

# MARKETING MANAGERS MEETING

WEDNESDAY 9 MAY 2007, 10.30am – 4.00pm

ROYAL OVER-SEAS HOUSE, LONDON

Chaired by **Karen Cardy**, *Marketing and LSO St Luke's Centre Director*  
and **Terri Anderson**, *ABO Board Member and Director, Big Red Kite  
Communications*



## R E P O R T

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Karen Cardy, *Marketing and LSO St. Luke's Centre Director* welcomed the group and introduced herself. Terri Anderson, *Director and ABO Board member* introduced herself and informed the group that after twenty years as a journalist followed by a second career in corporate PR and communications she is now a consultant with her own Big Red Kite Communications company. Terri also explained that the ABO board had decided to trial an initiative of co-chairing the Specialist Manager Meetings to ensure that a board member was present at the meeting of their specialism in addition to the senior manager.

Terri then invited attendees to introduce themselves and indicate how long they had been at their position and what their particular role as a Marketing Manager was.

### Scope and Purpose of this Specialist Group

Terri Anderson opened the discussion by asking what people thought were the key topics to be covered at these meetings. Many attendees were keen to discuss usage of new media, new additions to the marketing mix, web technology (and how that might be causing the product itself to change) and data collection and sharing.

Kath Trout, *Senior Marketing Manager, Philharmonia Orchestra* pointed out that it was clear that all of the orchestras were trying to deal with new technology and keep on top of opportunities to promote themselves successfully. Simon Funnell, *Chief Executive, Orchestra of St. John's* informed everyone about an excellent presentation at the ABO Conference in Manchester by the Guardian's Media manager Martin Prendegast. He spoke about the different ways people take technology on board.

Nicola, *ABO Membership Services Manager* pointed out that this presentation was on the ABO website at [http://www.abo.org.uk/event\\_ann.php](http://www.abo.org.uk/event_ann.php) (under Digi:nation).

General thoughts were that not enough time or money was being spent on the collection of data and as Simon Fairclough, *Marketing and Development Manager, Academy of Ancient Music* pointed out knowledge of public usage is vital in order not to plough money into unsuccessful schemes.

The conversation turned then to the subject of partnerships between orchestras and arts venues. Alison Atkinson, *Marketing and IT Product Development Manager, London Sinfonietta* explained how difficult it had always been to get hold of useful customer data from the Sinfonietta's regular venues, and it was generally agreed that access to this data would be extremely useful from a marketing and audience development perspective. Jo Towler, *Marketing and Development Manager, London Mozart Players* highlighted that orchestras have many different types of relationships with venues and due to lack of available information it is extremely difficult to target the right people with the right message.

Simon Funnell added that the Data Protection Act was often used as an excuse by many companies and it was agreed by all that a way in which to get venues to work with us needed to be sought in order to attain a direct relationship with the audience but also to ensure we are getting the full picture. Katy Rodda, *Marketing Manager, LPO* claimed that the Southbank Centre were excellent cooperators but it was pointed out that not all venues had a big enough team of organisers with which to successfully market and share data in this

way. The idea of there perhaps being a barrier between the various venues was questioned and the reasons for this. It was agreed that there will always be a proportion of audiences who are often loyal to a particular orchestra or venue, but generally culture devourers would still spread their wings across various venues.

It was agreed that the sharing of information between orchestras was obviously extremely important and should be high on the agenda list at every meeting. Presentations from individual Marketing Managers or suitable people from the industry were invited as a way of ensuring the best possible set of guidelines. It would also be useful to hear how not to do things to assist those new to their roles. Another suggestion was the new King's Place venue that would have a 400 seater concert hall. This new venue would be a good case study in how to share data.

## Annual Conference 2008 - Brighton

Thorben Dittes confirmed the 2008 Conference dates as 17-19th January and announced the current main focus points to be:

- Community engagement
- Healthy Orchestra/Noise
- Change Management
- New media/technology

It was suggested that a marketing presentation linked to political concerns about access would be an interesting Conference topic. Regarding change management, it was generally thought that administrators need to know how to cope with these changes and lack of resources, and to look into propelling the sector in different directions.

Karen Cardy suggested that more people would probably attend the conference if it had a new media focus. At LSO St. Lukes Discovery Programme, they have aimed their marketing towards specific geographical communities and perhaps someone from such an institution could be of great benefit at the Conference.

**Action: ALL to email Thorben at the ABO with suggested thoughts on marketing presentations or speakers.**

## Items arising from the last meeting

- SMS Marketing
- Ambassadors Schemes

The first topic forwarded was the idea of SMS Marketing. Karen Cardy informed attendees that the LSO had used a company called KODIME (??) to set up an e-hotline of people's email and mobile numbers. This enabled the LSO to quickly generate an audience at short notice, especially for the BBC series at LSO St Luke's. The scheme turned out to be an excellent method of getting a quick audience, but it became apparent that people only supported the idea in the knowledge that there would be regular events advertised.

Terri Anderson projected the notion that whilst sending marketing material via mobile phones would initially be expensive to set up, the costs would eventually settle down, as the new generations of cellphones which can deal with multimedia messagea (including graphics, video and sound as well as text and still pictures) become mass market items and bandwidth continues to expand: but there would need to be investment in the technology and knowhow at the orchestras' end to take advantage of this marketing potential.

It was suggested that a speaker from the industry should be sought out to come in and inform managers of the possibilities of SMS/ Bluetooth marketing.

The other topic to be followed up from the last meeting was that of Ambassadors Schemes. Karen Cardy asked for any news on current schemes and the ones mentioned were:

- A Sonic card – gets you discounts for orchestras
- OAE scheme for students
- CBSO have schemes set up in connection with the Conservatoire and set up the CBSO Youth Orchestra
- London Sinfonietta schemes to encourage a younger audience
- LSO Student Mobile scheme for specific concerts (£5 a seat)
- LSO Community Ambassadors scheme

Alison Atkinson talked about the Sinfonietta's schemes to encourage a younger audience and explained how it needed a bigger recruitment drive to get more people on board, but unfortunately due to funding running out this has fallen a little by the wayside. This is however something they would like to continue as a scheme.

The LSO community ambassadors scheme is run by nine members of the local community who meet regularly every 2-3 weeks. They are people such as church goers who know everybody in the local community and together they decide agendas about what they and the local community would like to see happen. This has so far been an extremely rewarding idea because of the two way relationship between the audience and the orchestra. Karen also mentioned that the student mobile scheme has been very successful but needs a lot of tending to. On the other hand their City Ambassadors scheme is much more hard work, but Muireann Sheahan suggested that perhaps they hadn't spent enough time perfecting the model and/or finding the right representatives. This was agreed and it was concluded that for ambassadors schemes finding really enthusiastic candidates was crucial to making a successful campaign.

Jo Towler put forward feedback that events at schools don't work because schools generally are not community hubs, and also that even Music Societies see it as a threat when they are approached. It was agreed that an example of excellent social networking was the New York Philharmonic's Concert with post show dinner afterwards. Kath Trout told the group that the Philharmonia had even tried a dating event for specific concert programmes, but that this didn't feel like a particularly strategic idea at the time and if tried again much more thought would be needed to ensure its success.

It was generally thought that there were evidently so many ideas and different ways of enticing concert audiences but the problem then became fitting them all into the season. Simon Funnell suggested that the orchestras need to be careful with marketing schemes such as SMS messaging advertising because they may not be particularly appropriate for the current niche market.

Thorben Dittes noted that Greg Sandow had written about a case study in Australia. This was available via his weblog. (<http://www.artsjournal.com/sandow/>)

**Action:** *Develop the idea of Ambassador schemes as a topic for the 2008 Conference.*

### **Building on Excellence: Orchestras for the 21st Century**

Karen opened this topic by explaining a little about the project. The Arts Council together with DHA Communications (a PR agency) had approached the eight English Symphony orchestras for a campaign to raise the profile of orchestras in the UK. This originally took the form of a number of discussions between Marketing Managers and Chief Executives of the orchestras involved. Six policies were agreed and sent to MPs, media representatives and influential people in the music sector.

The ABO entered the project two months in and pooled all the orchestras individual strengths and ideas together leading up to the press conference in April 2007. It was decided that an annual impact report to measure the value of orchestras on British society should be published in order to encourage people who don't yet understand the cultural necessity and value of orchestras and their work in the community, and to build a bigger and brighter picture of what orchestras do. This would also put across a political argument for the support of UK Orchestras.

It was mooted that the ABO could play an ongoing part in providing some level of supervision and

expertise in setting up annual impact reports of this kind, but it was felt that there would be no benefit if something constructive were not seen to be done with these reports

## **BBC Play It Again**

[www.bbc.co.uk/playitagain](http://www.bbc.co.uk/playitagain)

Susannah Simons, *Head of Public Affairs & Outreach, BBC Radio & Music* joined the meeting to feed back on the BBC's Play It Again project.

Following the six part series on BBC ONE there was currently a series of BBC events around the country between April 21 and July 15. The aim was for approximately 250 people to attend and participate in an event for three hours with a BBC orchestra.

The BBC website <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/playitagain/> was currently displaying details of all these events, as well as information about getting started to play an instrument and signposting to other resources in the sector, such as Youth Music, Making Music and the ABO. During March this website had seen 150,000 hits and was currently experiencing 10,000 unique users per week.

The free countrywide events were being hosted by Tim Steiner, who constructs the programme for the session (and had written words to known pieces). Upon arrival people register for the event and were given the opportunity of hearing the live orchestra (many for the first time). The group are then split into players, non-players, singers and percussion and the aim is for the whole group to perform together with the orchestra by the end of the session.

So far there had been 175 participants in Newport and 200 in Aberdeen. Future bookings had been taken for the sessions in Cambridge (over 500 for two sessions), Glasgow, Leeds, Watford, Salford, Orkney, Maida Vale (430 currently booked), Swansea and Birmingham.

Feedback so far had been really positive and many whole families had joined in. All participants were given a 'goodie bag' of information, programmes and resources at the end of the day.

Further feedback about the project would be available in the autumn. The BBC would be measuring the reach, quality, impact and value of the project and also assess participants' appreciation via Audience Impact figures.

## **Sector statistics**

Karen discussed the DHA Communications policy document that had been drawn up at the start of the ACE project. One of the aims in this document stated that sector data would be collated for advocacy and lobbying purposes.

A general discussion took place about the data that was available to the marketing managers and also the mandatory data collection for the ACE annual return for regularly funded organisations.

*Action : Karen, Thorben and Terri would discuss this policy document and devise a template for data collection. Feedback would then be sought from the marketing managers.*

## **Improvements in Concert Programmes**

There was a general discussion to recap on the issue here and reference made to the 'Best practice guidelines for artist managers' summary dating from July 2005.

*Action : Terri would reword the 'best practice' summary sheet and include an example biography. The ABO would then forward to all marketing managers for approval before distribution to artist managers (via IAMA).*

DATE OF NEXT MEETING : 24 October 2007