaning of the plays they are in. It would be a wonder---seeing the concentration on one part required of them---if they weren't. And here is John Neville putting up his own theatre---with, presumably, one or two Arts Council 'trainee directors' under him! What a ludicrous piece of typically English cart before the horse!

*Performance level*

*Place*  
*Strindberg's*  
*plays are the show*  
*Now seem to be played to him*

I am sure that as there are serious playwrights thwarted of performance, there are thwarted producers too, and I don't mean just directors but men who want to run their own theatres, and I don't mean necessarily one-manager one-theatre but several managers in charge of a different branches, and each with his allocation of performance-time. I see no reason why there shouldn't be departments under the aegis of the BTA extending in the end perhaps to all but a few of the West End Theatres, so that the present 'impresarios', as they like to think of themselves, are forced to combine into an Independent

*each*

*See up*  
*of the theatre's life*

*West End*

Theatre Authority, whose standards would have to compete with those of the BTA. Eventually the author—since long 'West End' runs of two and three years would tend to cease, given the number of new (and profitable) productions (just as in books the old bestselling term 'bestseller' is now applied to sales of about a tenth of what they were ten years ago, through the intenser production of books), would be paid a larger down payment on signature of contract, and then a repeat fee, rather on the present TV lines.

Plays would be commissioned, not charitably through a director using Arts Council money, but realistically as in TV and publishing, by means of an advance on the later fee or royalties. Here again the tendency above all you would no longer find that the author 'froze' on getting the commission, as I believe you have found in the past (though what sort of writer it is who freezes on getting money I don't know—perhaps that whole scheme was useless to discover the real writers, as it was useless to discover the theatres to put their products on in).

The fact is, as we are both now agreed, that the pure act of charity (in this case a grant to help the writer to create) has the frequent result that the recipient loses the will to work. That simply couldn't happen if Arts Council money was vested in an Arts Council producer, answerable to an Arts Council programme-planner.

There are a number of people with thirty or so years of theatrical experience behind them who at present can't find their place, but are brimming with ideas, and would benefit from a regular income as producers or programme planners in the BTA. They would be able to give vent to their ideas, instead of having to approach private managements with scripts and schemes only to be told that this or that 'name' is what the management is after, however disastrous for the production. Even the small amount of money that the Drama department of the Arts Council has could have been used to mobilise writers, producers, designers, FOH managers in one bold design. But as a neutral body you can do nothing but fiddle with established works, and try to keep up the resultant mess as best as you can.

I don't think anybody would be afraid of the Council becoming a dictator, a State Body breathing down our necks, any more than the BBC is that. As it is, on the contrary, the Council is financing private dictatorships in the theatre at a stupendous annual price. And because the receipt of Arts Council money carries nothing but the most shadowy responsibility, it naturally breeds cliques, and very exclusive ones too, which once in charge of a theatre cannot be unseated, without the Council being accused of partiality.

INSERT \*\*  
Very sincerely yours,

P.S. A young Rushmore man walked into my garden this morning

The Arts Council

was

suspicious

as it develops

with it

all too often

as best as you can

without the Council being accused of partiality

Looking for a Russian Winter which was one. In the course of conversation he said - just after I thought I'd made it clear that both productions stank - that he enjoyed the Dance of Death & Love's before Love in the next, enormously. So I suppose I ought to ~~re-phrase~~ ~~and~~ the one I say also Olive is partial, they're perfectly true. innocent & true.

~~Once when I approached Peter Bridges with the idea of a production with that story - & writing a script, he had asked Peter Bridges if he already wanted Stern, he said, 'because the only people who come to see an actor are his wife & sister!'~~

→ terrible but it should like to know she could be more terrible than a city - the total life by using her who rarely need a script & turn down all work - whether by actors, writers, producers - <sup>which has no value!</sup> ~~and perfect~~ behind ~~press~~ ~~film~~

→ terrible <sup>but</sup> the BTA could be perfectly ~~for~~ ~~complex~~ ~~the~~ ~~BBC~~, if only because it could have to put on the ~~preparation~~ - ~~planning~~ ~~the~~ ~~you~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~interest~~ ~~is~~ ~~for~~ ~~more~~ ~~the~~ ~~needs~~ ~~of~~ ~~producers~~ ~~&~~ ~~people's~~ ~~back~~ ~~and~~ ~~is~~ ~~viewers~~, ~~to~~ ~~have~~ ~~like~~ ~~mind~~ ~~growth~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~product~~ ~~state~~ ~~of~~ ~~high~~ ~~more~~ ~~terrible~~, ~~because~~ ~~as~~ ~~state~~ ~~at~~ ~~all~~ ~~the~~ ~~stage~~ ~~do~~ ~~it~~ ~~hear~~ ~~at~~ ~~it~~.

Insert \*\*

You present scheme of encouraging  
 writer-director<sup>working</sup> relationships ~~against a backdrop~~ against  
 a studio-theatre background looks like the only  
 possible solution, but in fact it is a sign of just  
 how big the defect is, <sup>how big</sup> the defect is, <sup>how big</sup> the collapse results of  
~~any sort of timely plan~~ Of course it is a  
 nice idea, but the director finds the writer he  
 wants, & the writer the director. But, sure  
 I'd like a sort of Arts Council theatrical  
 financing scheme, how do they find out the  
 what they have found out the, is it certain  
 the director will want, for his own ends,  
 the kind of writer that will write the finest  
 plays, as opposed to the more immediate  
 useful scripts. One of scheme means,  
 setting up of clubs. Now, a year ago,  
 of course, is the ~~extension~~ of the distribution  
 the hypothesis always ends by setting up  
 clubs, and therefore outside of helpful-  
 writing, in the case of this club, the

30  
 30  
 60  
 169

And this is how encourages the wrong  
kind of director - the one who turns  
down a great play because 'there  
is nothing for me in it'

introduces are pretty well all the serious writers in the  
land, of no very good reason, the serious writers  
are ~~never~~ <sup>rarely</sup> clubby people. But a lot of script-  
writers or to who by play been down to  
is a confession that to help the serious writers,  
to find the serious writers, is impractical, so we have  
a fellow the drift and propagate the live-  
journalists who can do it if the directors  
want, as they want it.

2. make the situation much worse  
of the real playwrights than it has ever been - even  
in the worst days of the actor-manager set-ups.  
For there is ~~no~~ <sup>how</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> no one a writer can send  
his plays to! The commercial managers are  
- with the poor little exception of Bill  
Freedman - watching the clock, and not  
shut's written. Which leaves the repr. And  
they love the resident writers! What a fine  
pickle you've made of everything!!  
Now put these facts with another fact,  
the you found a writer every second of the day

directly, or his eyes ~~are~~ more than know your name,  
and ~~what you say~~ it really does seem  
remember that you haven't succeeded in stopping  
the <sup>Lyric</sup> playwright altogether, but ~~you are getting~~  
~~it better~~

I may say that I have a personal  
axe to grind, & the more this you do, my need,  
of the having in the house & 4 <sup>possibly</sup> ~~it is~~ <sup>coloured</sup>  
of production in the M. Maid (5 h. 15 m.  
changes), and having to face the fact that  
if Gerard Miles ~~for~~ decide to go into  
music hall, (which is not entirely ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> head)  
I am a h. outly & completely sunk, & am  
over finally, and the management's office  
& the rope & the place directors all  
over again <sup>the will already have</sup> ~~the hope the~~ <sup>of the</sup>  
~~they need~~ ~~it is~~ ~~had to have~~ ~~all~~ ~~day~~  
egg in me basket, ~~but only a few~~ ~~submit~~  
for the = if to the ~~of~~ ~~basket~~ ~~there is~~  
& the answer to this is, here's why me  
basket.

Insert \*

... on play nights.  
Then the bulk of the people who have made names ~~in the~~  
~~theatre~~ in the last 10 or 15 years have at some time been  
actors. Now you can always tell an actor's play ~~by the~~  
~~usual amount of talk in it~~ talk, as you would expect,  
by its showmanship and skill of manoeuvre - they rarely  
have either - but by the fact that ~~they~~ it is all talk.  
It is disastrous to have actors as readers and artistic  
direction and managers of the simple reason that they  
are usually ~~not~~ less capable of ~~giving~~ <sup>achieving</sup> a valid all-  
round picture of a script - seeing it on the stage -  
than most other people in the business. The dialogue  
is what interests them, because that is the vehicle,  
their field of concentration: and this is why. When  
they come to write plays, these plays invariably have  
little or no drama, <sup>no</sup> ~~no~~ ~~justification~~ <sup>contrast,</sup> but are rather  
like monologues. The greater the actor, the less  
likely is he to be able to judge anything new by  
way of deployment on the stage. His eye slides  
over the stage directions, and grips on the dialogue

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**British Gas**  
North Thames

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	W8
Postcode	
Telephone	

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Service Officers Area	945		
Contract Type			
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Two Star		One Star	

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# Portslade Productions Ltd.



5 Tamworth Street London SW6 1LB Tel: 01.385 4003

Directors: Maurice Rowdon and Nicholas Kimber

19.10.1974

Dear Mr Klug,

You may remember that I came to you two or three years ago with Tony Jacobsen about the possibility of starting a theatre in the Fulham area. All the sites offered me by the Hammersmith Borough Council proved unsuitable. But today I visited the West Centre Hotel and found that you have already built the finest theatrical site in London. I don't know whether this hotel is still in your hands but a quarter of the space available at present for exhibitions inside the hotel would be adequate for a theatre capable in terms of seating capacity of paying for itself. The side-entrance is a perfect theatre entrance, the foyer too is perfectly equipped, with its cloakroom and its access to two bars. There is a car park. In New York as you probably know it was the hotel-theatre that put the Hotel Martinique on the map. We have seen the extraordinary success of the conversion of the Essoldo cinema in the King's Road into a theatre, and something equivalent is needed for the young in Fulham, apart from the professional classes who have moved out to Wandsworth and Putney. I am told by the Arts Council that there is a long list of companies waiting to move their productions into theatres, and that most theatres in England are booked up till September 1975 and even 1976. West End theatres do fall free but their cost puts them outside the reach of all but the top managements. The theatre-hotel combination seems to me to ensure that overheads are minimal, and that the usual difficulties of the subsidised theatre are avoided. The hotel bars and restaurant would benefit greatly, and the publicity would be mutually advantageous. Tom Saunders will take a leading part in this project and tells me that a portable theatre could even be designed inside the area.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

Lead  
from  
Susannah  
+  
nail

Tricycle Theatre

Nick Kent

Christophe

Ronald Williams

The Stratford East

Theatre Royal  
Stratford

(0171) 790 2255

(5617)<sup>STING</sup>

1

61112  
**DRUM**



C/o ICA Nash House 12 Carlton House Terrace London SW1 Y5AH

**DRUM**

is a multiracial group of people who want to see black artists in Britain given a chance.

**DRUM**

is primarily concerned with the work of artists of Afro-Caribbean descent because it is they who have been the worst victims of cultural deprivation in the past and who are suffering most from cultural alienation now.

**DRUM**

sets out to redress the balance. More than that, DRUM will enable black people to make a major cultural contribution to the community as a whole.

**DRUM**

acknowledges that many attempts have been made in the past to help black artists in Britain, but recognises that most have failed for lack of a clear policy, firm direction, or co-ordination of effort.

**DRUM**

proposes to find out who is doing what and then to produce the best work it can find where it can be seen and enjoyed by the most people. That means drama, poetry, literature, music, dance, television, film, painting, sculpture.....

**DRUM**

will have its centre in London but offers its services and facilities to artists from every part of the country.

---

**Committee**

**Chairman**

Cy Grant 348-2191

**Sec/Project Organiser**

John Mapondera 346-4220

**Asst. Sec.**

Tania Rose

Joe Aveline

Gus John

Chris Konyils

Helen McEachrane

Gurmukh Singh

Eric Smellie

Charitable status applied for



C/o ICA Nash House 12 Carlton House Terrace London SW1 Y5AH

## ARTS CENTRE

At a time when society as a whole is concerned about the quality of life of the young black generation, concerned about the sense of deprivation within black communities, and increasing reports which suggest that we are dealing with a group of young adults who are both energetic and disenchanted, we feel that the establishment of a national centre for artistic expression related to the local experience of black people in Britain and to the international scene, is both necessary and urgent.

Proposals for such a centre arise from the varied experiences of black people who have for many years been living in and interacting with this society. The group immediately concerned with this project consists of black artists and of individuals whose work has involved them in monitoring the experiences of the black community, and particularly the experiences of young blacks.

It has been difficult for black artists to develop individual potential. Black artists are caught on the horns of a dilemma. This is best illustrated in terms of theatre. On the one hand, black artists are claiming, with some justice, that their professional skills ought to be deployed in roles which are not written specifically for black people so as to give them more opportunities within a wider range of artistic expression. On the other hand, such opportunities as they get for employing their skills and developing their talents have been limited to roles specifically needing black people. The kinds of projects in which they are asked to play a part are usually geared to the expression of a cultural tradition which is very largely white-orientated and to an even larger extent, British-orientated.

In the last decade it has become apparent to innovators within the life of the black community in Britain, that young people are seeking new forms in which to express their experience of living. Their growth in identity, their awareness of new movements in the black world scene and more particularly the black culture which they have had to rediscover and then to develop, is a result of society's unwillingness to accommodate them as black people. In this context, black artists in every medium are claiming that, given the cultural bias to which they are exposed in the society in which they have to live, it is important to develop and project the arts as created by the black peoples of the world.

---

### Committee

Chairman

Cy Grant 348-2191

Sec/Project Organiser

John Mapondera 346-4220

Asst. Sec.

Tania Rose

Joe Aveline

Gus John

Chris Konyils

Helen McEachrane

Gurmukh Singh

Eric Smellie

Charitable status applied for

# DRUM

C/o ICA Nash House 12 Carlton House Terrace London SW1 Y5AH

This is one of a number of developments which many are beginning to recognise as crucial, not only to the future of black people within this society, but also to that society's own regeneration and enrichment through a growing awareness of the importance of other people and other cultures.

London is an obvious choice as the most suitable location for a national centre for the arts of black people, not only because of the high percentage of black people who live in the Greater London area, but also because it is easily accessible to visiting artists and companies from abroad. But it is a primary objective of the centre to encourage black artists working in smaller communities - or indeed anywhere - throughout Britain, by giving them a focal point at which they can display their talents and exhibit their work to the largest possible audience. The policy of the centre will be based on the principle that programmes and exhibitions will be changed sufficiently often to provide the maximum opportunity for artists of demonstrable merit in any medium and from every quarter.

The Centre is intended to incorporate the following functions:-

1. Theatre
2. Arts Gallery
3. Special Events  
Concerts/Poetry Readings/Films/  
Lectures
4. Workshops related to the above activities
5. Audio-Visual facilities

The Centre will be administered by a Trust\* consisting of the initiating committee, and will undertake a programme of activities on the lines indicated above on a phased basis, no matter how modest their beginnings.

Like all other cultural organisations, the DRUM Arts Centre looks to public bodies, established charities and individuals, for part of their financial needs.

Joe Aveline	Helen McEachrane
Cy Grant	Tania Rose
Gus John	Gurmukh Singh
Chris Konyils	Eric Smellie
John Mapondera	

Committee for the Drum Arts Centre

\*Application has been made for registration as a charitable trust.

---

**Committee**

Chairman	Joe Aveline
Cy Grant 348-2191	Gus John
Sec/Project Organiser	Chris Konyils
John Mapondera 346-4220	Helen McEachrane
Asst. Sec.	Gurmukh Singh
Tania Rose	Eric Smellie

Charitable status applied for

2.1.1975

BLACK THEATRE OF PRAGUE

Dear Ann,

This is just to say that I'll be making out a rough budget for the fifteen-minute live presentation you suggest as soon as I know about your choice of venue. Do you want me to negotiate with the Mayfair theatre for you? I think the New London quite unsuitable, whereas the Mayfair is geared to trade shows and accustomed to handle, and the manager there is very amenable.

The show itself presents no technical difficulties whatsoever. We shall use four dancers and an experienced choreographic director. I shall be working with Ronnie Lee, who directed HAIR in Germany, on the basic ideas, and tie them in with a specially composed tape from the Mott the Hoople group. UV paint, by the way, will almost certainly not correspond exactly with the colour of your carpet squares, but I expect you know this.

If we are going ahead on this I would like to know what information about the squares you wish to get over, apart from general delight, what commentary you think essential and what the film will be about. I think it important that we see the film as soon as possible so that it can be integrated with the live show.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

# THEATRE PROJECTS

## STAGESOUND (LONDON) LIMITED AND THEATRE PROJECTS

Stagesound Limited, the sound company founded by the late Bill Walton, becomes on 01st October, 1974, a member of the Theatre Projects Group.

The facilities of Stagesound and Theatre Projects Sound being entirely complementary, their integration will provide a more comprehensive and efficient service for the Entertainment Industry and in the fields of Education and Industrial Training.

For Audio-Visual and Educational recordings the Group offers a production service which includes advice, engagement of artists and all facilities required for specialised programmes including those in foreign languages.

At our Langley Street headquarters will be found the enlarged sound equipment hire department, sound equipment design and manufacture, high speed tape copying, ALTEC (UK) Sales and general administration. (Telephone 01-240 0955)

At 11-13 Neals Yard, W.C.2., (a five minute walk from Langley Street) is the recording studio with facilities from Mono to eight-track, the largest commercial sound effects library in the country and two tape mixing/editing suites. An additional small voice-over studio will shortly be under construction. (Telephone 01-240 5411)

The existing 16/35mm film dubbing and transfer facilities will remain at 28 Maiden Lane, W.C.2. (Telephone 01-240 0959)

Theatre Projects provide a complete service for the Entertainment Industry. The Group specialises in Lighting, Sound and Audio-Visual equipment hire and sales, with a Sound and Lighting Design service. Theatre Projects are the sole U.K. agents for ALTEC sound equipment and Rosco Colour Media. The Group is also internationally engaged in Theatre Consultancy and Design and in production for theatre, films and television.

All correspondence should be sent to the THEATRE PROJECTS registered office at 10 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LN

27th September, 1974

23.12.1974

BLACK THEATRE OF PRAGUE

Dear Ann,

I think it would not only be cheaper but produce a much more professional show if I devised the whole thing with my own people instead of employing another company en bloc. Ronnie Lee, who directed HAIR very successfully in Germany, would work with me on the ideas, and Morgan Fisher could do the stereophonic back-up in an amusing sort of way---plucking sounds as the carpet squares fall into place, with perhaps UV-strobe flicker lighting to heighten the effect. There could be a few words of commentary here and there, but these should be light dabs simply to pinpoint the action. One really has got to get the press amused---and flattered by the speed and impeccable level of performance. This needs ample rehearsal---ten days or two weeks---especially as one has to go into costume as soon as possible.

I'll make out a rough budget as soon as I can in the New Year. Please let me know if you get the Mayfair theatre, or want me to negotiate for it.

Yours,

Maurice Rowdon

19.12.1974

Dear Clive,

THE DARK AND LIGHT THEATRE

Many thanks for yours of the 11th which I read to a Board meeting of the Dark and Light Theatre last week. There was a lot of gratification about the interest shown on your side. When I saw Michael Kustow at the National a couple of weeks ago he suggested that we get together a production budget for the coming year and present it to Lambeth Council, and we are doing this in the hope of getting something like £20,000 out of them. As to the re-orientation of your policy towards the Dark and Light Theatre, and our discussing together my 'umbrella' plan for taking productions into the major theatres, I imagine we all agree that this must depend on the professional level of the coming productions.

You will have received Norman Beaton's programme and estimates for the coming year. The Board feels that the £29,000 quoted for estimated box office receipts is over optimistic, and has asked me to tell you that they think half of that sum nearer the mark. The amount hoped for from the Arts Council is £13,000.

DRUM ARTS CENTRE

I have been in discussion with Cy Grant and John Mapondera about the possibility of associating my company in some way with their coming DRUM ARTS CENTRE. They would like me to select a few plays by black authors for touring next year under the DRUM banner, and to set them up, I believe together with Oscar Lowenstein. One of these plays will be for the ICA Festival in June.

Secondly, as you may remember, I talked to you some time back about a big-cast black play of mine called CHRISTOPHE which I am setting up with a committee of black people. My discussions with

PORTSLADE PRODUCTIONS

- 2 -

Cy Grant have been mainly about this. He and Mapondera suggest that I tour CHRISTOPHE before London and get your help in this while they invite the Community Relations Commission to regard the tour as a 'self-help' project, which I believe is possible. I don't think it realistic to approach you for financial help, in such an expensive production, but finding likely slots in the provinces would be most useful. Do you think you could put the right colleague in the picture about me, so that something could be started there, both for CHRISTOPHE and the smaller cast plays we shall be setting up for DRUM?

Yours,

Maurice Rowdon

19.12.1974

BLACK THEATRE OF PRAGUE

Dear Mr Wimpres,

Further to our telephone conversations earlier this week, we shall be looking for a small troupe capable of presenting Black Theatre of Prague for the purpose of advertising carpet squares. It will be an exclusively Press show, to take place at 11.00 a.m on March 20 1975 at a West End venue, possibly the New London theatre (though not in the main auditorium). The performance will last fifteen minutes. The earlier I can get together with the troupe to discuss the manufacturers' artistic requirements the better.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

The Arts Council of Great Britain



105 Piccadilly London W1V 0AU

Telephone 01-629 9495  
Telegrams Amec London W1

Chairman Patrick Gibson  
Secretary-General Sir Hugh Willatt

11th December, 1974

Maurice Rowdon, Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London,  
SW6 1LB

Dear Maurice,

Thank you for your letter in support of the Dark and Light Theatre. It is, of course, too early to say what we will be able to do for the Dark and Light in the next financial year; as Norman Beaton is aware, there is very little hope of any further assistance from us before March 31st.

As you know, the Arts Council currently regards the company as a touring operation, and sees the work ~~at~~ Longfield Hall as the responsibility of the Local Authority.

The suggestion you make is, however, an interesting one. I take it that you would wish to see the Dark and Light Theatre as an umbrella organisation offering Black productions to other theatres across the country. If this were to become policy, we would obviously need to discuss it with you in detail.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Tempest  
Drama Officer

DARK AND LIGHT THEATRE

BUDGET FIGURES

ADMINISTRATION (52 weeks)

	£
1 x Director (overall policy on Board) + expenses	1750. 00
1 x Associate Director (Artistic & day-to-day running)	2500. 00
1 x Administrator/Theatre Manager/Bar	2100. 00
1 x Secretary	1750. 00
1 x Front of House/Part-time	750. 00
N.H.I.	416. 00

Technical

1 x Stage Manager/Production Manager	2100. 00
1 x A.S.M.	1250. 00
N.H.I.	166. 40

Publicity

1 x P.R. + expenses	1750. 00
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Other Administrative Expenses

Telephone	600. 00
Travel	500. 00
Bank Charges	400. 00
Repairs and Renewals	520. 00
Stationery, brochures	520. 00
Scripts, printing and postage	600. 00
Cleaning	300. 00
Sundries	520. 00

N.H.I. for acting and additional technical staff	716. 80
--	---------

£19,209. 20

TOTAL EXPENDITURE 1975

Administration	£19,209. 20
Production Costs	£24,679. 00

£43,888. 20      £43,888.20

Receipts

Box Office	£29,320. 00
Rental of Hall	800. 00

£30,120. 00

EFFECTIVE ANNUAL SUBSIDY .. .. .

£13,768. 20

PLAY MAS

11 actors

Actors: 2 x £40 x 8 weeks	£	8640. 00	
9 x £35 x 8 weeks		2520. 00	
Understudies: 2 x 30 x 7 weeks		420. 00	
Director x £50 x 2 weeks		100. 00	
+ 1% gross x 6 weeks (say)		63. 00	
Author's Royalty x 7 1/2% x 6 weeks		472. 50	
Bands: 3 x £35 x 6 weeks		735. 00	
Lightings: 1 x £50 x 1 week		50. 00	
Extra A.S.M. x £25 x 8 weeks		200. 00	
Publicity/Programmes		500. 00	
Sets etc./costumes by arrangement with the Royal Court Theatre			
		<hr/>	
		£5800. 00	£5,800. 00
		<hr/>	
Estimated Box Office receipts		6300. 00	
Programmes: 6 weeks x £40		240. 00	
Advertising in Programmes	say	150. 00	
Bar receipts	say	400. 00	
		<hr/>	
			£7,090. 00
Less Expenditure			£5,800. 00
			<hr/>
Projected Profit .. .. .			£1,290. 00
			<hr/>

\* Number of actors employed: 13

# THE EMPEROR AND THE ARCHITECT

3 actors

Actors: (Playing) 2 x £45 x 4 weeks	£	360.00	
(Rehearsal) 2 x £35 x 3 weeks		210.00	
Understudy: 1 x £35 x 7 weeks		245.00	
Director x £150		150.00	
+ 1% gross		26.00	
Author's Royalty @ 7½% gross		195.00	
Lighting: 1 x £50		50.00	
Publicity		500.00	
Set		100.00	
Costumes		50.00	
		<hr/>	
		1886.00	£1,886.00
		<hr/>	
Estimated Box Office receipts		2600.00	
Programmes: 4 weeks x £20		80.00	
Advertising in Programmes	say	150.00	
Bar receipts	say	150.00	
		<hr/>	
			£2,980.00
Less Expenditure			£1,886.00
			<hr/>
Projected Profit .. .. .			£1,094.00
			<hr/>

\* Number of actors employed: 3

N.B. Interest has been shown in this production by Jonathan Miller. I spoke to Jonathan Miller about the play and 'Waiting for Godot', which I want to set in the Transvaal. He says he would be interested in directing either play. I have to phone him later this week to see when his schedule will allow him to do so.

THE KARL MARX PLAY

Actors: leads:	3 x £35 x 4 (rehearsals)	£	420. 00	
	3 x £45 x 4 (playing)		540. 00	
supporte:	3 x £35 x 8 weeks		840. 00	
	5 x £40 x 5 weeks		1000. 00	
Understudie:	2 x £30 x 6 weeks		360. 00	
Director x	£200		200. 00	
	+ 2½% gross	say	83. 00	
Author's Royalty	7½% x 4 weeks	say	251. 00	
Lighting	1 x £120		120. 00	
Extra A.S.M.s:	2 x £25 x 5 weeks		250. 00	
Publicity/Programmes			750. 00	
Set			150. 00	
Costumes			100. 00	
			<hr/>	
			£5064. 00	£5,064. 00
			<hr/>	
Estimated Box Office receipts			3320. 00	
Programmes:	4 weeks x £30		120. 00	
Advertising in programmes		say	200. 00	
Bar receipts		say	250. 00	
			<hr/>	
				£3,890. 00
Estimated Loss				£1,174. 00
Arts Council New Play Production Grant				250. 00
				<hr/>
				£924. 00
				<hr/>

\* Number of actors employed: 13

JUMBIE STREET DANCE

	£	
Actors: 3 x £35 x 7 weeks	735. 00	
Understudios: 2 x £30 x 5 weeks	300. 00	
Director: 1 x £150	150. 00	
+ 1% gross	33. 20	
Author's Royalties 7 1/2% gross	251. 00	
Lighting: 1 x £50	50. 00	
Publicity	500. 00	
Set	100. 00	
Costumes/Props etc.	50. 00	
	<hr/>	
	2169. 00	£2169. 00
	<hr/>	
Estimated Box Office Receipts	3320. 00	
Programmes	120. 00	
Advertising	200. 00	
Bar receipts	250. 00	
	<hr/>	
	3890. 00	£3890. 00
Less expenditure		£2169. 00
		<hr/>
Estimated profit .. .. .		£1721. 00
		<hr/>

\* Actors employed: 5



REVUE for summer tour

Actors: 8 x £35 x 4 weeks (rehearsal)	£ 1120. 00	
8 x £40 x 6 weeks (playing)	1920. 00	
Bands: 3 x £40 x 5 weeks	600. 00	
Understudies: 2 x £30 x 7 weeks	420. 00	
Director	200. 00	
Lighting	150. 00	
Publicity	750. 00	
Costumes <sup>4</sup>	200. 00	
Props	100. 00	
Musical Director: 4 weeks x £40	160. 00	
Author's Royalties	600. 00	
	<hr/>	
	6220. 00	£6,220. 00
	<hr/>	
Estimated Box Office Receipts	6000. 00	
Programmes	240. 00	
Advertising	200. 00	
Bar Receipts	500. 00	
	<hr/>	
	6940. 00	£6,940. 00
Less Expenditure		£6,220. 00
		<hr/>
Estimated Profit		£720. 00
		<hr/>

\* Number of Actors employed: 10

19.12.1974

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Thomley,

I am enclosing a black play of mine called CHRISTOPHE which I would like you to consider for this coming year's Festival. This will be mounted as a multi-medial production, with film and specially composed sound, for a big stage. It has already generated a lot of interest among the top professional black actors in this country as a shopwindow not only for the best black acting but for black history generally, not to say the modern black problem. This coming year will see a lot of attention devoted to black theatre, with the support of the Arts Council, the Community Relations Commission and the Greater London Arts Association. I shall be arranging for several plays by black playwrights to be performed under the banner of Cy Grant's DRUM ARTS CENTRE which will be opening shortly in London, its theatre side in the hands of Oscar Loewenstein. With the increase of racial incidents in NW England (69%) recently, there is a lot of official feeling that something has to be done right away. And one of the things to be done is getting black people on both sides of the proscenium arch. I feel the Festival could play an important role in this.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

16.12.1974

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Morgan,

This is the script we talked about the other day with Ronnie Lee.

When the play is properly set up and the financing starts we would have to enter a professional relationship of course, and get something down on paper. But meanwhile please see if you like the script and we could perhaps exchange a few preliminary ideas.

Yours,

Maurice Rowdon

## THE CASE FOR A BLACK THEATRE WORKSHOP

The case for a black theatre workshop really rests on the question of whether it is separatist to argue for a black consciousness.

In the best of all possible worlds, there is no place for arbitrary categories like race, nationality and class. But in the world as it is - a world in which racial, national and class distinctions are overlaid with discriminatory judgments - it is disingenuous to call black selfhood separatist.

To argue for an English cultural tradition distinct from a French tradition, a European mind distinguishable from the American mind, a working class idiom unaffected by middle class values is separatist. But it is separatism in the cause of variety, pluralism, humanness, genuine equality. Why on earth should the English deny or repress their Englishness, or the working class their "proletarianness"? Black artists should be equally free to call their art black.

"We are far more likely to achieve a society in which resentment is kept within bounds if society is thought of not as a homogenous mass but as a system of overlapping circles. This has really two components; in a society which is to be reasonably harmonious, there will have to be full opportunity for the expression of a diversity for which the Welsh language, the Sikh turban, may serve as symbols. But there must also be overlapping of groups, so that no one category has overriding priority and people can win esteem in a variety of ways." (Philip Mason, "Patterns of Dominance")

The Drum Theatre need not be more separatist than the National Theatre is chauvinistic. Is the Welsh National Eisteddfod harmfully separatist?

To be black is to be acutely aware of being black. We feel we are black much more consciously than whites feel they are white. White men gave us our racial self-consciousness. Racial oppression has meant that it is first of his race that the black man must take conscience. He must compel recognition of himself as a man. And he can only do so by turning what has been a handicap for 300 years into a source of pride. He is black. He is held to authenticity. In asserting himself as Black in the face of White, his blackness - the source of his identity - must be made explicit for it to evolve into a more meaningful, less separatist identity.

We resent having to identify ourselves in terms of skin colour. But this is the state of affairs that imperialism has created. Equally, industrialisation has produced a situation in which working people define themselves principally by class. We may bemoan the fact, but it is a fact, and the reality of the fact finds expression, for example, in the "separatist" art of DH Lawrence.

We are told that our black identity - the identity our oppressors gave us - must be repressed, since otherwise we set ourselves apart. This is doubly to oppress us. We must be free to act out our black experience, give it free artistic rein, and discover unashamedly for ourselves a new selfhood in which race is irrelevant.

If great art springs from great suffering, what theatre! The difficulty is to find a social and cultural structure that facilitates and encourages expression of the black experience. I think this is what divides modern opinion. Some believe that the present theatre is adequate. I believe that the black message requires a black medium for it to be authentic, fearless and in good faith. Ironically, racist South Africa has a black theatre workshop in Natal, and their production of "Umabatha" for the World Theatre Season 1972/73 in London was an outstanding success. Witness also the success of the recent South African Season at the Royal Court Theatre. Yet we in London have no Black Theatre.

For years, black thinkers believed that their blackness alone made no difference. Now I believe that 300 years of living out an alien identity is too great a psychological mask to discard lightly. A black theatre will act as a necessary centre of black consciousness - a laboratory for those who have shared the experience of racial oppression to discover a new selfhood through art. As with black music and drama in the States, a black centre for the arts in London would have real potential for the emancipation of the most deprived section of the community. The very scarcity of black actors in the present theatre reflects uniquely and most glaringly the failure of the integrationist ethic - an ethic that always turns out to mean accommodation to white institutions and values. Invariably, it is we who must integrate with them; we who must adapt and fit in. As long as we are extras on the stage of life we will be regarded as outsiders. The

freedom to play leading parts can only be attained by ourselves acting out our real selves. To be free, we need our own stage.

"In the animal kingdom, the rule is, eat or be eaten; in the human kingdom, define or be defined." (Thomas S Szasz, "The Second Sin") It's time we took over the definition of ourselves.

"The ultimate unity which will draw together all the oppressed in the same combat must be preceded by that which I shall name the moment of separation or of negativity. This antiracist racism is the sole road which can lead to the abolition of the differences of race." (Jean-Paul Sartre, "Black Orpheus")

Cy Grant  
8 March 1974

Home Office

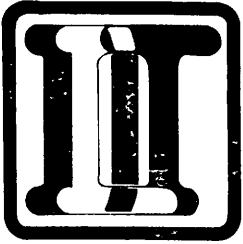
Miss G. A. Arnold  
Home Office (Foreign Labour Division)

LUNAR HOUSE  
Wellesley Road

Croydon

Surrey

CR9 2BY



# The Dark & Light Theatre Limited

LONGFIELD HALL KNATCHBULL ROAD LONDON S.E.5

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Frank Cousins  
ADMINISTRATOR: Manley Young

BOX OFFICE 01-274 4070  
ADMINISTRATION 01-274 4210

Mr. Maurice Rowdon,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
LONDON, S.W.6

4th December 1974


Dear Maurice,

I would like to invite you and guest to the first public performance of 'ANANSI and THE STRAWBERRY QUEEN' - a spectacular folk/rock Christmas musical directed by Norman Beaton at the Dark and Light Theatre on Thursday 26th December commencing at 7.30pm.

Perhaps you would be good enough to write or telephone and confirm if this date will be convenient for you.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

  
Frank Cousins  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PATRONS George Baker, John Fraser M.P., Sir Reginald Goodwin, Canon Harvey Hinds, Geoffrey Pattie, M.P., George Strauss M.P.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Frank Cousins (chairman) Gaie Cousins (secretary) A.G.P. Stuart (treasurer)

REGISTERED OFFICE 34, South Molton Street, London W1Y 2BP

REGISTERED IN ENGLAND NO. 958345



# Mermaid Theatre

Puddle Dock, Blackfriars, London, EC4V 3DB.

Box Office: 01 248 7656

Restaurants: 01 248 2835

Offices: 01 236 9521

CR/MPM

Maurice Rowdon Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London, SW6 1LB.

4th December, 1974.

Dear Mr. Rowdon,

Thank you for your letter of 2nd December.

Our present production, COLE, will be playing here until 8th March 1975, and programming for the twelve months following has been complete for some months now.

Perhaps if you could contact us in the Autumn of 1975, we would then be in a more flexible position for discussion.

I am sorry we cannot help you with regard to a main bill production. However, we do hire out the theatre for single Sunday performances between seasons of Mermaid Poetry. Do contact me if this should interest you.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

*Corinne Rodriguez*

CORINNE RODRIGUEZ,  
Manager.

# Hampstead Theatre Club

*Founder: James Roose-Evans*

SWISS COTTAGE CENTRE LONDON NW3

ADMINISTRATION 722 9224 BOX OFFICE 722 9301

*Artistic Director: Michael Rudman      General Manager: Ruth Marks*

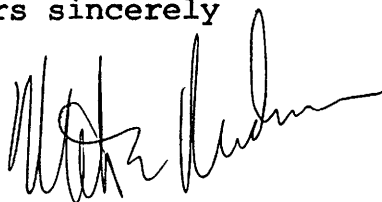
Maurice Rowdon  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth Street  
LONDON SW6 1LB

10 December 1974

Dear Maurice Rowdon

Yes, I would be very glad to meet with you. Perhaps you would give me a ring and we could arrange a convenient time.

Yours sincerely



Michael Rudman  
Artistic Director

Ideas for letter to Arts Council, Lambeth Borough, Gulbenkian Foundation, other Trusts, groups that may have funds, for assisting small theatres in London:-

The Dark and Light Theatre came into being in Brixton as a result of the efforts of the founder of the Theatre, Frank Cousins, and with the help and cooperation of the London Borough of Lambeth, whereby the Borough of Lambeth provided to F.C. a hall, known as Longfield Hall, Knatchbull Road, S.E.5. where plays, musical plays and other performing arts could be staged. The Dark and Light Theatre as the name implies, had hoped to be the first theatre of its kind, where white and black actors could work together in a constant repertory of plays and where also plays performed entirely by black actors and written by black writers, whether from this country or abroad, could be performed and seen by the local public and any other people, who felt that the programmes presented were worth travelling to Brixton for. The 1971-72 season appeared to be full of promise - four plays were performed and the D and L T was gradually becoming known by the public at large. Some critics who felt that it was their duty to criticise any work wherever it was shown travelled the three or four miles south of the river to the DLT and noticed the first efforts of this theatre company. Survival of this initial idea was short-lived. The situation as I understand it is as follows:-

Between 1972 and 74 the DLT was forced to abandon this policy of playing in Longfield Hall because the Arts Council had no machinery for giving money to new London theatres. If the DLT company was to at all survive the Arts Council stipulated that insofar as the only money available was for touring companies, that the DLT would have to undertake touring projects. The financial aid given was £5000 ~~per year~~. This £5000 was dispersed as the discretion of the Arts Council and this discretion implied that the DLT was to perform 2 plays a year, each both of which had to be toured and both of which would be given a grant of £2500. ~~Each play was to do 7 weeks touring~~ Each play was to do 7 weeks touring. The tours ran into a number of snags; I gather that the Regional Arts Association was not in a position to give the DLT any venues and the theatre had to seek a circuit through the aid of the CRC, whereby the company played in halls and community centres doing usually one performance per night per town. The rising costs of petrol, the fact that one set of handbills and posters would not do for a week, in other words if one was playing in a town per night a poster would have to be designed for each town and each hall. This kind of cost factor can never be adequately reflected in the Arts Council's grants of £2500 per play. When one takes into consideration that administrative costs, stage management, lighting, rehearsal salaries for artists, pay for artists, touring allowances all have to be taken into account from this figure of £2500 one could see that each production was massively under-financed. The consequence of such a venture as touring was that each production would run at a loss. This loss, I understand, was to some extent covered by grants from the CRC which guaranteed each performance up to a loss of £75 per playing venue. After 2 years of touring the DLT's financial situation is that it is in the region of £4000 overdrawn, or that the DLT has in the two years of touring been running at a loss of about £2000 a year. This is at a time when its maximum salaries have been £18 per week to actors and with petrol costs at between 35 and 40 pence per gallon. If inflation continues at its present rate along with the fact that Equity demands, and rightly so, a minimum of £35 per week for actors, ~~with the cost of petrol having~~ and

For the year 1974

\*2 I gather that in preceding years this grant was much less

should

doubled in the course of the last six months, ~~if~~ the DLT continue the policy demanded by the Arts Council it will have to run at a loss of between £3 and £4000 per year. Insofar as the DLT's bank is now ~~from~~ demanding that its overdraft be settled within the next months it would appear that unless an urgent injection of funds reaches the DLT or that the Arts Council decides to change its policy towards the DLT the theatre may have to go out of existence. The position is further complicated by the fact that the Lambeth Borough feels that having given the DLT the use of Longfield Hall which the Board of Directors think is worth about £2500 a year it is doing as much as it can to help the theatre, considering that no performances of any kind take place in the Hall. The Christmas pantomime is the solitary exception to this rather dreary rule. There is of course absolutely no guarantee that if the company were to abandon touring that it would receive any money from the Lambeth Borough, and this of course places the theatre on the horns of a rather tricky dilemma; and that dilemma is that to continue the Arts Council touring policy will lead to further insolvency and possible bankruptcy, and not to continue it may mean the withdrawal by the Arts Council of the only money for production that comes in to the DLT viz the £5000 per year to touring productions.

The Board of Directors, at its last meeting, decided that to continue a touring policy could lead to certain legal irregularities whereby as a company, if we were supporting an overdraft of the size we have now incurred and we did not have assets to cover that overdraft, should the bank foreclose we could be made bankrupt and the Directors could be made liable. I believe that this is only a technicality, as we are a Trust, but in strict legal terminology we could, in fact, be outside the law, and therefore the touring policy should now be abandoned. The question now remains, should the DLT now embark on a policy of presenting plays at Longfield Hall, where would funds to promote such productions come from. Inevitably any artistic director looking at the present situation would have to ask this question. What should the DLT be all about? The DLT is situated in the Borough of Lambeth. It is the only civic theatre between the sprawling ~~area~~ complex of the National Theatre and Wimbledon. It is the only civic theatre administered by black people in the whole of the U.K. It is situated in an area of London that ~~it~~ has a sizeable proportion of immigrants. When all these factors are taken into consideration there seems to be an overwhelming argument for its maintenance and survival. Indeed nearly everyone to whom I have spoken, the Arts Council, the London Borough of Lambeth personnel, the patrons of the theatre, the Board of Governors, sundry journalists, members of various other bodies, including the CRC, have all said that for the DLT to disappear would be indeed a shame. The problem is what should the DLT aim for. I believe that this company has a golden opportunity to present to the public the work of black actors and black writers to the indigenous population the new immigrant population in the catchment area south of the Thames, stretching as far as Wimbledon and perhaps Greenwich. At a recent meeting of the newly formed Afro-Asian Sub-Committee of Equity, attended by nearly a hundred Afro-Asian members, it was discovered that there are some 500 A-A members of Equity, which would lead us to believe that there are possibly another 300 or 400 actors and actresses who may not hold Equity cards. Most people concerned with the acting profession will realise that for years non-white actors have been complaining to Equity and other interested bodies that they are not being given a fair slice of the acting cake. Repertory companies all over the country do not reflect in their plays and productions that sizeable percentage of brethren who are not white, and it would seem to me that the DLT can be the one theatre in Britain at the moment ~~with~~ work of some of these actors can be seen.

where

To promote the kind of programme whereby productions could be played at this theatre and still do a revised touring schedule, and by revised I mean the kind of tour that would not incur a loss, would call for the kind of grant in the region of £40,000 per year. No one will deny that in the last 2 years the policy of the Royal Court theatre, wherein it has employed a resident West Indian playwright, Michael Abinsetts, and produced the works of 2 other West Indians, Barry Reckord and Mustapha Matura, no one will deny that such a policy has produced the kind of work that supports the idea, or rather the long-held belief in the ~~black~~ black community, that there are writers capable of attracting the public into the theatre. MM's play Play Mass had the kind of notices that were once reserved for writers of the calibre of Peter Schaffer, Peter Nichols and Alan Ayckburn. Michael Abinsetts' plays have been done at the Royal Court to fairly triumphant notices and have been reproduced in sound on BBC radio. Barry Reckord's work has been seen on BBC TV. A number of very powerful black actors have emerged - Rudolph Walker, Stefan Kalipha, Mona Hammond, Carmen Munro, Derek Griffiths, in fact a considerable role of acting a writing talent. I believe that a season of plays can be devised that would attract the local community and that a number of ~~it~~ could be persuaded to do a production <sup>with</sup> Donald Howarth has expressed the desire to do something for our theatre; ~~.....could also be persuaded to do something at the DLT.~~ I refer to <sup>other persons</sup> ~~persons~~ like Jonathan Miller, Roland Joffe, Bill Bryden, Peter Gill, David Miles, Alan Strachan, ~~and other persons~~ <sup>with whom I have worked</sup> I believe that a policy of including 2 new plays per year would be an attractive proposition to West End managements, whereby the possibility of transfer could always exist. British writers who feel that they have something to say about an immigrant population may find that with the existence of a strong black company and a good team of guest directors, that they would be able to contribute something towards that very delicate subject of race relations. The DLT, I will reiterate, is ideally placed <sup>to co-ordinate</sup> the energies of Afro-Asian actors and writers, British actors, directors and writers into a multi-racial establishment that the Borough of Lambeth, ~~although concerned with~~ all those concerned with promoting racial harmony and integration of immigrants into the indigenous population, and a council for the Arts, which was dedicated to promoting the Arts, irrespective of colour, creed and political persuasion, could feel justly proud.

A sum of money in the region of £40,000 will also allow the DLT to continue a much more comprehensive touring programme for which I believe it has established roots all over the country. We have letters from persons and organisations in various towns and cities where our tours were performed expressing delight in our work and hoping to see our work again. These letters come from all sections of the community, black and white, and to get a response to theatre from the black areas of the community is in itself a signal achievement. In an industry where audiences are falling off to inculcate the habit of theatre-going from a new section of the community should be a welcome step to be encouraged by the Arts Council and people who want to see theatre in its present form or for that matter in any form survive into the 21st century. The success of Play Mas at the Royal Court demonstrated that immigrant communities will go to the theatre if the kind of theatre that they want to see exists, and there is no reason why the DLT cannot continue in the footsteps of the Royal Court if it were allowed to do so by a more forward-looking policy by all those agencies who have expressed concern about its survival.

I have anoted the following ideas as a tentative programme for the year 1975:-

*Established  
discipline*

*other persons  
we would  
approach  
and  
and others  
that have  
expressed a  
desire to  
do something  
with  
black  
actors*

*Advice*

9.5.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr McDougall,

I have been discussing the enclosed Black play with Jane Edgeworth at the British Council in connection with the coming Lagos Festival, and as she enjoyed the script so much herself she suggested that you might be interested in seeing a copy.

She asks that if you do like it could you please get in touch with her?

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

9.5.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Codron,

I have been discussing the enclosed Black play with Jane Edgeworth at the British Council in connection with the coming Lagos Festival, and as she enjoyed the script so much herself she suggested that you might well be interested in it.

She asks that if you do like it could you get in touch with her?

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

9.5.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr McDougall,

I have been discussing the enclosed Black play with Jane Edgeworth at the British Council in connection with the coming Lagos Festival, and as she enjoyed the script so much herself she suggested that you might well be interested in producing it.

She asks that if you do like it could you get in touch with her?

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

9.5.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Hollis,

I have been discussing the enclosed Black play with Jane Edgeworth at the British Council in connection with the coming Lagos Festival, and as she enjoyed the script so much herself she suggested you might be interested in seeing a copy.

She asks that if you do like it could you get in touch with her?

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

9.5.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Havergal,

I have been discussing the enclosed Black play with Jane Edgeworth at the British Council in connection with the coming Lagos Festival, and as she enjoyed the script so much herself she suggested I send you a copy.

She asks that if you are interested in it could you get in touch with her?

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

9.5.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Miss Montagu,

I have been discussing the enclosed Black play with Jane Edgeworth at the British Council in connection with the coming Lagos Festival, and as she enjoyed reading the script so much herself she suggested that you might very well be interested in it.

She asks that if you do like it could you get in touch with her?

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

14.5.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Robertson,

I have been discussing the enclosed Black play with Jane Edgeworth at the British Council in connection with the coming Lagos Festival, and as she enjoyed the script so much herself she suggested you might be interested in seeing a copy.

She asks that if you do like it could you get in touch with her?

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

3.10.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Conville,

I have been advised by Miss Jane Edgeworth at the British Council to send you the above Black play, which earlier this year we were discussing as the British entry for the Lagos Festival.

You may also be interested in Peter Hall's reaction to the script, and I enclose his recent letter.

There is some interest at the Palace in Watford in the script and they would come into the financing if the opening there were to be the basis of a tour.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

3.10.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Sir Bernard,

I am sending you the above Black play on the advice of Miss Jane Edgeworth at the British Council with whom I have been discussing it in connection with the British entry for the Lagos Festival.

I recently sent it to the National Theatre, and you may be interested in Peter Hall's reaction. I enclose a copy of his letter.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

With Compliments



**Harbottle & Lewis**  
Solicitors

34 South Molton Street  
London W1Y 2BP

---

TO AWAIT RETURN  
Maurice Rowdon, Esq.,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London SW6 1 LB.

Telephone: 01. 629 7633  
Cables: Harlex London W1  
Telex: 22233

Our reference

Your reference

# Prospect Theatre Company



TOBY ROBERTSON director

1/6 FALCONBERG COURT LONDON W1V 5DG  
Tel: 01-437 7365/6 Grams: PROSCO LONDON

SP/ML

20th September, 1976.

M. P. Gibbs, Esq.,  
Harbottle & Lewis,  
34 South Molton Street,  
London, W1.

Dear Mr. Gibbs,

Thank you for your letter of 26th August. Unfortunately, I cannot find any record in the book of CHRISTOPHE by Maurice Rowden ever being received.

I would be very grateful if you could find out what date it was sent, and if an acknowledgement was ever received from this office by either Maurice Rowden or yourself. If you did receive acknowledgement then the mistake is ours.

As you know I only arrived at Prospect in July, but understand that during the summer all outstanding plays were read and returned, and I am sorry that Maurice's was not amongst them.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Phillips,  
ADMINISTRATOR.

G/jak  
SP/ML

Stephen Phillips, Esq.,  
Administrator,  
Prospect Theatre Company,  
1/6 Falconberg Court,  
London W1V 5DG.

21st September 1976

Dear Mr. Phillips,

Maurice Rowdon, Esq.

Thank you for your letter of the 20th September and I have referred this to Maurice Rowdon. I think he is abroad at the moment but no doubt he will get in touch with you on his return.

Yours sincerely,

Mark P. Gibbs

bcc: Maurice Rowdon, Esq. (w/enc)

C  
O  
P  
Y

11.11.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Sir Bernard,

On 3 October last I sent you a copy of the above Black play, on the advice of the Head of Drama at the British Council, with whom I had been discussing it as the possible British entry for the Lagos Festival. I also enclosed a letter from Peter Hall about the play which I thought might interest you.

I am just checking that the script and enclosure reached you, as we are finding recently that scripts can get lost in the post.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

possible again after a forced landing. Nothing crippled a dog's confidence so much as a mistake which the teacher allows himself to feel dismay at.

Dorothy was careful, in this first lesson without voice, not to calculate the answers in her own head before Elke gave them. The telepathy-principle had fixed itself in Dorothy's mind, through her reading, as the chief armament used by the enemies of animal-intelligence.

11.11.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Conville,

On 3 October last I sent you, on the advice of Miss Jane Edgeworth at the British Council, the above Black play, enclosing a copy of a letter from Peter Hall which I thought might interest you.

I am just checking that the script and enclosures arrived, as we are finding recently that sometimes things don't get there.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

Why? Who did Eeko do?

2

4 ~~A~~

2 ~~O~~ Wrong!

4 A

2 O → OPEN!

1 f Did Eeko open the door? YES

Why did you hit the poodle

6 N

13 ~~F~~

11 g

17 t

→ Night anters kaa  
N. chit ande. kaha

4 a

Can do nothing else

6 n

17 t

Do you know what you did  
to Mami? and how much pain  
you caused to the poodle? and  
to Mami.

10 e

3 r

16 ~~S~~ S

14 K

4 a

6 n

Eddie Kulukundis  
Knightsbridge

6.11.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Kulukundis,

I have been discussing the above Black script with the British Council in connection with the British entry for the Lagos Festival, and a subsequent African tour.

On the suggestion of the Head of Drama there we also sent it in September to the National Theatre, and I thought you might be interested to see copies of the letters from Peter Hall and Lord Birkett, explaining their unenviable situation.

Today I happened to be talking to Denys Becher about an American Black actor of his for the title role, and it was he who suggested you might well be interested in seeing this play.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

6.11.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Chardet,

I think I overlooked to send you copies of the letters from Peter Hall and Lord Birkett with the above script.

I enclose them now.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

3.11.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Stephen,

In view of the money-shortage, and on the advice again of the British Council, we sent the above play to the National Theatre, and I wondered if you would be interested in seeing two of their letters. They can't afford it either.

I think the idea of a tour starting from your theatre is still valid and interesting. It would be easy enough to call up money, or at least possible, if a white star could be involved. This is always the dilemma I have to face in the end.

Yours,

Maurice Rowdon

24.11.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Witt,

I have been discussing the above Black script with the British Council in connection with the British entry for the Lagos Festival, and a subsequent African tour.

On their suggestion we sent it in September to the National Theatre, and I'm sure neither Peter Hall nor Lord Birkett would mind me sending you photostats of their letters, to give you an idea of the kind of play it is.

It has to be a powerful atmospheric evening, with the drums and the Voodoo ritual getting inside people. Morgan Fisher of the Mott the Hoople group has composed for me a powerful electronic sound backup for the show.

I happened to be talking to Denys Becher this evening about an American Black actor of his for the title role, and it was he who suggested you might be interested to see a copy.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

29.11.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Loewenstein,

I have been discussing the enclosed Black script with the British Council in connection with the Lagos Festival, should it come off, and a subsequent African tour. Jane Edgeworth there suggested you might be interested in seeing a copy for the Roundhouse.

We tried the National Theatre recently and I'm sure neither Peter Hall nor Lord Birkett would mind me sending you copies of their letters to give you a preliminary idea of the play.

Its spectacular nature puts it beyond the means of our own company here but if the venue was right, and maybe a white star could be included, I think my partner, a money-broker experienced in theatre-investment, would call in other investors.

The Mott the Hoople group are composing a rather extraordinary electronic score which could supplement the two drums onstage, and generate the right excitement. My Black friends are always complaining that a serious straight-on history of their race is never given---this is why I'm resisting turning this into a musical, which it could easily be.

In Germany I found, after long searching, a Black American actor capable of playing the lead. Nobody in this country could (wild statement I'm prepared to wager on).

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

# knightsbridge

THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS LIMITED

11 Goodwin's Court, London WC2 N411 01 836 7517/8

11 December 1975

Maurice Rowdon Esq  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth St  
LONDON SW6

Dear Mr Rowdon

RE: CHRISTOPHE

Thank you very much for sending us the above script, but I fear it is not really one for us.

I think possibly this is something that would be far better mounted in the States as I think there are many more black actors who have the experience for this type of production; I may be wrong.

I wish you every success with the project.

Yours sincerely

  
EDDIE KULUKUNDIS

Enc.

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Secretary:  
F.W. Adair F.C.I.S.

Maurice Rowdon, Esq., 11th November, 1975.  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London SW6 1LB

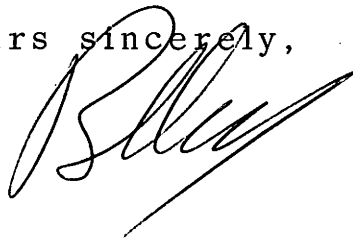
Dear Mr. Rowdon,

'Christophe'

Thank you for your letter of the 4th November with reference to the above, but after careful consideration we feel that the subject matter is something which we cannot interest ourselves in, so do hope you understand.

Do you wish us to post the script to you or would you prefer to collect it from this office. Perhaps you would give my secretary a ring and let her know.

Yours sincerely,



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2.12.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Loewenstein,

I have been discussing the enclosed Black script with the British Council in connection with the Lagos Festival, should it come off, and a subsequent African tour. Jane Edgeworth suggested you might be interested in seeing a copy for the Roundhouse.

We tried the National Theatre recently and I'm sure neither Peter Hall nor Lord Birkett would mind me sending you copies of their letters to give you a preliminary idea of the play.

Its spectacular nature puts it beyond the means of our own company here but if the venue was right, and maybe a white star could be included, I think my partner, a money-broker with experience of theatre-investment, would call in other investors.

The Mott the Hoople group are composing a rather extraordinary electronic score which could supplement the drums onstage and generate the right excitement.

In Germany I found, after long searching, a Black American actor capable of playing the lead. He should be getting an Equity card here soon.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

2.12.1975

THEATRE BOARD ADS

Dear Ann,

I wonder if it would be possible for you to insert the following ad in the Theatre Board as soon as possible:

Guitarist-composer, dedicated, non-commercial, with classical and jazz experience (and Equity card) required for new theatre production. Contact (mornings) 01.385.4003.

With thanks and best wishes

Yours,

Maurice Rowdon

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Director  
Deputy Director  
General Administrator

Sir Max Rayne  
Peter Hall  
Michael Birkett  
Peter Stevens

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The National Theatre

Maurice Rowdon Esq  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth Street  
LONDON SW6 1LB

1st September 1975

Dear Mr Rowdon

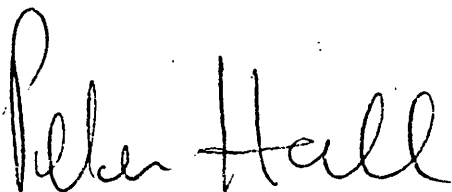
I have now had a chance to examine your text of CHRISTOPHE, which I found fascinating.

I think the play rings of truth and that the characters are drawn with clarity and compassion. The story line is strong and important, and the part of 'Christophe' would provide a black actor with an opportunity for a great tour-de-force performance. The background is colourful, exciting and extravagant.

However, having said that, I don't think that at the moment it is one for us. In our current state of flux we do not have the flexibility which would be required to enable us to incorporate this particular piece into our repertoire.

However it was very good of you to let me see your script, and I am returning it herewith for safe keeping. I wish you every success with it.

Best wishes  
Yours sincerely



PETER HALL

Vienna.

25.3.1975

Dear Miss Edgeworth,

We've been invited by the Venetian Biennale to submit a programme for their theatre side this year, and I wonder if we could discuss the possibility of your making a contribution towards the production costs. I shall see that the scripts are two- or three-handers and will not be costly. May I get in touch with you after Easter on this, when I'm back in England?

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

# Portslade Productions Ltd.



5 Tamworth Street London SW6 1LB Tel: 01.385 4003

Directors: Maurice Rowdon and Nicholas Kimber

21.3.1975

SGT. PEPPER

Dear Mr Grabowski,

I enclose a letter I wrote today to Bob Swash Ltd here in London, after our negotiations for the rights of this musical. Could you forward a letter to us in which you ask us to negotiate on your behalf for the purchase of these rights, for our files? We're glad to have been of assistance to you.

Ronnie tells me that we may be meeting you at Bochum over Easter to discuss our other projects and to see your new show, and we are very much looking forward to this.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

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OUR REF. 1486B/AGW/AA

19th February, 1975

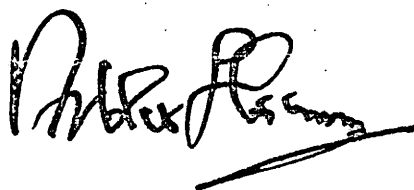
Mark Gibbs, Esq.,  
Messrs. Harbottle & Lewis,  
34, South Molton Street,  
London,  
W1Y 2BP.

Dear Mr. Gibbs,

Maurice Rowdon

Thank you for your letter of 17th February. We have rather lost touch with Mr. Rowdon and I shall be grateful if you can give me a current address to which I could write. Meanwhile, I can say that we have seen no financial records of Portslade Productions Limited. The only matter with which we have been concerned in that connection is the registration of the company for V.A.T. purposes.

Yours sincerely,



Arthur G. Warne.

25.2.1975

Dear T-Bone,

I'm sorry you felt you didn't want your plays read by others than Maurice Rowdon. He feels that by passing plays on to myself and his other partners they can be assessed in a way that a White man would not always be able to. I don't think your approach is professional and it causes a lot of unnecessary nuisance, when the only question for us---and it should be the same for you---is getting the stuff on the stage.

All the best to you,

Ronnie Lee

20.2.1975

Dear Mike Ockrent,

I believe Brendan Donnison spoke to you about the possibility of slots for us at the Traverse, and you suggested I should write to you. I am doing a Black Double Bill (that is, negro) with Michael Rudman at Hampstead---a couple of American plays, two handers--- is he likes my choice of the second. I would suggest bringing up to you a mixed bill (I mean Black and White), one of these two-handers together with a three-hander of mine called TICK TICK which is where Brendan Donnison comes in. I have a full-length three-hander called ESKIMO TRANCE which has had two productions and I would like to re-cast, which could perhaps be run in the same slot or later. What I would ideally like would be an arrangement with you whereby the company I am forming, called THE FIVE PAST TWELVE COMPANY, producing 'crisis' plays of a certain type, could get a showing rather than one or two plays as such. I imagine we couldn't lean on you for more than running costs or guarantee.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

# Portslade Productions Ltd.



5 Tamworth Street London SW6 1LB Tel: 01.385 4003

Directors: Maurice Rowdon and Nicholas Kimber

Herrn Vincenz Grabowski  
Schweizer Tournée-Theater  
BASEL  
Malzgasse 8

Sehr geehrter Herr Grabowski,

Seit ich Deutschland und Ihre "Hair" Produktion verlassen habe habe ich hier in England mit grossem Erfolg in verschiedenen Theaterstücken gearbeitet. Neuerdings bin ich Co-Director in Portslade Productions Ltd., einem Theaterunternehmen, welches sich auf 2 bis 4 Personenstücke spezialisiert. Wir planen Tournées in Deutschland, Holland, Belgien, Frankreich, etc.

Ich erzählte meinen beiden Partnern, Mr. Maurice Rowdon (der Besitzer der Firma) und Miss June Baden-Semper über unsere Zusammenarbeit, und insbesondere über Ihre grossangelegten Arbeitsmethoden in Bereiche des erfolgreichen Tournée-Theaterunternehmens, welche meine Partner sehr beeindruckten.

Wir würden gerne unsere erste Kontinentale Produktion in der Schweiz eröffnen, wir dachten dabei sechs grössere schweizer Städte zu bespielen. Unsere Stücke sind alle in englischer Sprache, alles neue Stücke - kurz erstklassiges Theater.

Mr. Rowdon ist ein bekannter Bühnenautor ("Mahler", "Eskimo Trance") und Schriftsteller; er schrieb unter anderen Stücke die allerhöchstens 2 bis 4 Personen erfordern und welche Mindestanforderungen an Produktionsaufwand benötigen (Kostüme, Requisiten, Bühnenbild, etc.) Da Sie und Ihr Bruder offensichtlich das grösste Tournée-Theaterunternehmen in Europa sind, d.h. sie können die bestmöglichen Arbeitsbedingungen bieten, würden wir gerne mit Ihnen zusammenarbeiten. Somit könnten Sie mit englischsprachigem Theater einer immer grösser werdenden Nachfrage auf den Kontinent Rechnung tragen.

Die Stücke wie ich schon anführte sind alle samt kleinere Produktionen für die Tournées. Der Name des bestehenden Schauspielerensembles ist "THE FIVE PAST TWELVE COMPANY" (in Deutsch etwa: "Das Fünf Nach Zwölf Ensemble") Wir spielen auch Stücke von Autoren mit schwarzer Hautfarbe.

Ich würde Sie gerne anfang März entweder in Basel oder in Pisa (Italien) treffen, wo Mr. Rowdon's Schwiegervater zu Hause ist, Vielleicht kennen Sie ihn, Herrn Gottfried Bermann-Fischer von Fischer Verlag? Wir können Sie dort als Gast herzlich empfangen um unsere Arbeitsmöglichkeiten zu erörtern. Natürlich können Sie auch bei Herrn Rowdon in London zu Gast sein. Es gibt noch andere interessante Projekte, die wir am besten mündlich erörtern sollten.

Ich freue mich auf ein baldiges Wiedersehen.

herzliche Grüsse

Ihr

Ronnie Lee Williams

# Portslade

## Productions Ltd.



5 Tamworth Street London SW6 1LB Tel: 01.385 4003

Directors: Maurice Rowdon and Nicholas Kimber

P.S. Ich würde Sie gerne telephonisch erreichen um ein  
baldmögliches Zusammentreffen festzulegen. Ab den 6 März  
bin Ich in Italien.

Bitte senden Sie mir Ihre neue Telephonnummer an die  
Portsladeproduction. (Briefkopf) Laut Auskunftsermittlungen  
sind sie im Telephonguch nicht angeführt, und somit von  
London nicht erreichbar!!!?

Vielen Dank

**Harbottle & Lewis**  
Solicitors

34 South Molton Street  
London W1Y 2BP

Telephone: 01. 629 7633  
Cables: Harlex London W1  
Telex: 22233

Our reference G:ab

Your reference

Maurice Rowdon Esq.,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London, S.W6.

G. Laurence Harbottle  
J. B. Stutter  
R. S. Aikin  
James C. G. Crichton  
Alan J. Patten  
H. J. Beach  
Mark P. Gibbs  
R. W. Lee  
F. L. Caldwell

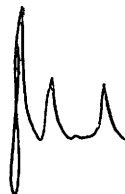
21st February, 1975.

Dear Maurice,

I enclose a copy of the letter I have received from Arthur Warne. Clearly you now need to write to him and give instructions for him to proceed with the preparation of accounts, for which he will need all the financial details and records that you have.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Gibbs



25.2.1975

Dear Mr Warne,

Mark Gibbs of Harbottle and Lewis has been in touch with me. I am preparing the financial details and records of our MAHLER production which has been the company's only activity so far, and I wonder if you would be good enough to prepare the accounts on the basis of these when you receive them.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

24.2.1975

Dear Miss Edgeworth,

It was a pleasure meeting you the other day, and I enclose a copy of the Black play we talked about called CHRISTOPHE. It will be as multi-medial a production as the money available allows.

As far as this company is concerned, CHRISTOPHE will be in the context of a number of other Black productions under the banner of a live company we are forming now called THE FIVE PAST TWELVE COMPANY. This is designed for the production of small-cast plays by both Black and White authors, with actors doubling up in a complete repertoire of three or four evenings. All the plays will be 'human crisis' plays, as the title of the company denotes. Our first Black production will be a double bill of two-handers in association with Michael Rudman at the Hampstead Theatre Club, and later a full-length play at the ICA. Slots are being offered us at the Traverse and at the Studio theatre in Sheffield.

One of our principal aims is to tour our productions on the Continent, and for this purpose we shall next week be meeting a number of touring managers on that side.

We would greatly appreciate suggestions of any kind, and help in finding smaller venues in Belgium, France and Holland, which the FIVE PAST TWELVE COMPANY could tour. One of our directors worked with Germany's biggest touring managers for some years, so we are OK in that area.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

## Edinburgh International Festival



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Festival Director Peter Diamand CBE LLD

WT/ADP/F

19th February 1975

Maurice Rowdon Esq  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth Street  
London SW6 1LB

Dear Mr Rowdon

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to read your play "Christophe", which we are now returning to you. We enjoyed it very much.

Plans for the Festival however are now well advanced, and it is not possible to add to our arrangements at this stage.

For your information, last year we read another play about "Christophe" which covered very similar ground. It was subsequently produced by a regional theatre in the USA, with Clayton Corbin in the lead.

I hope that you too will be successful in your efforts to have your play produced.

With all good wishes

Yours sincerely

William Thomley  
artistic assistant

20.2.1975

Dear Dick Mayo,

This is just to say that I'll be at the following address from March 1 to March 4/5, but anything you want to say if I don't happen to be there will be conveyed to me at home:

Casa Fischer  
Pieve di Camaiore  
(Lucca)  
Tel: 0584/689688

From March 4/5 I shall be at home:

Casa Campardi  
San Gimignano  
(Siena)  
Tel: 0577/940739

I shall only be in Italy until March 15th, then back here. So I look forward to meeting you, probably in Rome. The most experienced film entrepreneur I know always tells me, 'If you want to lose a friend ask him to put money into a film'. With that caution up front----!

Yours,

Maurice Rowdon

Miss Mandy Lewis  
Community Relations Commission  
15/16 Bedford Street  
LONDON  
WC2E 9HX

20.2.1975

Dear Miss Lewis,

Thank you for your letter of the 30th January.

I feel that to approach you for the financing of a large-cast show like CHRISTOPHE, however educational its content, would not be quite realistic. I would be glad to know your suggestions on this---as to whether, for instance, you could offer some guarantee against loss at the box office.

We are in process of forming a live company called THE FIVE PAST TWELVE COMPANY which I do think comes much more into your field of activities, since it involves small-cast plays and modest venues. Our first production will be a Black Double Bill at the Hampstead Theatre Club which we are planning with Michael Rudman, involving a cast of only four people. We are also in negotiation with the Traverse in Edinburgh, The Studio at Sheffield and The Other Place at Stratford for touring this. Together with the ICA we shall be setting up a full-length play for their Black Festival in June, towards which they will be giving us £250. We would appreciate the possibility of getting these productions off the ground with the help of a grant from you. We estimate that we shall need at least two thousand pounds.

Yours sincerely,

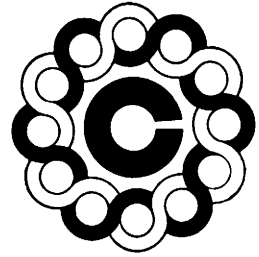
Maurice Rowdon

DR JAN DeBLIECK  
OOSTDUINLAAN 68  
THE HAGUE  
HOLLAND

010 31 70 242483

**Community Relations Commission**

15/16 BEDFORD STREET LONDON WC2E 9HX  
01-836 3545



30 January 1975

Mr Maurice Rowdon  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth Street  
London SW6 ILB

Dear Mr Rowdon

I have just discovered your letter of 1 November during an attempt to clear my desk, and must apologise that this has never been answered.

I would be interested to know if you are still planning the production of "Christophe" with the Dark & Light Theatre, or if the recent changes at the Theatre have held this up.

Yours sincerely

*Mandy Lewis*  
MANDY LEWIS - Grants Officer  
ML/bg

Chairman Sir Max Rayne  
Director Peter Hall  
Deputy Director Michael Birkett  
General Administrator Peter Stevens

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10a Aquinas Street  
London SE1 8AE

Telephone 01 928 2033  
Cables/Telegrams Thenat London SE1

**The National Theatre**

Maurice Rowdon Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5, Tamworth Street,  
London SW6 1LB

6 February 1975

Dear Maurice,

Thanks for sending the informal memorandum about The Black Festival. You certainly are thinking big. There are a number of points I would like to discuss with you, which I'd rather do face to face than through a letter. Perhaps you would give me a ring and we could meet again.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



MICHAEL KUSTOW  
Associate Director  
(Projects/Visitors)



# IMPERIAL GROUP LIMITED

Imperial House 1 Grosvenor Place London SW1X 7HB  
Telephone 01-235 7010 Telex 263732 Telegrams Impsgroup London SW1

Group Public Affairs Department

J

21st January, 1975.

Maurice Rowdon Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London SW6 1LB.

Dear Mr. Rowdon,

I refer to your letter of 16th January. I have spoken to our Tobacco Division, who would be the only people likely to be interested in promoting the two events which you mentioned to me.

Unfortunately, they have now told me that they would not be able to help in promoting either of these events and I regret that there seems to be little value in a meeting.

Yours sincerely,



G. W. McKelvie  
Manager

2.2.1975

Dear Michael,

Here are two copies of the informal memorandum we talked about. My two Black partners are June Baden-Semper (West Indies) and Ronald L. Williams (USA). In association with us, and sitting in on some of our meetings, is Mrs Jocelyn Barrow-Downer OBE (West Indies), whom I mention at the end of the memo.

I say in the memo that the Dark and Light Theatre will soon be known as The Black Theatre of Brixton--- this is jumping it---we have to be careful of Charity Commission hassles here. Things down there are in a state of necessary embryonic disarray but as long as the members of the Board don't go mad simultaneously it will be allright in the end.

In the memo we mention a few people as 'advisers'. These are people we know would help us, but they are not aware of this project and we feel as few people as possible should be at the moment.

Yours,

Maurice Rowdon

S.A.S. La Princesse Grace  
Monaco

26.1.1975

Your Serene Highness,

We are setting up a big-cast Black play of mine called CHRISTOPHE IS KING, set in modern Haiti and presenting the history of King Henri Christophe and his extraordinary Court at the time of George 111.

For some time we have been toying with the attractive idea of premiering it in Monte Carlo. I myself have just finished a book on Diaghilev and know of his efforts to make your city a centre of the arts.

I am writing to ask you whether we could have your patronage and help in this, and also perhaps later (in the summer of 1976) in a Black Theatre Festival which we and the National Theatre here are about to prepare, the first of its kind in Europe, to take place on the newly built South Bank site next to the Festival Hall.

With deepest respects,

Maurice Rowdon

15.1.1975

Dear Nicholas,

I wonder if we could fix up a meeting very soon together with John Underwood and Mark Gibbs of Harbottle and Lewis the theatrical lawyers. As Portslade Productions enters various commitments Mark is worried about our constitution, which he describes as one of the most remarkable documents he has ever seen. There are so many things to be cleared up, not least among them the clauses about my copyright. We are having a separate conference with my agents the IFA next week.

I am setting up the Black play of mine I gave you after MAHLER, and working closely with two Black associates whom I would like to draw into the company. You may feel you want to withdraw from the whole thing and if you do this is your chance but it would be so sad now that we are getting going, and you are such a good person to have. We are also setting up, under the Portslade banner, a couple of Black plays (not mine) at the Hampstead Theatre Club. And the National theatre has asked me to prepare an international Black festival to celebrate the opening of their new site on the South Bank in 1976. I would like you to keep mum about this last for the time being, as I fear Black politics starting before we are ready for them.

Mark Gibbs and I are on the Board of the country's only black theatre, the Dark and Light Theatre, which I am anxious to revitalise. I have been discussing its future with the major subsidised theatres, and Portslade generally comes into it somewhere. So we do need to sit down and thrash out a new constitution that copes with the new members in some way (not necessarily giving them equal status), and defines your part clearly.

Please do give me a call on this, it is most urgent.

Yours ever,

Miss Ann Garneau  
Cultural Section  
Canada House  
Trafalgar Square  
London  
SW 1

15.1.1975

Dear Ann Garneau,

This is just to thank you for your interest in our Black show CHRISTOPHE IS KING. I did write to David Mirvish. And I shall keep you informed of any developments.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

16.1.1975

BLACK DOUBLE BILL

Dear Michael,

I agree we should have a couple of Shannon plays, if only because T-Bone Wilson hasn't responded to my enquiry about his play, or rather Oscar Abrams hasn't on his behalf. I'm not anxious to get into W. Indian politics---but it's a pity for Wilson, who possibly doesn't even know about the enquiry.

Oscar Loewenstein told me he had a pile of Shannon plays which Donald Howarth had given him and which he thought the Court wouldn't want to produce. I shall have to write to Donald to get hold of these, and will do that, and then get in touch with you again.

Yours,

Maurice Rowdon

REMEMBER  
to use the  
POSTCARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



Maurice Rowdon, Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London SW6

**Oxford Playhouse Company**  
**12 BEAUMONT STREET**  
**OXFORD, OX1 2LW**

The Oxford Playhouse Company acknowledges  
receipt of your script:

CHRISTOPHER

MIKE SPARROW (produces & presents Breakthrough)

BBC Radio London 493 5401  
home 586 1601

GLORIA TAYLOR  
13 Duke St. St. James's  
SW1  
839 7578

Both will know me as Nancy!

2<sup>nd</sup>.11.1975

Dear Robin,

It looks as if this company is going to rationalise itself and my lawyer Harbottle and Lewis are getting together with Nicholas Kimber's lawyer to work out a new constitution. The original one says I must forfeit my author's royalty, and this made it impossible to ask you to represent me in the theatre. Effectively the copyright was not for me to play with.

The British Council who would like to see my CHRISTOPHE touring Africa have been doing a lot to get it on with one of the big companies. I enclose a couple of letters, from Peter Hall and Lord Birkett, about the script. I have it with Trevor Nunn at the moment. I thought I would keep you in touch with all this in case I suddenly have to ask you to make a contract. And any new ideas you have would be useful.

Yours ever,

Maurice Rowdon

2<sup>nd</sup>.11.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Jane,

I did send a copy to Trevor Nunn at RSC, together with photostats of the letters from Peter Hall and Birkett. Have you a way of breathing down his neck gently so that it tickles but doesn't get under his skin? See you soon!

Yours ever,

Maurice Rowdon

**Harbottle & Lewis**  
Solicitors

34 South Molton Street  
London W1Y 2BP

Telephone: 01. 629 7633  
Cables: Harlex London W1  
Telex: 22233

Our reference G:mb  
Your reference

J Underwood Esq  
Messrs Winckworth and Pemberton  
41-43 Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 3LH

G. Laurence Harbottle  
J. B. Stutter  
R. S. Aikin  
James C. G. Crichton  
Alan J. Patten  
H. J. Beach  
Mark P. Gibbs  
R. W. Lee  
F. L. Caldwell  
M. H. D. Bowler  
R. A. Storer

20th November 1975

Dear Mr. Underwood,

Re: Maurice Rowdon

Further to our telephone conversation this afternoon, I am committing my thoughts immediately to paper, as at last we seem to be getting somewhere.

We agreed, did we not, that the old contracts really have to be disregarded, for no-one could suggest that Maurice Rowdon was inextricably bound in his activities as a writer to Portslade, any more than one could suggest that your client could only invest in that company.

Portslade exists, a loss exists within it, and there may be circumstances in which our respective clients may be able to agree on plans for using the company, and hopefully the loss. The equality of shareholding and representation on the Board should presumably therefore be maintained.

Maurice Rowdon would say that if he wrote a new play, he would, unless he were writing it on a commission for any third party, show it first to Portslade as a potential production company. That would mean that he and your client would have to sit down with the play and decide within a specified number of weeks, whether or not they could agree a plan for a Portslade production for the play. Part of that agreement would be the terms upon which Portslade would acquire the rights from Mr. Rowdon as a writer, including terms for payment of royalties to him. Likewise, it would be necessary to decide the terms upon which your client would be prepared to invest money in the production fund. If agreement on all these points was reached, Portslade would have for itself an activity. If agreement is not reached, then obviously Mr. Rowdon's agents will try and find a market for his work elsewhere.

If all this is agreed in principle, then surely a simple exchange of letters could clarify the situation once and for all.

I should be most grateful for a reply as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Gibbs

Miss Jane Watson

Drama Panel

Greater London Arts Association

25/31 Tavistock Place

London

1.11.1974

W.C.1.

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Miss Watson,

I wonder if you would consider making a special grant for the production of a largely black play of mine dealing with the 'emperor of Haiti', Christophe. I am preparing this production with the Dark and Light Theatre (Frank Cousins), who will be responsible for casting and presenting the play. The cast is very large by present standards: together with the 'voodoo group' and drummers, it will amount to twenty or thirty. The expense will be very great, even if we launch it in the most modest manner. Our aim is to bring black theatre in England to the notice of theatre-going people in London by taking it to a recognised venue like the Mermaid or Greenwich. At present the Dark and Light Theatre, hardly able to hold itself together, is touring small halls: I was present at one of their performances at West Norbury last week and heard people express surprise at the professional level. There should of course be no surprise, and that theatre should take its place side by side with the other inner fringe theatres. The Dark and Light Theatre at present receives no subsidy from the Arts Council, only a guarantee of £2500 on each production, and two productions are allowed each year. Frank Cousins and I think that Christophe, with its sprinkling of white characters, and its presentation of black history in a contemporary Haitian context, would be an excellent medium for the first step in the right direction. I discussed this at an early stage last year with Sam Wanamaker, and it was indeed he who suggested that I contact the Dark and Light Theatre.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

29.11.1974

RE: RONALD WILLIAMS, ACTOR

Dear Miss Arnold,

I believe Mr Ronald Williams's permission to remain in this country is expiring at the end of this month.

The above company is planning a stage production of a spectacular black play called CHRISTOPHE, and I am very much hoping that Williams will be taking the lead in this. We have been looking for an actor to play this exacting role for something like four years, and we feel we have now found the right man. This does not mean that there are not, among the five hundred black actors in London holding Equity cards, one or two who could manage the part adequately. It simply means that only Mr Williams seems to us---from the point of view of his remarkable technique and personality on stage, and not least for his ability to get on with English people at all levels---the perfect man for that particular role.

Our difficulty is that a theatrical production company does not usually trade between productions. Money comes in from investors only at the start of a production, and it would indeed be illegal to start trading when incapable of doing so.

Our wish is to have Mr Williams here for daily talks and consultations and research until the production is mounted, which should be in between one and three months' time. We would then pay him retrospectively for this period. He has I believe funds of his own and can survive this period very adequately. His residence in this country is a choice and not a necessity: it is the choice between earning something like ten percent of what he could earn in Germany and has indeed earned there for some years past. My problem is how to fill in the form APPLICATION TO EMPLOY AN OVERSEAS WORKER without stipulating salary etc.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

# Portslade Productions Ltd.



5 Tamworth Street London SW6 1LB Tel: 01.385 4003

Directors: Maurice Rowdon and Nicholas Kimber

7.12.1974

## BLACK THEATRE

Dear Michael Kustow,

Thank you for being so positive and helpful in the matter of the Dark and Light Theatre which we discussed last week.

This letter is about the Festival project you mentioned to me---I began to realise only when walking away what exactly this could mean, and last night I got together with my two associates for Black Theatre and we explored possibilities that would make of such a project one of the most remarkable things that has happened to the black artistic world in a white country.

White as it is, I don't think this country is in a position to finance such a project on the high professional (and international) level it has to be. To my mind it must be underwritten from other sources than state-subsidy ones, and in such a way that if at the last moment the new National Theatre was not ready the project could survive. Underwriting it would not, I think, be difficult. May I prepare you an informal memorandum outlining not only the nature of the festival as we see it, but the nature of the financing?

I am sure you agree that two kinds of politics have to be avoided---violent racialism in the actual festival presentations, and the internal kind of politics that bedevils black acting in this country. One black festival has already foundered here through not being master-minded from the beginning, but left to a committee which broke up into jealous factions. Thankfully for my own activities, my two associates, both of them black, are devoted to Black Theatre because they're devoted to theatre.

We feel a festival on this scale should be associated with a major black charity.

For myself, quite apart from all this, I am anxious to get across the idea that the black contribution is an urgent need for US---for our thought, our habits, not to say our theatre. I really and truly believe that we need them rather more than they need us, at this point.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

Company Reg No. 51236 Reg Office 24 Castle Street Edinburgh 2  
Registered as Theatrical Employers

7.12.1974

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Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

25.11.1974

THE DARK AND LIGHT THEATRE

Dear Mr Brierley,

I am on the new board of the Dark and Light Theatre, London's main permanent black company, and we are very much concerned with giving the company a completely new orientation. It was my suggestion that we try and interest the major subsidised theatres in taking productions from the newly constituted Black Theatre, while rehearsals would continue to take place at our Brixton headquarters, so that more than one group could be in production at the same time. You may be aware that there are about a thousand black actors and actresses in London, five hundred of them holding Equity cards. I am in discussion at the moment with the National Theatre, who want to cooperate as much as possible, and I wonder if you and I could meet, to the same end.

Yours sincerely,

Naurice Rowdon

4.12.1974

THE DARK AND LIGHT THEATRE

Dear Mr Rudman,

I am on the new board of the Dark and Light Theatre, London's main permanent black company, and we are very much concerned with giving the company a completely new look. It was my suggestion that we try and interest the major theatres in taking productions from the newly constituted Black Theatre, while rehearsals would continue to take place at our Brixton headquarters, so that more than one group could be in production at the same time. I am in discussion with the National and the RSC, who want to cooperate as much as possible, and I wonder if you and I could meet, to the same end.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

eye to the Baldwin site than ②.

In the Hampstead and RSC  
in the Black festival, we  
on safe morning found.

(1)

Henry Moore wd arrange Liverpool  
I am sure with the sculptor side -  
my wife is a sculptress - they are  
good friends.

A letter to Wilson - then local MP -  
to Alex Lyons.

I think the Community Relations  
Commission wd be expected to get off  
some way to free the administration  
from. But I am told that this work  
is not in the hands of the right people  
& this wd. be money taken + political.

The British would need, like, say,  
New Yorker, of 'heavy' American  
political drama, speeches etc. If we  
visited anyone to speak, of course it

kids to come. But don't think I'm  
disapproving---I mean of the war destiny.  
(Giving her a clear look) ~~The only thing~~  
~~is I realise it's my destiny too. War~~  
~~goes on to make men rich. It can make~~  
~~me rich too.~~ That we <sup>for a 15</sup> make  
men rich. It can make me rich too.

# RSC



**ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY**  
**Trevor Nunn** *Artistic Director and Chief Executive*  
*Direction*  
Peggy Ashcroft Peter Brook Trevor Nunn  
*Consultant Directors* Peter Daubeny Peter Hall

## Royal Shakespeare Theatre

Stratford-upon-Avon Warwickshire CV37 6BB

Incorporated under Royal Charter Patron Her Majesty the Queen  
President The Earl of Harewood  
Chairman Sir George Farmer Vice-Chairman Dennis L Flower

Telephone: Stratford-upon-Avon (0789) 3693  
Box Office Telephone: Stratford-upon-Avon (0789) 2271

## Aldwych Theatre

London WC2B 4DF

Telephone: (01) 836 1446  
Box Office Telephone: (01) 836 6404

Please reply to Stratford address

Maurice Rowdon, Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London, SW6 1LB

3rd December, 1974.

Dear Mr. Rowdon,

Many thanks for your letter dated 25th November.

I shall be very happy to meet you, and I will ask my secretary to give you a ring to fix a time and place.

Yours sincerely,

DAVID BRIERLEY  
General Manager.

2.12.1974

THE DARK AND LIGHT THEATRE

Dear Corinne Rodriguez,

The new board of the Dark and Light Theatre, of which I am a member, is very much concerned with giving the company a completely new look. It is my plan to try and interest the major subsidised theatres in London in taking productions from the newly constituted black theatre, while rehearsals and some previews would continue to take place at our Brixton headquarters. You may be aware that there are about a thousand black actors and actresses in London, five hundred of them holding Equity cards. I wonder if you and I could meet, to start the discussion off.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

# Portslade Productions Ltd.



5 Tamworth Street London SW6 1LB Tel: 01.385 4003

Directors: Maurice Rowdon and Nicholas Kimber

30.11.1974

## THE DARK AND LIGHT THEATRE

Dear Clive Tempest,

As a member of the Board of the Dark and Light Theatre I want to keep you informed of what---with the mandate of the Board---I am doing to give the theatre a new look. My efforts are designed to parallel those of Norman Beaton, with whom I am in close touch all the time. I am getting discussions going with the major subsidised theatres in the hope that they will leave slots open for black productions which can be rehearsed at our Brixton headquarters before entering into their repertory and thus benefiting from their grants. My plan is conceived on the basis of the hunch that little or no extra money will be available from the Arts Council next year, so that the only hope for Black Theatre that is not privately subsidised will be to put itself under the wing of those theatres that are well established with generous grants, and those which are in the habit of meeting the production-costs of an incoming company for a share of the box office. I shall not be seeing the Royal Court as I think Donald Howarth is already well aware of Black Theatre, and they have already done quite a lot for it.

If the Arts Council looked after administration and the maintenance of the Brixton hall, and perhaps a week of previews there to pull in local audiences before productions move to the Aldwych or the Mermaid or the National, the present guarantee of £5000, that really presents more problems than it solves, would begin to look a feasible sum.

Norman Beaton may not get anything like the £40,000 he asked you for, but could I add my voice to his, that there is an urgent need to settle the present deficit, which was not helped by the £1700 loss incurred on the last show? A rescue operation would help us to get off to a good start, after the pantomime season.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

30.11.1974

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Yours sincerely,

Maurice Roudon

11.12.1974

RE: RON WILLIAMS, ACTOR

Dear Miss Arnold,

Further to my letter of 29th November last about RONALD WILLIAMS, actor, here is the information you need on him. He was born on 2 February 1942 in Oakland California, USA. His Home Office number is E103840. His paasport number is Z1789-831.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

18.1.1976

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Lewenstein,

I thought I would write about the time of your return to England and remind you of the above script as your pile of scripts must have risen somewhat.

I shall be in Munich for a couple of weeks and will if I may call you on my return. My partner who I think I told you is a money-broker feels that the climate for play-investing in the City is better than it has been for some time. I think he would come up with support if half the finance was already there.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

18.1.1976

Dear Mr Phillips,

Further to our phone conversation last week about my advertisement in the Business Opportunities column I have asked my solicitors Harbottle and Lewis to write to you.

Would you then, if all is clear, place this as a line advertisement in the first instance on the earliest Tuesday or Thursday available? I have amended the advertisement as follows:

Production company seeks investors for musical one-man stage show for international and US tour. Box number.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

Lord Birkett  
National Theatre  
Upper Ground  
London  
SE1 9PX

10.11.1976

CARMAGNOLA

Dear Lord Birkett,

After CHRISTOPHE I would like to try another 'big' but less expensive (and White) play on you. I think something on a Venetian subject could be most satisfying. A few years ago I wrote a book on Venice---both here and in the States it did better than any other book of mine. There seems an opportunity for inexpensive pageantry. The script is written in a 'simultaneous action' style, with two and sometimes three scenes going on at once.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

1h.h.1976

BLACK BOBIN

Dear Mr Pierce,

I wonder if you would be kind enough to keep the enclosed manuscript for the time being as a copyright precaution.

Authors are today advised by the Society of Authors to deposit their scrips with their banks so as to ensure that there is some copyright evidence in the casâ of dispute.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

ROY MARTIN

Height: 5'10"

Eyes: Blue (2)

Hair: Various

ROY MARTIN, actor, director, musician, writer, poet, acrobat and Equity member, also rides horses, performs car and motor-cycle stunts, and is an expert Scuba diver.

Early Training 1960 - Stuntman for Warner Bros. Hollywood  
1961 - Wall-of-death rider, Southend Amusement Park  
1962-1965 - Travelled in the East with The Magic Theatre

1966-69 Robert O'Neil's Actors Studio Company

Jonathan Hammond's Northend Troupe (plays by Paul Ableman and Roger Howard at London Arts Lab and Mercury Theatre)

Quipu Productions (David Calderisi and David Halliwell)

Rivendo Productions (Alexis Kanner)

La Mama

1969-70 Co-Director of Wherehouse La Mama (London), Ellen Stewart's London offshoot of her New York company. Extensive European tours and TV appearances including:

'Hump' (in collaboration with the author, David Benedictus)

'Group Juice' and 'Little Mother'

Title role in 'The Hilton Keen Show' - to which James Mossman devoted an entire TV programme, Review (13 Dec 1969)

'obviously a bit of a shock for some older members of the audience . . . imaginatively appalling . . . cleverly devised . . . brutally funny . . . projected with vigour and abandon by this energetic young company' - Guardian

Playschool (TV Director: Michael Cole)

Launched BBC TV's new series 'First Time Out' with 'Programme', written and performed by the company (TV Director: Anne Head)

'Does you mother know your watching' (TV Director: Michael Cole)

Roy Martin was Founder-Director of La Mama Amsterdam, launched with 'Evol', a rock-musical, directed by and featuring Roy Martin.

' . . . entirely effective . . . The whole work is a free-flowing pastiche of contemporary theatrical effects that succeeds in sensuously, ecstatically involving the audience and, at the end of the performance, bringing them to their feet. . . The music and songs are delightful and the joyous involvement of the actors in their work is miraculous in the face of the current theater of abstraction and alienation.' - Paradiso Fox, Amsterdam

Roy Martin's departure from the London La Mama company was noted by Irving Wardle in The Times:

'Since I last saw them the Wherehouse have lost two of their strongest members, Roy Martin and Neil Hornick. . .'

1971 Classes and workshops in Experimental Theatre at London School of Contemporary Dance  
Directed 'Spiggy Topes' 'Plastic Sock' at The Place, London

Quipu Productions - David Calderisi's 'Intersection' at Mercury Theatre, London, and Phoenix Theatre, Leicester.

Co-directed 'A Shakespeare Collage' for D. A. T. Company, Amsterdam

Directed La Mama Season at Pistol Theatre, Stockholm:

Leonard Melfi's 'Stimulation'

María Irene Fornés' 'Dr. Kheal' (a one-man play directed and performed by Roy Martin)

Roy Martin's 'Five and a Half Minutes'

Roy Martin / continued. . .

1972-73 Staged '22', Marsha Hunt's new Road Show

Collaborations with Neil Hornick's The Phantom Captain company

'Watch out Monty Python. There's an outfit called The Phantom Captain coming close behind you in the fine art of making serious fun of heavy breathing subjects.'  
The Sunday Times

Playroom Theatre season, Old Compton Street, London

'The Hidden Arthur' by the Company, Director J. Skarvellis

' . . . Roy Martin's fiery Merlin' - Time Out

'Animals Under Canvas' by J. Skarvellis, Director Christy Dickason.

' . . . imaginative performance of Roy Martin' - Time Out

'Beautiful Lunatics' by William Dumasque, Director Richard Howard.

'Dr. Kheal', a one-man play by Marla Irene Fornés, Director Roy Martin

'Electra' by Warren Heamden, Director Mike Same

'the very talented Roy Martin' - Plays and Players

'Wankers' by J. Skarvellis, Director Mike Same

Films: 'Crossplot' (Tribune Productions, Alvin Rakoff)

'Twenty-nine' (Shillingford Lamb Productions, Brian Cummings)

'Connecting Rooms' (Telstar Productions, Franklyn Gollings)

'La Pied' (Avcar Productions Brussels, Patrick Hella)

63 CROMWELL RD SW7

ALL ENQUIRIES:

Roy Fox (Artistes Management)

4 Kings Ct. Sth.

King's Road SW3

telephone 01-352-2153

\*\*\*\*\*

Roy Martin / continued. . .

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' . . . imaginative performance of Roy Martin' - Time Out

'Beautiful Lunatics' by William Dumasque, Director Richard Howard.

'Dr. Kheal', a one-man play by Maria Irene Fornes, Director Roy Martin

'Electra' by Warren Heamden, Director Mike Same

'the very talented Roy Martin' - Plays and Players

'Wankers' by J. Skarvellis, Director Mike Same

Films:

'Crossplot' (Tribune Productions, Alvin Rakoff)

'Twentynine' (Shillingford Lamb Productions, Brian Cummings)

'Connecting Rooms' (Telstar Productions, Franklyn Gollings)

'La Pied' (Avcar Productions Brussels, Patrick Hella)

53 CROMWELL RD SW7

ALL ENQUIRIES:

Roy Fox (Artistes Management)

4 Kings Ct. Sth.

King's Road SW3

telephone 01-352-2153

\*\*\*\*\*

ROY MARTIN

Height: 5'10"

Eyes: Blue (2)

Hair: Various

ROY MARTIN, actor, director, musician, writer, poet, acrobat and Equity member, also rides horses, performs car and motor-cycle stunts, and is an expert Scuba diver.

Early Training 1960 - Stuntman for Warner Bros. Hollywood  
1961 - Wall-of-death rider, Southend Amusement Park  
1962-1965 - Travelled in the East with The Magic Theatre

1966-69 Robert O'Neill's Actors Studio Company

Jonathan Hammond's Northend Troupe (plays by Paul Ableman and Roger Howard at London Arts Lab and Mercury Theatre)

Quipu Productions (David Calderisi and David Halliwell)

Rivendo Productions (Alexis Kanner)

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1969-70 Co-Director of Wherehouse La Mama (London), Ellen Stewart's London offshoot of her New York company. Extensive European tours and TV appearances including:

'Hump' (in collaboration with the author, David Benedictus)

'Group Juice' and 'Little Mother'

Title role in 'The Hilton Keen Show' - to which James Mossman devoted an entire TV programme, Review (13 Dec 1969)

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Launched BBC TV's new series 'First Time Out' with 'Programme', written and performed by the company (TV Director: Anne Head)

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'Since I last saw them the Wherehouse have lost two of their strongest members, Roy Martin and Neil Hornick. . .'

1971 Classes and workshops in Experimental Theatre at London School of Contemporary Dance  
Directed 'Spiggy Topes' 'Plastic Sock' at The Place, London

Quipu Productions - David Calderisi's 'Intersection' at Mercury Theatre, London, and Phoenix Theatre, Leicester.

Co-directed 'A Shakespeare Collage' for D. A. T. Company, Amsterdam

Directed La Mama Season at Pistol Theatre, Stockholm:

Leonard Melfi's 'Stimulation'

Maria Irene Fornes' 'Dr. Kheal' (a one-man play directed and performed by Roy Martin)

Roy Martin's 'Five and a Half Minutes'

***5 Tamworth Street London SW6 1LB Tel: 01.385 4003***

# Portslade

## Productions Ltd.



5 Tamworth Street London SW6 1LB Tel: 01.385 4003

Directors: Maurice Rowdon and Nicholas Kimber

### THE FIVE PAST TWELVE COMPANY

PORTSLADE PRODUCTIONS have formed a live company called The Five Past Twelve Company which is to set up its activities in Munich as the centre and launching pad of its international tours. The nucleus of the company, under the direction of Maurice Rowdon, consists of RONNIE LEE WILLIAMS (American), ROY MARTIN (British), BRENDAN DONNISON (British) and RUTH CAMERON (Canadian). Outside this nucleus the company will audition in London and Munich for English-speaking actors and actresses. On its tours the Munich centre will always be named on the programmes. For some time PORTSLADE PRODUCTIONS have been looking for a suitable centre for its tours in Europe, and the close affiliations of all its members with Germany seemed to make Munich the obvious choice.

1.

PORTSLADE PRODUCTIONS is financed in London by Nicholas Kimber, money-broker, who would retain a financial interest in the Munich enterprise.

The Company's last production was Maurice Rowdon's play MAHLER at the Arts Theatre, London (handbill enclosed). It attracted the attention of Ken Russell who subsequently made his film of the same name. An off-Broadway production of this play is now projected, to be directed by Peter Delaunay.

Maurice Rowdon's Canadian play THE RYE MAN, designed for restaurant or beer-hall presentation, with music, will premiere in Montreal and is based on his earlier play ESKIMO TRANCE which had two productions in Britain, the first at the Victoria Theatre, Stoke on Trent, directed by Peter Cheeseman, and the second directed by the author himself at the Mercury Theatre, London.

Maurice Rowdon's new one-man show BLACK BOBIN, featuring Ronnie Lee Williams, the Black American actor, and Roy Martin, actor-guitarist, is also with lyrics and music, and an album is planned in which Mick Tayler of the Rolling Stones will be participating. This production is suitable for a 500-seat theatre.

Maurice Rowdon's new small-cast plays (TICK TICK, THE OPEN PAN SYSTEM etc), for two and three hands, are designed for studio-theatre production.

Maurice Rowdon's CHRISTOPHE, a full-length Black play, dealing with Haiti's king at the time of Napoleon, with Voodoo drumming and ceremonies, is for a large cast (correspondence from the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company on this play is enclosed). Negotiations are pending with Oscar Lewenstein at the Roundhouse in London for a production in 1977. The famous pop-group MOTT THE HOOPLE has composed a complete electronic sound backup for this play.

Maurice Rowdon's FINGERPRINTS ON THE WATER, designed as an entirely new type of musical, is also to be set up in 1977. The book is already complete.

11.

Apart from his theatrical activities Maurice Rowdon has recently written an international film called JULIA for Susanna York based on Jean Rhys's GOOD-BYE TO MR MACKENZIE, located in Paris and London in the Thirties, with music and cabaret from the period. Maurice Rowdon is currently working with the Roman producer MARIO FERRARI (Visconti's THE LEOPARD, Fellini's ROMA etc), who has taken the JULIA script into Warner Bros as his first project with them.

Maurice Rowdon is also writing an Italian film IN CHIANTI for Mario Ferrari, for the Italian market, and a script based on his novel AFTERWARDS, with an Anglo-American cast.

Maurice Rowdon made the 55-minute FALL OF VENICE for BBC Television in 1973. He was last year a director of the DARK AND LIGHT THEATRE, London.

111.

Maurice Rowdon has published many books---novels, travel, biography and history. His one-man show BLACK BOBIN is in fact based on his latest book of history, THE SPANISH TERROR, published in London by Constable and in New York by St Martin's Press. It is a study of Spain's imperial role in the sixteenth century.

Rowdon's published works are as follows:

Novels

Hellebore the Clown (Chatto and Windus)  
Of Sins and Winter (Chatto and Windus)  
Perimeter West (Heinemann)  
Afterwards (Barrie Books)

Travel

Italian Sketches (Gollancz)  
A Roman Street (Gollancz)

Biography

Lorenzo the Magnificent (Weidenfeld/Regnery)  
Leonardo da Vinci (Weidenfeld Great Lives)

History

The Fall of Venice (Weidenfeld/Praeger)  
The Spanish Terror (Constable/St Martin's Press)

Maurice Rowdon is at present at work on a worldwide book project THE THINKING DOGS for Doubleday in New York and Ekon Verlag in Germany.

# RSC



ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY  
Trevor Nunn Artistic Director and Chief Executive  
Direction  
Peggy Ashcroft Peter Brook Trevor Nunn  
Consultant Director Peter Hall

## Royal Shakespeare Theatre

Stratford-upon-Avon Warwickshire CV37 6BB

Incorporated under Royal Charter Patron Her Majesty the Queen  
President The Earl of Harewood Chairman Kenneth R Cork  
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Telephone: Stratford-upon-Avon (0789) 3693  
Box Office Telephone: Stratford-upon-Avon (0789) 2271

## Aldwych Theatre

London WC2B 4DF

Telephone: (01) 379 6721  
Box Office Telephone: (01) 836 6404

17 December 1975

Please reply to Aldwych address

Maurice Rowdon  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth Street  
London SW6 1LB

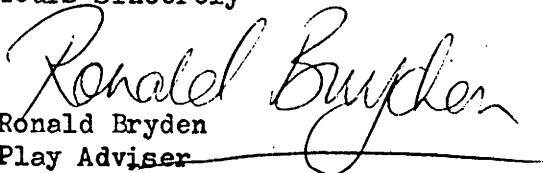
Dear Mr Rowdon

Trevor Nunn passed on your play "Christophe" to me to read. We've conferred about it today, and he has asked me to return it to you with our regrets that it seems impossible for the RSC.

We can both see that it's a play with immense theatrical possibilities. But it's hard to see how they could be realised with a cast of less than twenty-five or thirty, all but six of them black. In our present financial situation, it would be prohibitively expensive to mount, and in any year it would be an unprecedented departure for us to put on a play which used so few of our regular RSC players. Theoretically, I know, while we are playing straight-run repertory at the Aldwych we can cast any play ad hoc. But in practice this makes us all the more concerned to maintain an obvious identity from production to production, by using actors associated with the RSC in the past. In the nature of Shakespearian casting, very few of these have been black.

Could I make one criticism of the script as it stands? I was put off at the beginning of the play by the prologue scene with the tourists and Tonton Macoute policeman. I can see that it conveys some necessary information, but in most other ways it seemed to me unnecessary and unhelpful: instead of suggesting that the story the play then tells is reality rather than tourist legend, I think it has the reverse effect. I'd have thought myself that the information the scene conveys could be put over equally effectively by one of the English characters, Tom Gulliver or Dr Stewart, perhaps, and that the use of one of them as a narrator-mediator between the story and an English audience might be helpful: might, for instance, discourage them from judging Christophe's rule by the standards of 1975 rather than the early 1800s.

Yours sincerely

  
Ronald Bryden  
Play Adviser

RONNIE LEE WILLIAMS

Born in Oakland, California.

BOYS IN THE BAND, Munich 1970

HAIR (Hudd) in the original ensemble, Munich, Düsseldorf, 1968, 1969.

DO AS YOU LIKE IT (Orlando), Cologne, 1970.

HAIR Cologne and Vienna, 1970.

HAIR, directed new production for tour of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, 1971, 1973.

TV FILMS, Germany

NBC/TV Colour me German (lead role) 1969.

ORF/TV Neighbours (lead role) 1969.

ZDF/TV Tomorrow a Window to the Street, 1969.

ORF/TV Trip (lead role) 1971.

ZDF/TV The pawnbroker 1971.

FEATURE FILM: Traumstadt 1972.

BRENDAN DONNISON

HAIR, lead role and director in Germany, Austria, Holland, Switzerland.  
JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR (Annas) in Germany, also sang on the album.

With the SAN QUENTIN WORKSHOP:

Hatchet in THE CAGE: London, Munich, Frankfurt, Bochum, Edinburgh Festival.  
END GAME: Edinburgh.  
THE WALL IS MAMA: Edinburgh, ICA in London and New End Theatre, London.

With the MONSIEUR ARTAUD COMPANY:

With Sally Willis THE SAILOR: Edinburgh and Bracknell Arts Centre, London.  
MOBY DICK.  
THE STAIRCASE.  
Sartre's MEN WITHOUT SHADOWS.  
JASON by Joe Praml.

FILMS: Horace Pove's THE IMMIGRANT, TIRED OF WAITING.

RUTH CAMERON

Studied Drama at University of British Columbia, Canada. She has played many roles in German theatres:

Pinter's THE INTERVIEW.  
Arden's SERGEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE.  
THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE.  
A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR THE MAID.  
Albee's THE AMERICAN DREAM.  
Kenneth Cameron's THE HUNDRED AND FIRST.  
Joe Orten's RUFFIAN ON THE STAIR.  
FUNERAL GAMES.  
Beckett's HAPPY DAYS.

For her performance in HAPPY DAYS (1975) Ruth Cameron was chosen 'Star of the Week' by the Abendzeitung, Munich.

ROY MARTIN

Height: 5'10"

Eyes: Blue (2)

Hair: Various

ROY MARTIN. actor, director, musician, writer, poet, acrobat and Equity member, also rides horses, performs car and motor-cycle stunts, and is an expert Scuba diver.

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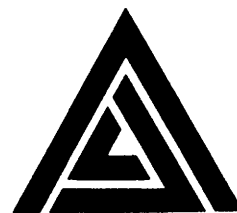
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Leonard Melfi's 'Stimulation'

Maria Irene Fornés' 'Dr. Kheal' (a one-man play directed and performed by Roy Martin)

Roy Martin's 'Five and a Half Minutes'

The Arts Council of Great Britain



105 Piccadilly London W1V 0AU

Telephone 01-629 9495  
Telegrams Amec London W1

Chairman Patrick Gibson  
Secretary-General Sir Hugh Willatt

19th November, 1975

Maurice Rowdon, Esq.,  
Director,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London,  
S.W.6.

Dear Maurice,

I was glad to receive your letter of the 4th November and to hear that 'Christophe' is finding favour with the British Council and at the National Theatre. I was also delighted to hear that Peter Hall has taken a personal interest in the play and that he and Lord Birkett were able to read it and reply to you so quickly.

I apologise if you received no personal reply from me to your letter of the 19th December, 1974 concerning 'Christophe', but I do remember speaking to you on the telephone at around that time. The letter in fact indicated that you did not wish to apply under the New Drama Scheme, but that you were hoping to involve the Drum Arts Centre in producing the play. The substance of the letter was to inform us generally about events at the Dark and Light Theatre, and as such your points were dealt with in subsequent correspondence to the Dark and Light. I am sorry if you were expecting a personal reply.

Your criticisms of the repertory directors I must say did not surprise me, but it would be wrong to assume that repertory directors feel that they can get away with anything and have no concern for the needs of writers. The difficulties writers face in the repertory theatres are of course well-known and deep-rooted and may have more to do with the whole nature of repertory organisations than with a ~~subsequent~~ <sup>con</sup>sequent lack of concern for writers. Let us hope that Watford will take a continuing interest in 'Christophe'. I would suggest that if you have still not heard from Oxford, you should get in touch with Kerry Crabbe there: he has recently been appointed to look after the interests of writers at the Playhouse and I happen to know that he arrived to find a backlog of scripts awaiting his attention.

The Arts Council is, of course, aware of the needs of writers and through its revised Schemes to Encourage New Writing In The Theatre, is endeavouring to improve the writers' lot. I expect to see further improvement in the next twelve months.

I do, of course, agree with you about the sad circumstances of the Dark and Light situation earlier this year. There was, of course little that the Council could do at that stage to help the Dark and Light sort out its problems. The organisation's successor, the Black Theatre of Brixton, no doubt faces difficult times ahead, but it has the advantage of being a new organisation, unencumbered by the earlier history.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Tempest

# DAVID CONVILLE PRODUCTIONS LIMITED

Telephone:  
01-935 5756/5884

c/o The New Shakespeare Company Limited  
Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park, London NW1

Telegrams:  
Conplay London NW1

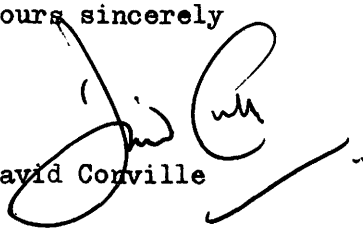
11th November 1975

Maurice Rowdon -sq  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth Street  
London SW6 1LB

Dear Mr Rowdon

Thank you for both your letters. I think I have read something like twenty new plays in the last month, and this is the reason you have not heard from me sooner. I fear we are unable to present your play. I was once very interested in another play about Christophe written by James Forsyth, and was unable to present it for financial reasons, but sent the play around to a great many people including film producers. I think the only companies who could present this are the first-class repertory companies or the National, the RSC or Chichester. Anyway, all good luck with it.

Yours sincerely

  
David Conville

18.11.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Trevor Nunn,

We met last year I believe and had a discussion about the Dark and Light Theatre of which I was then a director. Now it's just dark.

I am sending you CHRISTOPHE at the suggestion of Miss Jane Edgeworth at the British Council with whom I was earlier discussing it as the possible British entry for the Lagos Festival and a subsequent African tour.

We tried the National Theatre in September, and I'm sure neither Peter Hall nor Lord Birkett would mind me sending you photostats of their letters on the play.

You will see that Lord Birkett mentions the strong film possibilities of the script, and I do find a lively interest among the producers I've mentioned it to. I only hope that the theatre-part, which interests me most, gets before the film-part.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

Chairman Sir Max Rayne  
Director Peter Hall  
Administrative Director Patrick Donnell  
General Manager Anthony Easterbrook  
Secretary Kenneth Rae

Address The Archway  
10a Aquinas Street  
London SE1 8AE  
Telephone 01 928 2033  
Cables/Telegrams Thenat London SE1

**The National Theatre**

Maurice Rowdon Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5, Tamworth Street,  
London SW6 1LB

14 January 1975

Dear Maurice,

Many thanks for your letter of 7th December, and please excuse my long delay in replying. I'm extremely pleased that the idea of a Black Festival in collaboration with the new National Theatre seems to interest you. Yes is the answer: I would be extremely pleased to receive the informal memorandum you propose outlining the kind of Festival and the sources of finance.

For our part, I would have thought that the summer of 1976 was the kind of date to aim for. This would have the advantage of enabling us to do outdoor events as well as activities within the various spaces and auditoria of our new building.

With such a time scale, there's obviously no immediate rush to get the thing prepared. Do take your time with it, and in the meantime, keep me in touch with all new developments with the Dark and Light, and allied activities. You don't have to write a letter each time - just phone.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Michael Kustow  
Associate Director  
(Projects/Visitors)



# H. M. TENNENT LTD.

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MANAGING DIRECTOR: Arthur Cantor (U.S.A.)  
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**GLOBE THEATRE  
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LONDON, W.1**

Telephone No.:  
01-437 3647/8/9

Telegraphic Address:  
TENMONT, LONDON, W.1

Cables:  
TENMONT, LONDON

18th June 1975

Maurice Rowdon Esq  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth Street  
LONDON SW6 1LB


Dear Mr Rowdon

CHRISTOPHE

Thank you so very much for sending us your play, which we have now had the opportunity of reading. We regret that, after careful consideration, we would not be interested in mounting a production of it.

I am, therefore, returning your script - thank you again for letting us see your work.

Yours sincerely

  
HELEN MONTAGU



31.10.1975

Dear Jane,

As you advised me to send CHRISTOPHE to the National in the first place, and to return it to them, this time to Lord Birkett, when they got more money than expected, I thought you might be interested to have copies of their letters.

I do keep reminding Werner Schmid in Zurich to send me back the cassettes of the South African comedian, and he will do this next week.

All good wishes,

Yours ever,

Maurice Rowdon

mistakes he made seemed to be due to his pleasure at having a visitor!

\* \* \*

The same visitor was present at one of Elke's lessons. That morning she had astonished Dorothy by solving multiplication problems which were supposedly far beyond her present level. Hitherto she had been given problems of the most primitive order,  $1 \times 2$ ,  $1 \times 3$  and so on. She had attempted  $5 \times 20$ , giving the answer of 85. But more intricate problems such as  $3 \times 19$ ,  $4 \times 17$ ,  $3 \times 15$ , where numbers had to be carried over, had not yet been attempted. Now, without the smallest exercise in them, she was solving them without hesitation or difficulty. Dorothy wished to show Mr Storz what she could do. She chalked up  $3 \times 19$  on the board and asked him not to calculate the answer in his own mind in case Elke got it telepathically

# Prospect Theatre Company



TOBY ROBERTSON director

1/6 FALCONBERG COURT LONDON W1V 5DG  
Tel: 01-437 7365/6 Grams: PROSCO LONDON

TR/AW

M. Rowdon Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5, Tamworth Street,  
London SW6 1LB

22nd October, 1975

Dear Mr. Rowdon,

Thank you for your letter of 3rd October. After a thorough search, however, we can find no trace of "Christophe" in this office, we have no record of it ever having arrived here. As a general rule, we acknowledge all plays which come into the office, so, unless you received an acknowledgement from us it would appear that it might have been lost in the post.

The only other alternative is that it might have been sent to Mr. Robertson's home address. If you did, in fact do this, then perhaps you could let me know and I will arrange for it to be brought into the office.

I am sorry not to be more helpful. If it is possible for another copy of "Christophe" to be sent, it will be read at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Alison White,  
Personal Assistant  
to Toby Robertson.

31.10.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Robertson,

I have received a letter dated 22 October from your personal assistant about the above script and it appears that the copy I sent you back in May must have been lost, for there is no record of an acknowledgement from your office.

I got in touch with you then on the advice of Miss Jane Edgeworth at the British Council, with whom I was discussing the play as a possible British entry for the Lagos Festival, should it ever happen.

Much more recently, and again on her advice, we sent the play to the National Theatre, as the spectacular nature of the play is beyond the means of this small company. I thought that now, rather than your reading the play right away and perhaps wasting your time, I would send you copies of two of the letters from the National, one from Peter Hall and one from Lord Birkett, putting their unenviable situation. Now since your situation vis-à-vis a big production might be the same I thought I would leave you to ask for the script or not, as you decide on reading the letters.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

mistakes he made seemed to be due to his pleasure at having a visitor!

\*

\*

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# Portslade

# Productions Ltd.



5 Tamworth Street London SW6 1LB Tel: 01.385 4003

Directors: Maurice Rowdon and Nicholas Kimber

Clive Temper  
Arts Council  
Britain and Strait  
4.11.1975 Kebab

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Clive,

You may be interested to know that I sent the above Black play, on the advice of Miss Jane Edgeworth at the British Council, with whom I was discussing the play as the British entry for the Lagos Festival, to various London and provincial theatres, since its spectacular nature puts it beyond the financial scope of this company. On 9 May of this year I sent it to Giles Havergal in Glasgow, Gordon McDougall at Oxford, Richard Eyre at Nottingham and Stephen Hollis at the Palace Theatre in Watford. Stephen Hollis called me a few days later with a suggestion of perhaps starting the play at his place for a tour, and I have seen him several times since. There were no other replies, though both Glasgow and Nottingham acknowledged the script. Oxford didn't even acknowledge it. I sent reminder notes to all three on 3 October last, and have received no replies even to these.

Further on the advice of the British Council I sent the play to the National Theatre in September. I had a most positive reply from Peter Hall himself within two or three weeks. Lord Birkett read the play in a further week and found time to write me a long letter about it. It seems to be that there is a big difference between the provinces and London, doesn't it? No one can tell me that the provincial directors are busier than Peter Hall. But they apparently can get away with anything, and it is time writers began to impress on you that they are an integral, and surely quite important, part of the theatre, and that theatres are not tailor-made instruments for the whims of their artistic directors.

Not that you yourself are much better. I wrote to you on 19 December last for help on CHRISTOPHE and received no reply. You have killed the Dark and Light Theatre, which I and other new members of the Board were trying to revive under a new title. The sorry crew in charge of the place would no doubt have destroyed themselves (and perhaps me) in the end, but they must get themselves together in their own way, not ours, as I am sure you and everyone else on the Council know and

# Portslade

- 2 -

## Productions Ltd.



5 Tamworth Street London SW6 1LB Tel: 01 385 4003  
understand (without being able to do anything about  
it). There is no point in arguing about a situation  
of bankruptcy, but the people who do receive money  
Directors: Maurice Rowdon and Nicholas Kimber  
from you are doubly obliged to do their work thought-  
fully and efficiently.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

4.11.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Mr Chardet,

I am sending you a copy of the above Black play on the advice of Miss Jane Edgeworth at the British Council with whom I have been discussing it as the possible British entry for the Lagos Festival.

You may also be interested in Peter Hall's reaction to the script, so I am enclosing a copy of his letter, together with a later one from Lord Birkett explaining the National Theatre's situation.

The spectacular nature of the script puts it beyond the means, naturally, of my own small company, which can just manage small try-outs. But my partner, a money-broker, can call up money if the venue is right and a white star or two can be involved. There are three white parts in the script.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

learn the letter which is still missing?' Dorothy asked him. NO. 'Can you tap it just the same?' To her surprise he tapped YES. 'What is it?' He tapped once left and seven right (17), which was indeed the value of T. She got very excited and asked, 'Where do you know this letter from?' Without being coaxed or aided in any way he tapped the word LOROR, adding another O at the end which she did not write on the blackboard as she assumed it was inconsequential. 'Is this word right?' she asked him. NO! 'Which of the letters is wrong?' 5---which she took to refer to the fifth letter or R (of the five letters on the board). 'And any other letters?' He tapped 1, which she took to be the first letter or L. 'What should the first letter be?' He tapped 3 (R), so that the word would now be RORO. 'Surely this isn't right?' He tapped 11 (G). As she wrote that down, to make a new word, GORO, he withdrew it by tapping three left (NO). She erased G and said, 'Let's try once again! What's the first letter?' This time he tapped 9 (D). So it now read DORO. 'Now what about the fifth letter?' He tapped, without help, 17 (T). So the word now read DOROT. 'Is there a letter still missing?' He tapped 10 (E), making the word DOROTE, in the German pronunciation of 'Dorothy'. It hardly seemed possible and she wanted to cry with pleasure. And he had done it so effortlessly, without the usual coaxing from her---a day after she had reflected that his tapping was so painfully slow! But she had learned to be cautious. There was a strong possibility that a telepathic influence had operated between them, since early in his tapping she had guessed what he was aiming at, and she may even have unknowingly interrupted his tapping at crucial points, naturally not with gestures but by means of the satisfaction she felt, to which a dog is so sensitive.

19.3.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Miss Cushingam,

Further to my letter from Italy, I tried to call you this morning but find that Dick Mayo didn't give me your phone number, so I had better send this to you straight away.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

m

13.3.1975

Dear Miss Cushingam,

I was having a talk with Dick Mayo yesterday and he suggested contacting you about a Black play of mine called CHAISYOPHE IS KING, the story of Henri Christophe of Haiti at the time of Napoleon. Dick suggested you might well be interested in helping us to set it up. I'll be back in England next week and will bring you a copy of the play. Looking forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

15.5.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Miss Cushingam,

Back in March Ronnie Lee and I were with Dick Mayo in Montecarlo, and discussed various film and theatre projects with him, one of which concerned the enclosed Black play.

I sent you a script at once on my return to England but got no reply: yesterday we decided to call in on you, and found that Dick had given us the wrong number, or else I had taken it down wrong. Anyway, my three letters and the script obviously never arrived, since the house we sent them to is empty and under decoration.

I have been discussing this play with Jane Edgeworth, Head of Drama at the British Council, in connection with the coming Lagos Festival. She likes the script very much and if you do too I wonder if you could contact her, since as you know an interest here can be most useful financially.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

21.3.1975

CHRISTOPHE

Dear Miss Cushingam,

I just wanted to put you in the picture about this play. We shall probably be calling it CHRISTOPHE IS KING, and intend to make much of the conflict between the Voodoo element and the Christian. The electronic sound back-up has already been composed by Morgan Fisher of the Mott the Hoople group and is most exciting to hear.

The script, by the way, is true to the history of this man who, born a slave, unable to read or write, built up a Kingdom of the Blacks, and designed it to be the First Black Empire of the West. He was in all things a dictator. His Court was in the style of George 111's, his architecture based on Versailles. He won the attention of all political Europe in Napoleon's time, as far as Russia. Now I believe it is no good presenting history straight on, and the play is therefore presented in a modern context, in Haiti today, under Papa Doc's son, and actually presented to the audience by a Ton Ton Macoute.

About four years ago Toby Rowland wanted to start this piece off on Broadway in association with Merrick and with Patrick Garland directing. It depended on whether James Earl Jones was free and thankfully he was not, as I think that today we have a much better chance both audience-wise and performance-wise of getting what we want. A few months ago I at last found the actor I have been looking for all this time, as Christophe, Ronnie Lee, an American Black, whom Dick knows too by the way. As you will perhaps have seen, the play also has three Whites. At one time, even four years ago, a Black play in this country would have posed a big problem but my recent experience, working in Black theatre more than ever before, is that this problem has diminished because of a new generation of actors.

Yours,

Maurice Rowdon

# THE BRITISH COUNCIL

97/99 Park Street London W1Y 4HQ  
telephone 01-499 8011

Maurice Rowdon Esq  
Portslade Productions  
Ltd

5 Tamworth Street  
LONDON SW6 1LB

your ref

our ref GTB/340/11 L-Z

4 April 1975

Dear Mr Rowdon

Venetian Biennale

Thank you for your letter of 25 March.

Miss Edgeworth is away on an advance tour until  
15 April, but I will pass your letter to her on  
her return.

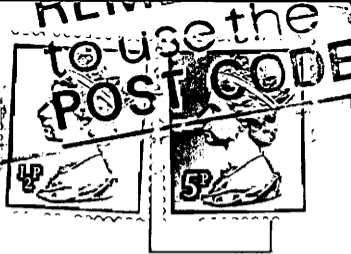
Yours sincerely



Joanna Gowan  
Secretary to Head of Drama  
Drama and Music Department

# POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



Mr Maurice Bowdon  
Portslade Productions  
5 Tamworth Street  
LONDON SW6 1LB

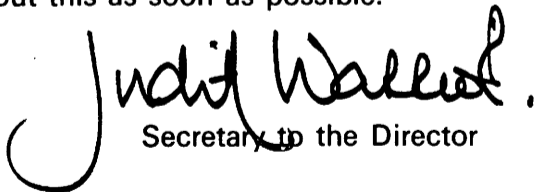
# Nottingham Playhouse

Wellington Circus Nottingham NG1 5AF  
Administration 44361 Box Office 45671

This is to acknowledge receipt of

CARISTOPHE

We shall contact you about this as soon as possible.

  
Secretary to the Director

CITIZENS' THEATRE  
Gorbals Glasgow G5 9DS

Chairman of the Board of Directors  
William L. Taylor, B.L., J.P., Hon.M.T.P.I.


12th May 1975

Maurice Rowden,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5, Tamworth Street,  
LONDON SW6 1LB

Dear Maurice Rowden,

Thank you for sending us the script of CHRISTOPHE, Mr. Havergal is at the moment away on holiday but will read it on his return.

Yours sincerely,

  
Jane Cattermull  
P.A. to the Director

Director  
GILES HAVERGAL

# MICHAEL CODRON LTD.

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Telephone 01-437 3577

Maurice Rowdon Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5 Tamworth St.  
London, S.W.6.

13th May, 1975.

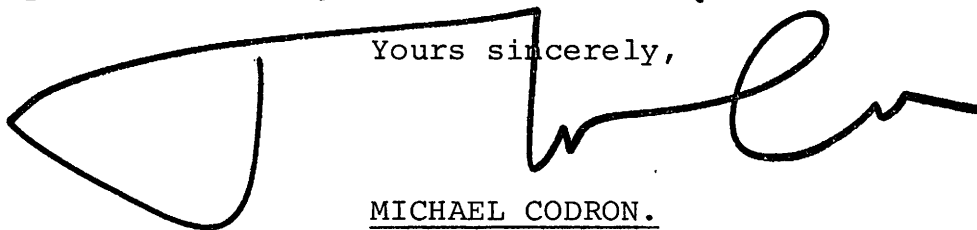
Dear Mr. Rowdon,

CHRISTOPHE

Thank you for sending this play to me but my programme is complete until the end of the year when I think I would like to take a sabbatical. For this reason, perhaps it would be best for you to send the play to another producer.

Thank you for thinking of me.

Yours sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Codron'. The signature is written over the typed name 'MICHAEL CODRON.' and extends to the left, crossing over the 'Yours sincerely,' line.

MICHAEL CODRON.

Enc:

6.5.1975

DIAGHILEV

Dear Mr Blackburn,

It was a pleasure for me and Ronnie Williams to meet you with Werner Schmid.

We found your suggestions about the National Theatre's proposed Black Festival most helpful.

This is just to say that we have by no means forgotten the musical called FINGERPRINTS ON THE WATER which we discussed, and that it will be on its way to you shortly.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice Rowdon

# THE BRITISH COUNCIL

65 Davies Street London W1Y 2AA  
telephone 01-499 8011 ext

Maurice Rowden Esq.  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth Street  
LONDON SW6 1LB

your ref

our ref GTB/340/11 A-K

please quote our reference

1 April 1975

Dear Mr Rowden

Thank you so much for letting me read 'Christophe' which I liked very much indeed, and I herewith return the script. Do let me know where and when it is being shown and I will certainly try to come along or else have it covered by a member of Drama Department.

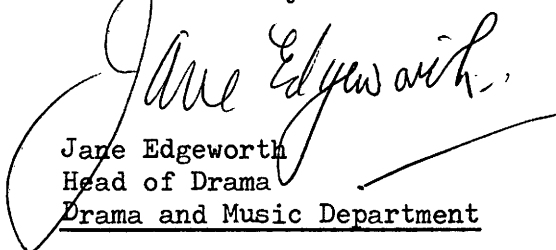
Regarding contracts, in Western Europe, I think probably the best thing would be for you to meet Dr deBlieck next time he comes over to London. We are in constant touch with him as he is handling several of our major European tours this year. He would certainly give you sensible advice. In the meantime, herewith his address and telephone number in case you would like to contact him direct:-

Dr Jan deBlieck  
Oostduinlaan 68  
The Hague  
Holland

Tel: 010 31 70 242483

Do keep in touch about your activities, you had such an awful cold when you came into see me that I don't think we got through your full agenda!

Yours sincerely

  
Jane Edgeworth  
Head of Drama  
Drama and Music Department

je.jg

encs

4.8.1975

Dear Mrs. Brinkman,

My associate Mr. Maurice Rowdon is at present on the continent looking into the possibilities of presenting english language plays in german speaking countries.

Vienna was among the cities he visited and after hearing about your theater there he attempted to get in touch with you. We were given your address here in London. We have several projects which we think might interest you, and besides I would enjoy meeting you personally since I too have worked in Vienna as an actor.

Could we manage it perhaps before you have to go back over? I hope so.

Sincerely,

Ronald Williams

p.s. If I'm not at the above number  
could you leave yours?

# Hampstead Theatre Club

Founder: James Roose-Evans

SWISS COTTAGE CENTRE LONDON NW3

ADMINISTRATION 722 9224 BOX OFFICE 722 9301

Artistic Director: Michael Rudman

General Manager: Ruth Marks

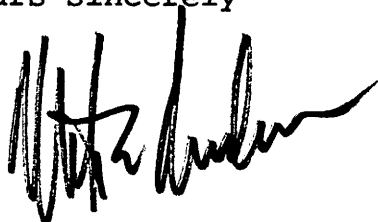
Maurice Rowdon  
Portslade Productions Ltd  
5 Tamworth Street  
LONDON SW6 1LB

4 April 1975

Dear Maurice

Our literary manager has finally given his attention to the enclosed play and I am afraid that, due to his reaction, we wouldn't be interested in producing it here and I am afraid I can't recommend it to Gilbert Moses, so I am returning it to you now.

Yours sincerely



Michael Rudman  
Artistic Director

ENC: CHRISTOPHE

Directors Oscar Lewenstein  
Oscar A Beuselinck  
Leonard F Ridgley  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

# Oscar Lewenstein Productions Ltd

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
London WC1  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

11, Western Esplanade, Hove, Sussex. BN4 1WE.  
Telephone: Brighton (0273) 418705.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

5th December, 1975

M. Rowdon, Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London, SW6 1LB.

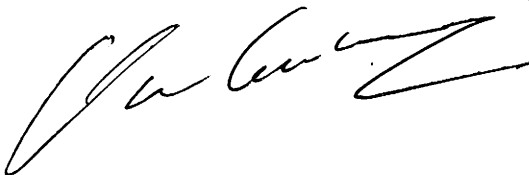
Dear Mr. Rowdon,

CHRISTOPHE

Thank you so much for your letter of the 2nd instant regarding the above. This subject interests me, but unfortunately I am going abroad tomorrow and will be away for six weeks and shall not have time to read it before my return. I hope this will be okay. Incidentally plans for the Round House are very uncertain at the moment so please don't hold up any other approaches whilst waiting for me to read the script.

I will get in touch with you again in about eight weeks time.

Yours sincerely,



Directors Oscar Lewenstein  
Oscar A Beuselinck  
Leonard F Ridgley  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

# Oscar Lewenstein Productions Ltd

11, Western Esplanade, Hove, Sussex. BN4 1WE.  
Telephone: Brighton (0273) 418705.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
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5th December, 1975

M. Rowdon, Esq.,  
Portslade Productions Ltd.,  
5 Tamworth Street,  
London, SW6 1LB.

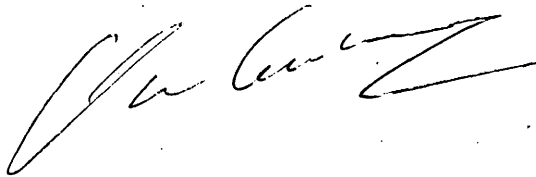
Dear Mr. Rowdon,

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I will get in touch with you again in about eight weeks time.

Yours sincerely,



Ilex House,  
Wells next the sea,  
Norfolk.

April 27th, 1960

My dear Maurice:

It is wonderful to know that we are at last in the same country at the same time; though quite when we will meet, I don't know. My sister who lives in NY is coming to Wells on about May the 9th; my parents have a car, but I need to take a test before I can drive it legally.

Was fascinated to hear of your novel, which I much want to read.

Heinemann have commissioned me to write a long novel about the Arab world.

Do you favour the transmission of consciousness (i.e. he felt, he thought, he remembered) through one person only, or through several? At the moment, I am inclined to make all my characters speak and act only, with the exception of one central character, not the most positive, but the most litmus. Is this right?

I wish we could meet: if only to discuss these vital technical problems on whose right solution so much depends.

You saw Jabbara had published a book? Doreen Warriner says it is good, and that I come in; I have rushed to order a copy; it would be magnificent if I could bring a case for libel, wouldn't it? Apparently I am introduced in a Turkish bath; my name (if it is me) being Brian Flint. I suppose Brian is as Irish as Desmond? It may, on the other hand, be you: though could anyone ever mistake us?

Penury will soon be my lot! Holiday, after paying me 1500 dollars for my article on Nasser, which took three rewrites before they would accept it . . . and then they accepted with acclaim and thanks . . . suddenly cancelled the article (though not the payment) and my agent, Carl Brandt, writes it is due to Israeli success in convincing NY opinion. And Holiday now caution me that they don't want me to write any articles with any kind of attitude to politics! Articles on the Near East, that is: which shows what a great and wonderfully objective country Simpson's homeland is! Because how anyone can write an article without an attitude, I don't know. Of course, if the attitude is a Foreign Office sneer at wogs, that's OK: that's just objective reporting, not having it put over you, hard-boiledness.

My lunch with James was pleasant and cost him a lot, or the firm. He is extremely intelligent. He warned me that this time I must not write carelessly ( he had to take the red pencil to a lotin A Woman Beseiged!) and that I must be prepared for several radical rewrites; he could almost graduate to Holiday, I think? There was also much talk about costing, and the sacred maximum figure of 100,000 words was mentioned several times. It is all frightening, I find: as I want to put the Arab East from 47 to 60 onto my canvas; or should it be 'hardboard'?

I would MUCH VALUE from you a few notes, from your angle, which is not length or poundage, I know! but on what you think I do well, what I do less well, what I should avoid, and so on. I really would value this. The novel is in the stage that many of the shrubs in this garden are: growing, where a slight rope, loosely tied round the tree's neck, does not strangle but pulls in the right way, away from a dangerous wind. Could you tell me about sex: more or less of it? Politics? One thing I am going to/very explicit about: money. Much too little mentioned in modern novels.

Have you read the Durrell novels about Alexandria? I think they are pretentious, rather than profound, flowery in a way that is Alexnadrian; nothing else of Alex. comes across; it is a masturbation - vision, I find, with characters far less real than in MY fantasies.

Love to Annette: is she sculpting in Essex? Is it a good scenery for the plastic arts? On the whole, East Anglia lends itself to painting most: it is the one region of England with a constnat radition of art, among the people. There is a painter here, Cox, who is a whelk-fisherman, and paints magnificently. When it is too rough for him to put to sea.

Love to you, too, my fellow-martyr to a horrible age . . .

Desire Nemond

# HARPER & BROTHERS

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49 East 33rd Street, New York 16, N. Y.

November 2, 1953

Dear Mr. Rowdon:

As you may have heard, Cass Canfield has written to Harold Raymond regretfully declining HELLEBORE THE CLOWN, which Mr. Raymond had send in to him. We were much impressed with the writing but did not feel it was a book with which we could do sufficiently well in this country. I am writing you separately about this because of our previous correspondence and, particularly, because of my strong continuing interest in your work. Back on September 25th, you wrote about another book called THE EMBALMERS, and I said I would be very happy to receive it. Should I have received it? It has not come.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Simon Michael Bessie".

Simon Michael Bessie  
General Editor

Mr. Maurice Rowdon  
bei von Schack-Lukschy  
Berlin - Grunewald  
Falterweg 31  
Germany

SMB: jr





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