

# NAPNOC

## notes

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### MOVING RIGHT ALONG:

#### The Public Role in Performing Arts Touring

Touring -- performing groups taking their shows on the road -- is a topic we've been looking into for months. We've been trying to learn why community-based arts groups tour, to understand the problems they encounter and the advantages that touring offers, and to identify resources which might be made available for neighborhood arts groups that decide to tour.

The easiest thing to see is that touring presents a complex set of questions. First, there are at least three parties involved in any performance tour: the performers, the audience, and the sponsors or presenters. Often there's a fourth: The funder, usually a public arts agency that subsidizes the performers or presenters (or sometimes the audience members through voucher programs and the like). The sometimes-competing interests of these parties to touring are the primary ground for complications.

#### A Mixture of Motives

Performers may have a variety of motives for touring in the first place: Some hope to earn box-office income or guaranteed fees they can't get at home. Others want to be seen and reviewed by critics more prestigious and influential than those at home, hoping that a New York review will attract larger and more adventurous local audiences. Still others see touring as a kind of cross-pollination process, since a company on tour has the opportunity to see others' work, to get feedback from performers outside their own communities, and to gauge the effectiveness of their own work before a less familiar audience. And some groups are formed in order to tour as a way of reaching audiences in communities that are off the beaten path of established performing groups.

The presenters' motivations may be similarly diverse: Some performing arts presenters are people whose interest is in promoting artistic diversity, and they want to sponsor as many different kinds of performances as possible. Other presenters have a season to fill out and they book the events they can afford, sometimes gambling on an unknown or risky company because it comes as part of a package with the tried-and true, or because its fees are subsidized by an arts agency grant.

The presenters' motives are key to the involvement of the third party -- an audience. Political or avant-garde theater groups taking part in a grant-supported tour sometimes find themselves playing to an empty house in a community unfamiliar with their work, largely because a sponsor shy of controversy has decided to soft-pedal promotion but can't

resist booking the group for the sake of state-guaranteed fees. But when such groups are sponsored by local community organizations which see the booking not only as an artistic event but also as a community gathering or even as a fundraiser, the audience is likely to be much larger and more enthusiastic.

When subsidy is a factor, well, he who pays the piper calls the tune. Currently most of the subsidized performance tours -- at the state and national levels -- are those of companies selected by the subsidizing agency. In some places the presenters are the grant recipients; they choose to book one of the approved groups, and the funder guarantees a portion of the performance fees. In other places, the performing group is the grant recipient, and the funder supports part of the approved group's touring costs. But in just about every current example, the funder is making the decision about which performing events should be seen with the government's help.

#### The Hidden Costs of Non-Support

By implication, this means that funders also have a role in making touring more difficult for groups not on their approved lists: Suppose Group A and Group B both want to tour community college campuses in their state, and both know that community colleges have fixed and fairly modest budgets for performing arts events. But Group A is subsidized by the state, so the college that presents it only has to pay \$750 of its \$1,500 fee. Group B's fee is also \$1,500, leaving it with a choice: Either cut its fee in half to com-

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pete with Group A and take a big loss on the tour, or wait until next year and try to get on the state tour itself. The state has used its subsidy program to ensure that the performing groups it chooses will get more bookings than their competitors. Competition among sponsors to book the approved touring companies will be high; but groups not receiving state support will have a doubly difficult time of it.

There's been a good deal of pressure to change this system, some of it from performing companies like Group B, put at a disadvantage in the competition for bookings, and some from presenters who want a broader choice of events. At issue, though not often explicitly discussed, is the question of just why the state and federal governments are in the business of supporting tours. Does the tour exist to spread the work of approved artists? The current system appears to be based on this assumption, but the rhetoric that accompanies it is quite something else: By and large, the publicly-funded performance tours are described as giving communities access to live performance where it has not existed before. If this is the real rationale, presenters ask, why not leave the choice of what to present to us? Clearly, this is double-edged problem for neighborhood arts people: The idea that decisions about arts programming belong with local people and not the state or national authorities makes sense; but there's no guarantee that a local promoter will be motivated by concern for and sensitivity to community interests in making booking decisions.

#### Shifts in Federal Policy

The National Endowment for the Arts has been grappling with this question for some time, and many of the state arts agencies have entered the debate. In December, 1978, the NEA commissioned Janet Oetinger to study the touring question and come up with recommendations. Her report, "Discussion Paper: Performing Arts Touring and Sponsorship," is essentially a plea on behalf of the established presenters, a potential Endowment constituency which allegedly feels that the agency has not been sufficiently responsive to its claims. Since Oetinger's report hardly mentions the kinds of performing groups that are part of the neighborhood arts movement, we can't tell you whether the NEA is concerned about the impact of its touring policies on this segment of the arts community.

The touring issue was discussed in some detail at the October Policy and Planning Committee meeting of the National Council on the Arts, mostly in terms of the inconvenience of the current system from the viewpoint of sponsors who must apply to the Dance Program for their dance events, the Theatre Program for their theatre bookings, the Music Program for musical concerts, and so on. Ana Steele, Director of Program Coordination for the agency, delivered a summary of the findings of the Touring/Presenting Steering Committee (5 NEA Program Directors, 5 state and regional arts agency representatives, and the director of a service organization), formed in the fall of 1979. The Committee made one broad recommendation (and fifteen others dealing with its implementa-

tion): "The Committee recommends that the Endowment's discipline programs assist artists and arts groups to tour, and that the Inter-Arts Program assist presenters, directly and indirectly, for a full range of costs."

The general feeling at the Planning and Policy meeting was in favor of what Ana Steele called "one-stop shopping" -- permitting a sponsor to apply to the agency for subsidy for its entire season regardless of the particular discipline heading under which events fall. Steele led a brief discussion on the ever-present "quality" issue: Should NEA fund only those sponsors which book performances approved for "quality" by the discipline programs? Several program directors present expressed concern about "losing control," fearing that sponsors whose "quality" wasn't high enough for discipline program funding could still get Endowment support through the Inter-Arts sponsor program -- but they were assured by Deputy Director Mary Ann Tighe that their judgements of "quality" would always be solicited and respected. Tighe then informed the Committee that NEA has requested a total of \$4 million in next year's budget for presenters, most of it in a program to be handled by Inter-Arts.

Observers have remarked on the speed with which NEA has been able to move to establish this major program, especially in light of the massive delays in approving any action on the question of local arts agencies. We understand that some members of the National Council are also concerned about attempts to "railroad" the sponsor program through; rumor has it that Council members may move before the February meeting to delay the program for further study.

#### Warning Signs from One of the States

The California Arts Council (CAC) is one of the state arts agencies that has heretofore funded an approved roster of performing companies to tour the state, and is now considering following the Endowment's lead and emphasizing funding for presenters. NAPNOC'ers in the Pickle Family Circus, headquartered in San Francisco, CA, sent us a copy of the memo they presented to the CAC, asking the agency to reconsider.

Here's the Pickles' problem: The Circus has toured since 1975, mostly up and down the west coast. They are sponsored by community organizations -- childcare councils, schools, senior centers -- and these sponsoring organizations benefit from presenting the Circus. The Pickles' memo laid out the economic facts: "Our cost for a weekend of 4 shows is \$7,500. For the CAC-sponsored tour dates, \$3,000 is paid for by the (state) Arts Council and the remaining \$4,500 comes from box office receipts or is subsidized by other grants. The sponsor sells all advance tickets for the shows and keeps \$1 on each ticket sold (advance tickets are \$1.50 for children and seniors, \$3 for adults). The Circus provides the sponsor with all publicity materials -- 2-400 four-color posters, 2-4000 four-color flyers, press releases, black-and-white glossies, music tapes for radio PSA's, etc. In addition, the Circus provides continuing advice and workshops if

necessary (and a Sponsor's Workbook) in the methods of successfully publicizing a cultural/community event...The sponsor, often with the participation of other local groups, also organizes a midway of concessions. The midway offers food, games and information booths, and all proceeds are kept by the sponsors. In 1980, the San Francisco Council of Parent Co-op Nursery Schools made \$9,000 off their midway.

"Our sponsors are private non-profits that operate with small administrative staffs -- often volunteer -- inadequate budgets, have continuing cash flow problems, and for the most part are not presenters of the arts. Their reason for supporting the Pickles is that at the same time they are raising money for their programs, and developing publicity and production skills, they are bringing quality, live family-oriented entertainment to their support groups and the community at large."

Many of the Pickles' sponsors are located in small and rural communities; for most of these groups, the Circus is a reliable annual fundraiser and performing arts event, and a yearly lesson in producing and presenting as well.

#### These Pickles Need a New Solution

The Circus took exception to the CAC's new program on several grounds. First, the Arts Council's switch to a sponsor program would mean that the sponsors would pay performance fees up front and await reimbursement by the CAC (a lengthy procedure). Most of the Circus' sponsors haven't got the cash or patience to do that -- especially since the only front money Circus sponsors now pay is \$500 to purchase an initial hatch of tickets.

Second, the Circus raised the issue of competition: "...a sponsoring organization will try to spread its CAC monies as thin as possible and therefore select who they will present according to the size of fees. A small group with few props and sets will of course be in a better competitive situation than a company of 20 performers and 11 tons of equipment." Here the Pickles point out that as a large company with sizable transportation costs, a system that funds selected groups to tour has helped the Pickles offset competition from groups that can tour more cheaply. By implication, they raise the question of need in touring policy, and give us the grounds for posing an additional question about the government's reasons for supporting touring: Should the government take on the role of helping to equalize the cost of touring for performing groups, so that large and small groups can become equal competitors for bookings?

Third, the Pickles raise what has come to seem an age-old question: Why must there be a single way of doing things? "It does not seem necessary that funding for presenters should automatically exclude grants to arts companies."

The Pickle Family Circus memo concludes by saying: "If the proposed guidelines are adopted, it seems inevitable that 1982-83 sponsoring organizations will be large production groups, like festivals, who can guarantee a fee and an audience...The most import-

tant implication of centralization is that the performing arts will neither be encouraged or subsidized in the areas of the state with the greatest need--small, rural areas..."

The Pickles' protestations seem to be an accurate harbinger of the impact of the NEA's new sponsor program and the state programs which will certainly follow. By definition, subsidizing sponsors for their entire season of bookings leaves out the occasional sponsor -- the community group that brings in the Circus, for example -- just as it diminishes the opportunity for subsidy of sponsors who don't book only approved events and companies. Guidelines for these new grant programs aren't out yet, but when pressed for examples of likely recipients at the October National Council committee session, NEA Deputy Director Mary Ann Tighe suggested Lincoln Center and the Los Angeles Music Center as two likely prospects.

#### Who Pays Whom for What?

What can be done to circumvent the maze of problems touring raises? To begin with, it makes sense to break down and analyze the costs of touring. Certainly, the biggest single increase in touring expenses has been in the area of transportation of people and equipment -- and transportation is also the key factor that makes it more expensive to tour a large group than a small one. Promotion and advance work tend to require considerable expenditures in dollars and staff time for the most successful touring companies; in our research on touring we found time and time again that the companies able to make money on tour were those that left little to chance -- or to the sponsor's whim -- in publicizing their tours.

Performers' fees are the third variable, and here the question of motive enters once again. The groups that tour to make money tend to be the most adamant in their requirements, making sure they are guaranteed enough to pay company salaries and costs and make a profit too. Groups that tour for other reasons tend to be willing to make personal sacrifices, taking a loss out of their salaries and counting a tour successful if they paid for the gas or got a write-up in the right papers.

Funding selected performing groups to tour means that the touring groups have financial help that they can usually apply in any of these three areas -- or wherever they choose. Funding presenters also provides financial aid wherever the secondary recipients -- those companies the presenters choose to book -- want to apply it.

The third option (one which, to the best of our knowledge, has never been considered by the arts agencies that support touring) is to fund specific expenses, employing some mechanism that ensures that the pattern of funding will reflect the pattern of need. For example, a fund could be established and made available to groups that wish to tour on the basis of financial need, perhaps on the basis of a ratio determined by comparing income, expenditure and staff size with the length and extent of the tour proposed. Such a fund might be supported by public arts agencies, but it could also be based on a tax-credit program for oil companies or transportation industries administered

by the state or federal commerce department, or it could be a small tax levied on road and bridge tolls by the highway department, or a fund administered by a foundation and derived from contributions from transportation-related businesses. Similarly, a public agency could take on the role of supporting a fund for promotion expenses -- printing, distribution, travel -- or a program of support for a nonprofit booking agency which could assume a substantial portion of the responsibility and expense of advance work.

Changing public policy to accommodate these program ideas is a long-term job, and in the interim it's important to consider how the sponsor support programs being emphasized by the NEA and the state arts agencies figure into the touring situation. It's clear that touring is not an area in which a single approach will be suitable; the adoption of some standardized sponsor support program will mean the exclusion of many touring groups from consideration. The short-term task of policy reformers will be to press government to diversify -- to provide support for groups that tour without a circuit of fulltime, professional sponsors, and for sponsors who reach outside the circle of NEA-approved art for their bookings.

#### In the Meantime...

Community-based touring groups can't wait for the arts agencies to clarify their touring policies; neighborhood arts groups need to seek their own solutions to the problems they face in financing tours.

Some groups are hoping that the coalitions of performing organizations which have formed these last few years -- the People's Theater Coalition in California and Alternate R.O.O.T.S. in the south and southeast, for example -- may provide a partial solution. By pooling certain administrative expenses, sharing information and sponsors, combining brain-power and fundraising clout, the members of these coalitions may be able to build viable touring organizations, just as in some cases they have been able to act as local presenters for visiting groups. Other companies are trying the same thing on a smaller scale: Two or three similarly-sized groups who travel the same circuit try to raise money to support a joint booking manager and promotional expenses, for example.

Some groups have turned their focus more steadily in the direction of the box office: The San Francisco Mime Troupe has written to NAPNOC asking for other companies who wish to exchange detailed information on good sponsors -- the Troupe needs guarantees to support its touring costs and doesn't see them coming in the form of grants. The Pickle Family Circus is producing its first winter season next month, to consist not of circuses but of a three-man show in a downtown theater, with expenses much higher than the summer circus season, and income potential significantly higher too.

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Touring -- along with economic development and public cultural policy -- is one of the topics we'd like to keep alive in the pages of NAPNOC notes. This article has

raised some of the issues that need to enter into the discussion, and we'll keep you posted as we hear of new program developments. But the most important aspect of this discussion must be the participation of groups that tour, or are thinking about it, or who have questions to ask and experiences to offer. If you have something to add, send it along -- or give us a call and we'll talk about it.

The groups named in this article are: Pickle Family Circus, 400 Missouri St., San Francisco, CA 94107; San Francisco Mime Troupe, 855 Treat St., San Francisco, CA 94110; People's Theater Coalition, Fort Mason, Building B, San Francisco, CA 94123; and Alternate R.O.O.T.S., c/o The Play Group, 1538 Laurel, Knoxville, TN 37916.

#### SOME RESOURCES ON TOURING

*Most published material on the subject of arts touring focuses on the concerns of touring companies that want to replicate the tone and content of Carnegie Hall performances -- on the road. Alternative touring groups and sponsoring organizations that serve the communities skipped by high arts touring should take the advice offered by these resources with a grain of salt. Following are a few resources that speak more broadly -- though sometimes not by much -- to the questions involved.*

*If you can suggest other resource materials, please drop us a card or call, and we'll review them in future issues of NAPNOC notes.*

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If you're interested in a good look at the issues involved in touring (as opposed to the nuts-and-bolts problems) and a description of current practices, get a copy of Janet Oetinger's Discussion Paper: Performing Arts Touring and Sponsorship (discussed in the previous article). Oetinger's survey was delivered to the NEA's Office of Program Coordination in May of 1979 as a preliminary to the Endowment's current examination of touring support programs. The report's 130 single-spaced pages offer a thorough discussion of the official concerns, problems and practices of touring (though there is barely a mention of neighborhood arts groups and their touring activities) and is useful in understanding the NEA's perspective.

Limited numbers of the Oetinger report are available from the Program Coordination Office, NEA, 2401 "E" St. NW, Washington, DC 20506, (202)634-6313.

When you write for the Oetinger report, you may also wish to ask for a copy of the NEA's Program Information for Arts Presenters, a February, 1980 publication listing NEA programs that currently support the presentation of touring events. Mainly, this publication is a distilled version of the information presented in the NEA's program guidelines, along with a short introduction and lists of other public and private sources of support and information for presenters.

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Many state and regional arts agencies have developed touring programs -- and technical assistance aids to go with them. The best-produced and most popular touring publi-

cation of this kind is Presenting Performances: A Handbook for Sponsors by Thomas Wolf, Director of the New England Foundation for the Arts. Presenting Performances has sold over 10,000 copies since its publication in 1977. It describes the whole range of sponsoring group activities -- establishing and administering a presenting group, dealing with touring artists, "filling the auditorium," and fundraising. This book speaks to the needs of very small, unstaffed, community-based sponsor groups, though it is written from a non-neighborhood arts perspective (for instance, it makes the suggestion that a group might wish to find "a minority member" to round out its board of directors). Nevertheless, Presenting Performances offers some sensible advice and is quite readable.

Copies may be ordered from the New England Foundation for the Arts, 25 Mount Auburn St., Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 492-2914. Single copies (postage paid) are \$3.95. For orders of five or more, the cost drops to \$2.50 a copy.

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ACUCAA -- the Association of College, University and Community Arts Administrators -- is the major national association of arts presenting organizations. It produces publications, conferences, workshops, research and other services related to upgrading the skills of member organizations' staffs in producing performing arts events.

Begun in 1957 as an association of "college and university concert managers," ACUCAA adopted its present name in the 1970's in recognition of the growing number of non-college agencies involved in concert management and the increasing roles many college programming departments were taking in community arts work outside their institutions.

Though now described as "the professional arts administrator's professional organization," it should be noted that the main emphasis of ACUCAA's services lies in the successful presentation of touring groups. Its conferences are major opportunities for such artists' management agencies as Columbia Artists to book tours and workshops and its publications center on the marketing, publicity, and theater facility management concerns of arts presenters. Memberships are generally \$125 a year, though a \$25 a year rate is available for students.

For more information about ACUCAA and a list of publications, contact ACUCAA, P.O. Box 2137, Madison, WI 53701, (608) 262-0004.

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#### CULTURAL ACTION IN AFRICA: Jacob Sou and the African-American Theatre Exchange Project

If you've ever looked into enrolling in an arts administration program, or participated in one, you're familiar with a major shortcoming: Heavy on administrative skills like accounting and grants-writing, they slide too easily over the tough questions that underlie neighborhood arts work. Little time is spent on the cultural problems that neighborhood arts work addresses, or on the various techniques of organizing

or the impact of cultural policy.

Well, here's a program that devotes twice as much time to the concepts and issues of cultural development work than to management skills -- and teaches administration as tool for effective cultural programming. Where is this progressive program? It's the Regional Cultural Action Center (RCAC) in Lome, Togo, on the coast of West Africa.

Early this month we spent a morning talking with Jacob Sou, the Director of the Center. Jacob was here to meet with theater people in the American south as part of the planning for a proposed African-American Theatre Exchange Project (more about this at the end of the article). But as he began to talk, we were seized by Jacob's description of the Center's training program, an international effort supported since 1976 by the governments of several west African nations.

The RCAC is part of the African Cultural Institute (ACI). It was begun when African cultural ministers meeting at the Senegal-based ACI came to the conclusion that cultural development work in Africa was being hindered by the absence of skilled cultural development workers. RCAC accepted its first six or eight students--from as many countries--in the fall of 1976, and has continued to develop and accept new students each year since.

RCAC's two-year curriculum is designed to integrate practical and theoretical studies. It aims to prepare students for positions as community artists and administrators that will call on them to remain flexible in responding to the cultural problems and realities they encounter. Two groups of students are accepted each year: One of cultural animators (cultural development workers, who will generally work directly in a community); and another of cultural counselors (a term roughly analogous to "administrators," it describes people who will work as civil servants in public cultural agencies).

There is no counterpart to RCAC's training of cultural animators now available in the United States. Animators (this term is discussed in more detail in NAPNOC notes #2's review of Council of Europe publications) are neighborhood artists, cultural development professionals. Jacob explained that for students just starting out in the animators' training program, many of whom already have been trained as visual or performing artists, it is necessary to say "You won't be just an artist any more. You are, but now you have to work for the whole community...You shouldn't go there and try to do what you would like to do, but help the community do what they want to do."

With a student population drawn from countries only recently free of European colonial domination, the job of training animators necessarily begins with an examination of African culture. Jacob explained that in his native Upper Volta, French history was taught instead of African history and that this was true in each colonized country: "I didn't study African history in school. I studied French history, and because it wasn't my country I couldn't

keep it...I don't know that much about African history -- I have to learn it, after school. So we try to teach people 'What is Africa?' 'What are African customs?' and generally, they are just learning it for the first time." Since each animator's work will center on reawakening active interest in African cultural forms, this attention to African traditions, economics, social life and politics continues throughout the training period, and serves not only to educate the students themselves, but to prepare them to involve other community members in the same process of recovering cultural traditions and creating new African cultural activities.

Animator's training is structured around "research-actions" -- practical field work carried out in Lome, in their home countries, and in a third country of their choosing. Guided by a supervising team, each student becomes, through this field experience, increasingly more independent and able to take on group projects with community people.

Classwork and workshops complement this field work, including the study of African culture, economics and social structure. Four other main subject areas are included: Personal communication skills (written, oral, symbolic and electronic) are developed. The social phenomenon of communication is studied in the context of each student's applied work. Cultural research and documentation techniques are learned and applied in practice. And administration and execution of a cultural policy are studied, both through case studies and applied work. Classroom work follows closely each student's continuing work in the field. Case studies and demonstration projects keep these abstract-sounding areas of study from losing their relevance to the work each animator will soon be called upon to perform.

#### Cultural Counselors

Though the administrative positions they will occupy after graduation are closer to American arts administrators', the cultural counselors' course of study could hardly be more different from the American pattern. Like the animators, cultural counselor students' training involves both academic and practical work. In fact, counselors spend a good deal of time working with the animation students to enhance their understanding of the conditions and administrative requirements of successful cultural development work, which they will eventually oversee.

In addition to their work with animation programs in Togo, each counselor student participates in two applied project situations: For two months between the first and second years, students return to their home countries to pursue projects in conjunction with their national cultural ministry or department. In the middle of the second year, counselors are sent to some third country to observe and analyze cultural action programs. Additional participation in meetings and events in Togo and year-long "simulation workshops" at RCAC call for the students to apply their new skills to real situations.

Like the animators, counselor students pursue ongoing studies of African culture,

including economic, social and political structures; the counselors' curriculum is generally more rigorous and theoretical, however. Lectures and reading lead to "conference-debates" where issues that arise in cultural development work are discussed in detail.

Four other areas of course work complete the counselors' curriculum: The functions of the state in cultural development requires students to examine how cultures evolve in different settings, how various states in the world support cultural life, and the components of cultural action -- conservation, expression, creation, diffusion, and animation. With this background, the future policy-makers discuss the consequences of various kinds of state cultural intervention -- law-making, cultural research, aid to creators, international cooperation, training of cultural development agents, cultural education in families, neighborhood and schools, promotion of cultural initiatives, and the coordination of public actions for overall development.

Similarly detailed courses of study are outlined in each of the three remaining topic areas -- public and community support structures for cultural action; the practical methods of cultural action; and finally, the administration and conduct of cultural activities. About 400 classroom hours are devoted to the study of administration, as opposed to 800 hours for the other four areas of study -- this in addition to at least 900 hours of practical and applied work.

Students for each of these rigorous courses of study are first pre-screened by cultural authorities in their home countries, then take a written competitive examination before names are submitted to RCAC. Each applicant then spends 3 weeks in Lome for an orientation and final selection process. In describing the ideal candidate, Jacob said "Those who work in the field already are better; they know generally what we're speaking about, they ask good questions,... they want to solve problems already, so we're really interested in those people."

Apart from the contribution it makes by helping to develop the students' skills, the Regional Cultural Action Center has a significant impact on cultural development work in all of the African countries from which students are drawn. As Jacob explained "In the member states where we have former students, things happen, people understand that cultural development is important." But in some other states cultural development has been assigned a low priority because people don't know how to advocate for it. So in a sense, RCAC is turning out advocates for cultural development work. And they can have major impact. For example, Jacob explained that a counselor student might choose to do a project on the development or creation of a department of cultural affairs in his or her country. When the student returns home, he or she will be working in the cultural ministry, and if the minister wants advice, the former RCAC student is the expert!

Jacob told us that the principal problems of RCAC are twofold. The first, pre-

dictably, is money -- not all member states are able to make contributions, and there are as few sources of support for neighborhood arts work in Africa as in the U.S. The second problem is also something American neighborhood arts workers should be able to relate to: Some students see counselor training as a relatively easy way to get a good civil service position, "and because there are not yet many people in the field it would be easy for them to become bosses." These people "criticize a lot and don't necessarily propose solutions."

#### African-American Theatre Exchange

The project which brought Jacob Sou to the United States is a good example of the kind of international cultural cooperation that ACI and RCAC seek to encourage: The African-American Theatre Exchange Project. The idea for the project first emerged from discussions between Marty Ardren, a NAPNOC National Organizing Committee member, theatrical producer, and former coordinator of Alternate R.O.O.T.S. (Regional Organization of Theaters - South, a network of alternative theaters in the American south). Marty and Jacob (himself a theater artist) met at the Harvard Institute in Arts Administration in the summer of 1975. The Project developed through the mails: They saw it as a way of encouraging exchange between African and American alternative theater groups. With support from the International Theatre Institute (with International Communications Agency funding), Marty and Jacob have now visited each other's countries to discuss the idea in detail with more theater people. They have found a great deal of interest in the Project, and hope to see the actual exchange begin in the summer of 1982 with the appearance of a pan-African company in the southern U.S.

The newly-formed African Association of Performing Arts (AAPA) will select a company of artists from African nations. AAPA's goal is to encourage a genuinely African theater -- one which integrates the whole range of traditional African performing and visual art forms. As Jacob says, "For us, it should be a complete show -- I mean, with theater, dancing, music, painting, poetry, everything. It should be the meeting of all the arts." AAPA's members are individuals and groups from all over Africa who are committed to authentically African performance work. Jacob noted that a number of the national theater companies might not qualify for membership because they perform work by western playwrights and not African work: "Some people are surprised because some national companies won't be able to be members and some little companies will be."

Jacob discussed the way the AAPA was created out of the need to develop a respect for theater that is based on African cultural roots instead of European theatrical forms: "When (African performers) do something (Africans) know already, they say 'No, that's not theater -- we know that, we can do that -- it's not theater.' The Association will try to explain to them 'That's theater -- that's your theater.'"

It is hoped that the AAPA company will appear in one or two festivals while it's in the U.S. and then will tour the south.

Later, an American company -- probably composed of black artists from the south and assembled by people in Alternate R.O.O.T.S.-- would tour to participating African nations. The final phase of the Project would be a collaborative production involving both the African and American companies, touring both Africa and the U.S. in 1983 and 1984.

Though planning and fundraising are still in the early stages, Jacob was encouraged by his visit and warm reception in the southern states to speculate even further into the future of international collaboration among black artists: "While I've been here, I realized that (the company) can be composed of blacks all over the world. We'll start with Africans, then Americans can come, and people from the Islands too. From the Association's point of view, after the United States, we'll try the same experiments in Europe too -- I know there are very, very good companies there -- African companies."

We hope the African-American Theatre Exchange Project is a portent of things to come -- the time is long overdue for better communication and exchange between members of the neighborhood arts movement around the world.

If you want more information on the African-American Theatre Exchange Project, contact Marty Ardren, Box 975, Sarasota, FL 33578. If you want to know more about the African Cultural Institute or the Regional Cultural Action Center, contact Jacob Sou, P.O. Box 3253, Lome, Togo.

#### NEA's Minority Arts Index

June Harrison, Acting Director of the NEA's Office of Minority Concerns has asked NAPNOC to tell our readers about a new project. Harrison's office is in the process of compiling a "Minority Arts Information Index," listing the name, address, contact person and artistic discipline of minority arts organizations across the country. According to Harrison's letter, "For the purposes of our office we are including Black, Hispanic, Native American and Asian groups."

She goes on to say "The Index will be used to distribute information to the field for potential applicants and other interested parties. Also, in an effort to generate a two-way flow of information, we would offer the organizations access to this data which we hope to have computerized by late 1981."

If you want your organization to be included in the index, write to:

Office of Minority Concerns  
National Endowment for the Arts  
2401 E. St. NW, Room 1301  
Washington, DC 20506.