



Quelle

A Report and Strategy Proposal for Birmingham's Arts Festivals (27. März 1990)¹

„3. The City Council's Aims in Investing in Arts Festivals

3.1 The aims towards which the City Council should direct its investment in arts festivals relate to the principles and priorities set out in the report entitled „An Arts Strategy for Birmingham“ which your Sub-Committee is also considering at today's meeting. It is proposed that these two reports together form the background for a future strategy for arts festivals in Birmingham.

3.2 Arts festivals represent a considerable and (this report will propose) an increasing investment for the City. The very nature of a major arts festival – its scale and its ability to attract public and media attention – inevitably contributes significantly to the cultural image of Birmingham in the eyes both of its citizens and of visitors to the festivals and to the City. It is therefore important that the City Council defines its aims in investing in arts festivals, so as to ensure the best and most effective use of its resources and to ensure that a positive image of the City is projected in the process.

3.3 It is important to be aware that festivals funded or sponsored by the City Council will have their own artistic policies and priorities which may not in every case be identical with the Council's priorities, though obviously the two should not be in conflict with each other.

3.4 An overall strategy for arts festivals will identify particular festivals with specific aims and needs of the City. Areas for the development of further festivals may therefore be proposed in the reports being submitted to your Sub-Committee later in the year dealing more widely with arts provision artform by artform.

3.5 Experience shows that a festival is most likely to succeed where it provides a genuine focus for and celebration of existing interests and arts activities in the City. Local festival possibilities are often identified by a few highly motivated individuals who provide the initial commitment and enthusiasm on which festivals depend. Whilst there are some artform gaps in the City Council's existing festival programme (dance, theatre and visual arts) your officers will not propose the creation of any new festivals that do not have behind them the driving forces of at least one committed individual, who is artistically and practically suitably experienced.

3.6 A long-term strategy for arts festivals would establish a framework of festivals which taken as a whole would demonstrate coherent City Council arts policies. A strong framework of varied and contrasting arts festivals would be a great asset to Birmingham, visibly and publicly translating the City Council's artistic strategy into action.

4.1 Proposals

4.1 The following aims are proposed to your Sub-Committee to guide the City Council's investment in arts festivals in future, related to the policy principles set out in the report “An Arts Strategy for Birmingham”:

¹ Auszüge entnommen aus: Birmingham City Council, Joint Arts, Culture and Economy Sub-Committee, A Report and Strategy Proposal for Birmingham's Arts Festivals, 27 March 1990.

- i) The large scale of major arts festivals offers unique potential to make a strong promotional and media impact for Birmingham. High profile publicity; the prominent visibility of the festival throughout the City, and positive local and national media attention not only serve the primary function of attracting audiences, but also more generally raise the profile of Birmingham as a lively and progressive City with a strong and distinctive cultural identity. Such media attention plays an important role in attracting further inward cultural and business investment.
- ii) Arts festivals have the capacity to draw into the City large numbers of visitors, whose spending in the City, enhanced perception of Birmingham, and possible return visits are all valuable in themselves as well as contributing to the creation of a festive atmosphere within the City. The high level of promotion of arts festivals also makes it possible to draw into the arts those communities within Birmingham whom the less heavily promoted arts programmes throughout the year may not reach, and festivals supported by the City Council should actively seek to achieve that aim.
- iii) The large budgetary and marketing provision associated with major arts festivals makes possible the invitation to the City over a short time-period of artists of national and international stature who do not ordinarily appear in the City. The particular circumstances of festivals make possible artistic planning of a more ambitious character than can be attempted at any other time in the year.
- iv) The high level promotion of festivals also serves to celebrate and raise the profile of all the other related artistic activities that take place in the City throughout the year. In turn, artistic programme and audience development in Birmingham throughout the year build and sustain local audiences on whom the festivals partly depend.
- v) Festivals are particularly effective in promoting the City's arts facilities and venues, attracting to them new audiences who can be encouraged to become regular attenders throughout the year. Festivals also have the ability to promote imaginative events in non-arts venues and public spaces, which significantly expands the range of access to the arts and enhances and enlivens the City environment.
- vi) Festivals offer particular opportunities to celebrate the cultural diversity of Birmingham. Whenever the programme of a festival is able to relate to the multicultural nature of the City, the festival gains in relevance to the City's diversity of cultural communities and therefore in impact within the City as a whole.
- vii) Festivals also provide an opportunity to celebrate the work of Birmingham-based artists, many of whom already enjoy a substantial reputation within their own fields. This not only gives recognition to high quality work that already exists in the City, but also serves to promote an awareness that Birmingham is a supportive and creative environment in which to pursue an artistic career.
- viii) Festivals are particularly well placed to provide distinctive forums and other opportunities to examine and debate contemporary cultural issues, as the Birmingham Film and Television festival has very successfully demonstrated. They also offer opportunities to examine cultural issues that are particularly relevant to Birmingham's own environment, and the City's cultural and social life.

Review of 1989 Festivals –Issues Common to All Three Festivals

4.2 There have now been six annual Reader's and Writer's Festivals, and five Film and TV and Jazz Festivals. These festivals have established themselves firmly within the cultural life of the City, and are all identifying their own areas for future development. Whilst the festivals have continued to grow in size and reputation and to improve the quality of their programming, funding from the City Council has remained at a standstill for the last two years. The festivals financial resources have now been stretched beyond manageable limits, and substantial further investment by the Council is now needed to enable them to fulfil their potential.

4.3 Following several meetings between your officers and the festival organisers a number of common need have been identified as follows:

- i) The festivals need to enjoy better and more effective marketing and promotional support. They need to be able to invite the national and international press more frequently to Birmingham in order to secure high profile media coverage, and the festivals would benefit by being projected with more energy and pride by the City Council itself.
- ii) Each festivals needs to identify a City centre space to serve as a source of information and a social meeting point, in short as a focal point for the festival. Visitors to the City need improved signing to enable them to find festival venues, and in general a greater festival visibility is needed throughout the City to promote events and to generate a 'festival atmosphere'.
- iii) All the festivals are concerned to attract more visitors to the City particularly from abroad. There is much undeveloped potential for the arts festivals to promote inward tourism.
- iv) Birmingham is a City with international links and a growing reputation for its commitment to the arts. The festivals see themselves able to play a very positive role in the development of Birmingham's international status, and are keen to work more closely with the City Council to attract audiences and artists from abroad, and to form relationships with Birmingham's European partners.
- v) The festival organisers welcomed the creation of the Arts Promotion Officer's post to strengthen their links with your Sub-Committee and with the City Council generally. They also see the post as a valuable link for the festivals between the various departments within the City Council with which in some cases relations could be productively strengthened.
- vi) If they are to develop further, all the festivals need to be able to plan ahead to the extent where they urgently need a three year funding commitment from the City Council. Your officers will propose ways that this might be done without committing the City Council further than is either financially practicable or strategically desirable."

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Auf diese Quelle bezieht sich ein einführender und erläuternder Essay von Höpel, Thomas: Kunst als Motor städtischer Erneuerung. Birmingham in den 1980er- und 1990er-Jahren im europäischen Vergleich. In: Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (2014), URL: <<http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2014/Article=690>>.