

# **BLIND TO THE FACTS**

**An Exploration of the Needs of Blind and Visually Impaired Musicians.**

A Report prepared by John Ludlow

for THE INNER VISIONS MUSIC COMPANY

(Edited by Agnes Meadows)

Supported by The Platinum Trust, and the Royal National Institute for the Blind. c The Inner Visions Music Company, 1995.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

Inner Visions could, by itself or in collaboration with other organisations, undertake the following tasks in order to support blind and visually impaired musicians:

1. Operate a transport network using volunteer roadies/drivers.
2. Offer a speedy transcription service for braille music users.
3. Operate a telephone hotline dispensing information about job opportunities, venues, festivals, funding etc.
4. Produce a weekly diary with the same information available in accessible forms.
5. Act as a pressure group to try to get instrument/computer manufacturers to produce adaptations for blind musicians which are affordable
6. Work to encourage visually impaired musicians to embrace the new technology.
7. Act as mediator between visually impaired musicians and agents, and work to make the latter more receptive to the former.
8. Give advice on publicity and presentation.
9. Help set up a course on sound recording for visually impaired musicians.
10. Offer a place where visually impaired musicians can come together to exchange ideas, meet each other and play music together.
11. Work to break-down discrimination in the music industry and represent any visually impaired musicians who have become victims of it.
12. Organise concerts which will give visually impaired musicians the chance to play in public and to earn money.
13. Operate a record/tape distribution service.

## INTRODUCTION

The general public has long regarded music as an obvious career choice for a blind person, and is an activity clearly perceived as falling into the 'can do' category. However, is this assumption correct, and, with the ever changing face of the music industry today, are visually impaired musicians still in a position to lay claim to a natural rightful place in the business? Have blind musicians in western society been given a clear but misleading image?

An aura of inspired creativity seems to be attached to visually impaired musicians. This is inspired in part by the often heard assumption that blind people always have more acute hearing, or even natural 'perfect pitch', and is underlined by the image of such gifted players as the black blues guitarists of America's Deep South.

The achievements of such legends as Stevie Wonder - blind from birth, or of his mentor - Ray Charles, are well known. Apart from their obvious talents they would appear to benefit from the mystique stemming from their disability.. However, this cachet is a dubious one, and one which some blind performers will abhor.. The good fortune of a handful of well known players, and the personal mythology they have developed, has had the unfortunate effect of obscuring the true position of the vast majority of blind musicians living and working today.

The music business is an extremely competitive one, and the fact is that blind and visually impaired musicians are at a disadvantage within it. The difference between success and failure, between getting or not getting the gig, recording contract, television slot and so on, can be marginal. The problems associated with being blind, or sometimes merely the perception of what those problems are, often leads to undeserved failure.

Some visually impaired musicians are able to make up for this because of their great talent, public relations skill, powerful friends or sheer luck. But too many others find themselves losing out to sighted musicians of equal or even lesser talent. It is within this context of disadvantage that the Inner Visions Music Company has been formed. Designed as an umbrella organisation, its aim is to redress the balance by identifying the problems faced by visually impaired musicians and helping to address these problems through mechanisms for support.

The need for such an organisation was initially identified by the renowned blind sitar player, Baluji Shrivastav, who was a key figure in setting up the project.

The Report is essentially Inner Visions' first step, providing it with a starting point, with

the intent of both illustrating the current state of play, and suggesting possible future policies and programmes of work for the organisation itself. The research programme could not have taken place without the support of The Platinum Trust and the Royal National Institute for the Blind, and grateful thanks goes to both these organisations for their help.

The Report is divided into four sections, each of which provides useful information for both visually impaired musicians or other organisations and individuals interested in this area of work.

PART ONE provides the results of a survey/questionnaire sent to visually impaired musicians living and working in the UK, as the end-users of any service ultimately provided by Inner Visions. Each respondent was asked to describe the problems they faced, and how they felt these problems might be solved.

PART TWO outlines the possible role which Inner Visions could take in helping to support these musicians.

PART THREE is a Directory of some existing organisations which at present wholly or partially serve blind or visually impaired musicians. This section outlines what is being done (and not being done) by other organisations in the field.

PART FOUR provides a brief survey of some key funding sources available to blind and visually impaired musicians.

As well as being available in large print format, the Report also comes in tape or braille at a cost of £5.00 + P & P. from the Inner Visions Music Company

## **BLIND TO THE FACTS**

### **PART ONE - SURVEY OF MUSICIANS AND KEY ISSUES**

Information for the survey was gathered via a questionnaire which was sent out between September and December, 1994, to over 150 blind and visually impaired musicians living and working in the UK. A list of the questions asked can be found in appendix 2.

The names of recipients were gleaned from pre-existing databases held primarily by the Royal National Institute for the Blind and the London Disability Arts Forum, plus a number of organisations ranging from the Musicians' Union to the Organisation for Blind Afro-Caribbeans.

While this method was time consuming it did spread the message of Inner Vision far and wide, and provided a wide geographical and cultural sweep for responses.

By January 1995 more than 50 people had replied to the questionnaire, of which some 20% were women. Break-downs are as follows:

#### **Musical Style**

Pop & Rock: 50%

Classical: 20%

Jazz: 20%

Folk & Other Ethnic: 10%

#### **Instrument Played**

Keyboards (Acoustic): 25%

Keyboards (Electronic): 25%

Voice: 10%

Brass: 10%

Guitar: 10%

Percussion: 5%

Bass guitar: 2%

Other: 15%

Although most replies came from musicians living and working in London, the whole of the United Kingdom was represented, from Cornwall to the north of Scotland.

Replies from musicians who had taken the time to reply were often comprehensive and thought provoking.

The survey lists problems which blind and visually impaired musicians have highlighted themselves.. With respect to the issues below the Report makes no attempt to substitute or add information which was not revealed in the survey, or to make any other assumptions of need.

## A) ACCESS

### i) Access To Transport.

The most often cited problem faced by the visually impaired working musician was that of lack of transport. Though in theory most respondents were willing to work almost anywhere it was clear that the vast majority were severely constrained by not having their own transport.

An inability to drive is not of course something which is exclusive to visually impaired people, but it is something which affects them all, putting them in a position of disadvantage from the start.. The life of a musician is by necessity a mobile one, and he or she must be prepared to cover quite large distances when called upon to do so, often at the drop of a hat.

Of course, blind musicians can, and do, enlist help to transport themselves and their equipment to and from gigs, recording studios, and so on. Helpful friends or partners can often be persuaded to give lifts, and more than one musician has actually purchased transport on the understanding that others will drive it.

But there are limits, in most cases, to the help which others are willing, or able to give, especially as performances can finish late, involving helpers in much waiting about. One solution is to rely on other band members, but this is no answer if the blind musician concerned would prefer to play solo, or if the sighted musician is reluctant to be a permanent driver. Many visually impaired musicians find themselves playing in groups simply because they know that their transport problems will thus be solved.

"The real problem is that I can't work on my own and that means less money", said one

respondent. Another put it simply: "It diminishes my ability to do solo gigs".

This is an especially acute problem where the booker only has a budget to effectively cover one performer.

Taxis may seem to be the obvious alternative as they are convenient and avoid dependency on the generosity of others. But they cannot easily cope with bulky or heavy equipment, and they are expensive, and in a highly competitive market that can easily have the effect of making the gig uneconomic.

"I have turned down work because it doesn't make financial sense" commented one respondent.

## ii) Access to Music

A major problem facing the visually impaired musician is access to music.'

The survey unequivocally revealed that many find themselves severely restricted in what music they can actually play. This is not simply a question of repertoire but also affects what one respondent has described as "actual development as an artist".

Enlarged Music for most, sight reading of conventionally notated music is not a realistic option, although those musicians with a fair amount of residual sight are able to read it with the aid of enlarged print music via enlarging facilities such as photocopiers and closed circuit television. In fact, over half of the respondents to this survey had some residual vision.

Large print music ought to be cheap and ubiquitous, but it is not. Catalogues reveal it to be a rare commodity largely limited to Christmas carols and a few 'traditional favourites'. Publishers clearly do not recognise the need for large print music in the profession, a misconception which needs correcting.

Fortunately, photocopying is now a cheap and fast alternative. Providing the machine has an enlarging facility, readable copies can be produced of any work. However, copyright always has been, and still is, a sensitive issue, but a recent agreement made between the RNIB and the Music Publishers' Association reflects the fact that music publishers are prepared to treat this issue reasonably, with the bottom line consideration that permission for reproduction is always sought. Other, more costly solutions include the use of a CCTV (closed circuit TV) or score writing software (copyright again an issue).



Braille Music Enlarged music is of no use to the totally blind or those with little useful sight. Of the handful of braille music readers revealed by this survey, all were Western classical players. This is scarcely surprising bearing in mind Western tradition's heavy emphasis on notation, and braille music therefore offers by far the best way he or she will gain first hand knowledge of the music text. Furthermore proficiency in braille music is almost essential for the blind student studying a conventional music course at college or university. (It should be noted that the flip side of this classical bias is that blind musicians working in traditionally aural traditions perceive braille music as irrelevant.)

The RNIB is the country's major provider of a regular braille music transcription service. Evidence from some respondents suggests that the RNIB is not always able to bear the burden that this responsibility implies; some regard the service as slow, and there is evidence to suggest that demand for the service is outstripping supply.

There are also problematic issues concerning the learning/teaching of braille music. Evidence indicates that fewer and fewer children are being taught braille music, which has the reputation of being difficult to learn. One factor influencing this is the low number of current braille music users in the country. Only a minority of these are realistically in a position to teach it. In addition, those in a position to teach the code on a one-to-one basis are rarely in the same location as those wishing to learn, and again the issue of mobility arises. A second, and highly significant factor is the increased number of visually impaired children being taught in mainstream schools where the teaching support for braille music tuition depends on the success of a number of disparate factors which rarely seem to come together successfully. Furthermore, those who remain in special schools are more likely to have multiple disabilities, and so will follow a curriculum in which braille music is not always seen as the best means to music literacy.

The RNIB is well aware of this problem, and a number of solutions have been proposed and are ongoing which seem to have met with varying degrees of success or support. RNIB also holds a database of teachers of braille music.

### iii) Access to Information

The professional/practicing musician needs to have speedy access to a wide variety of information if he or she is to flourish in the music business.

Details of venues, agents, record companies, studios, fellow musicians, festivals, and so on, need to be easily accessible, as, without it, musicians would not be able to find the opportunities to play in public.

Information of this nature does already exist in a number of useful volumes, such as

Music Yearbook, the Directory of Community Music and Jazz Services Yearbook, and periodicals such as Time Out and Melody Maker,

These publications are unfortunately not available in braille or tape versions and so are effectively inaccessible to visually impaired people.

This survey clearly revealed the frustration felt by musicians who feel left out of the information network.. As one respondent said, "We need someone to provide local, regional and national announcements and advertisements in an accessible format simultaneously with their appearance in print". Another said, "My biggest problem is my inability to access quickly and independently information about job opportunities".

Of course, the information comprises more than lists of facts. More traditional research should also be included.

Many visually impaired musicians would seemingly love to know more about the background to the music they play, or of its culture and history. Original manuscripts, however, will hardly ever be available in an accessible form to allow such a search.

#### iv) Access to New Technology

Technology is increasingly important to today's musicians. Advances undreamt of ten years ago are commonplace now. Working musicians are required to have mastery over whatever technology is available to make their lives easier.

Many visually impaired musicians, however, feel themselves to be straggling in the race to acquire this new technology.

These important new developments are twofold:

a) The advent of digital and audio sampling has made available a huge range of high-quality sounds from authentic instruments to original electronic noises.

b) The ubiquitous use by manufacturers of the MIDI system (Music Instrument Digital Interface) means that sound sources can now be played using an increasing range of electronic instruments to access them. Previously this was the exclusive province of keyboard instruments, but now this extends to guitar, wind synths, drum pads, and most recently sensors that detect movement in free space.

This new technology is not simply about burdens and demands but can be a liberating force that extends the creative process.

Most importantly, it allows musicians to work solo far more effectively than before because one musician is able to emulate the sound of a complete band or ensemble simply by using the one instrument he has mastery of.. Such developments could be such a boon to blind musicians, many of whom are forced by circumstances to perform on their own..

However, although most new systems do not require advanced knowledge of computers or great manual dexterity, they do rely heavily upon visual displays and mouse control for their operation, which is an obvious problem for visually impaired operators..

Music computer workstations have always required a good degree of visual referencing, whether it be from an LED readout display or the computer itself. However, whereas formerly music software packages ran on Disk Operated Systems (DOS), for which speech synthesis or braille readouts al be added, the inevitable rise of graphics/window-based software has put the technology initially out of the reach of visually impaired people.

## B) REPRESENTATION AND PROMOTION

The questionnaire clearly revealed just how few visually impaired musicians have agents or management of any kind..

Clearly, it is not essential to have an agent, and sometimes musicians feel happier without one.. Some respondents quite legitimately wished to keep control and 'maintain personal contact', which obviously means doing everything themselves. Others resented the 'cut' taken by the agent, and some felt it would be wrong to be involved with a person who had only a commercial interest in them.. Yet most respondents were appreciative of the importance of agents and were actively seeking some kind of representation..

The work of an agent is specialised and time-consuming, and many agents possess skills not shared by the artists themselves. Musicians do not always have the right skills to deal effectively with record companies, venues, etc., and often lack the knowledge, and language to promote themselves effectively. This is especially true of visually impaired musicians who often lack the confidence of their sighted peers, and worry more about face-to-face meetings with people in the industry. Not having an agent can also appear 'unprofessional', and create the wrong impressions.

Most visually impaired musicians would seem to prefer to have an agent to represent them. "I am looking for one" was a common response,

But 'looking' and 'finding' is not the same thing. While five of the respondents had acquired agents, the vast majority were unsuccessful and were therefore representing themselves.

A common response from these was that agents were simply "never interested" or that "I have difficulty in getting one interested in my problems".

The results of correspondence with agents themselves are illuminating. All the major agents in Britain were written to. Only one had a visually impaired musician on their books.

"We have never been approached by a visually impaired] artist" was one reply, while another added "but if I ever heard a singer of great talent who is suitable for the concert scene this would not deter me", and another, "I can only say that, should I encounter a singer, who in all other respects, was outstanding, a visual impairment would not necessarily lead me to reject such an artist".

One agency specialising in opera singers felt that "obviously the possibility of finding engagements for visually impaired artists would be limited". The exact reasoning behind this statement was never fully explained by the agent.

Another agent, also in the opera sphere, wrote: "I doubt whether a career in opera would appeal, as it would be hazardous on stage"

Other problems listed were:

- i) Singers have to be "virtually like a model before you even begin to sing"
- ii) Singers "must be in peak physical and emotional form"
- iii) Good singers "communicate with their eyes".

These are remarkable statements, coming from people who thought they were being helpful and constructive, and who took the time to compose lengthy replies.

Even if being good-looking and fit are requirements for a career as a singer, they should not debar visually impaired people from a career in the profession. Having a visual impairment and a good physique are not incompatible.

The hazards of being on stage can surely be overcome as they are for everybody else. "Communicating with the eyes" can be dismissed, as most of the audience cannot see

the performer's eyes. (There is a case for saying that visually impaired musicians and performers need to be encouraged more to 'look' at and to 'work' an audience, but that is quite another thing).

What emerges from this glimpse into the important and powerful world of the professional agency is that blind or visually impaired musicians seem to often be regarded as physically unattractive, unfit, isolated and a liability.

Inner Visions needs to find ways of fighting this prejudice.

### C) RECORDING

Many respondents expressed an interest in obtaining help with recording. As with new technology generally, there is a feeling among visually impaired musicians that the recording studio is designed to be the province of the sighted.

However, a number of respondents have their own studios, and Inner Visions had the good fortune to see one at first hand.. It dispelled any notion that a visually impaired person would be unable to function effectively in its mechanically complex and cluttered world. Visually impaired studio owners have often learnt the hard way, and have developed skills and knowledge which would be of great assistance to other visually impaired musicians. Unfortunately few visually impaired musicians realise that they exist!

One way to learn about recording is to attend a specialised course, although these are generally geared to sighted people. For this reason, perhaps, not one of our respondents had any formal training in recording techniques. However, a short course has recently been run by SHAPE, Hammersmith and Fulham, designed to cater for blind and visually impaired musicians.. This provided an excellent opportunity for visually impaired people to receive effective training in this important area.. Such courses should be replicated..

### D) EDUCATION

Roughly 50% of respondents to this survey lack formal training and rely therefore on self-taught skills. Of the rest, most got no further than a few sporadic instrument lessons at school. Yet the survey revealed that the vast majority would have welcomed formal music education. Indeed, the demand is all the greater if account is taken of the growing realisation among visually impaired musicians that they need to know more about advances in music technology.

Formal music education can seem a daunting prospect to the visually impaired person. Some music tutors are known to ask for very high entry standards for their courses, and the general view prevails that a visually impaired musician needs to be better than his sighted peers to gain acceptance. In addition, there is a real sense in which the visually impaired student has to 'go it alone' at college..

Despite the existence of support mechanisms for visually impaired people (such as the components of higher education grants which are designed to take into account specific needs), most students find that they have to negotiate any special terms and requirements for their courses themselves. For example, questions such as 'Is extra time allowed for blind students in exams?' and 'Are readers available?' need to be addressed, and answered.

In the absence of national guidelines, or professional representation this can be a minefield.. It takes a very strong and determined character to be willing and able to negotiate course structures with mature academics. Nor is it particularly acceptable for the colleges themselves. One academic tutor spoken to (himself blind) claimed that he was highly wary of taking on another blind student without greater backup. The situation has improved. The RNIB itself runs a student support service, and many colleges now have officers whose remit includes overseeing the needs of disabled students. But clearly many would-be students have been put off formal music study because they felt it to be a too daunting experience given their disability..

## E) SOCIALISING

Isolation is one of the biggest problems for blind or visually impaired musicians, subsequently, there is great demand for opportunities to get together and exchange ideas. As one respondent put it, "there is a lack of coordination between blind musicians - we need a forum for ideas".

There is also much-unsatisfied demand for a chance to meet other "like-minded" people for confidence-boosting and general encouragement. This is a role that Inner Visions may wish to undertake.

## F) DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is a big issue which one organisation in isolation could never tackle or defeat. There is, however,,real demand for a "pressure group to deal with injustices and discrimination" as one respondent put it. A number of examples of blatant discrimination were given to Inner Visions, and the situations where such examples arise clearly need to be addressed. Equally clearly, visually impaired musicians believe

that no organisation currently exists which could tackle issues of discrimination and prejudice from the perspective of the musician. This is a role which Inner Visions may wish to undertake.

## 1) DISABILITY ARTS

There seemed little interest among respondents in pursuing the idea of a blind music culture.. Perhaps it is because music, of all the art forms, is the one least likely to easily translate into literal forms of personal experience, and so 'disabled music' has very little real meaning. There is much support for an organisation dedicated to the interests of the visually impaired musician, but little support for disability arts as such.

## BLIND TO THE FACTS

### PART TWO-CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INNER VISIONS ROLE

The survey has revealed a number of problem areas which a new organisation such as Inner Visions could address. These are as follows:

#### 1) TRANSPORT

As one respondent put it, there is a need "either to establish a fund for commercial transport rates or provide volunteer roadies to avoid charging potential bookers unrealistically high rates".

A transport fund is a possibility, but it would be expensive to run and highly difficult to administer in a fully accountable manner.

The idea of volunteer drivers seems more accessible, using SHAPE London's concessionary ticket scheme for disadvantaged audiences as a model. Volunteer escorts are on hand to provide transport and assistance to disadvantaged people who wish to attend arts events in the London Area. The scheme is linked to over sixty venues in the capital. Funded by the London Borough Grants Unit, the scheme has been running for over ten years and currently has over 100 drivers offering 120 trips per year.

Of course, devising a scheme covering the whole country (and not just for designated venues) would be a Herculean task. But it is feasible. Much depends upon the

availability of good, reliable volunteer drivers.

The names of such people can be obtained from organisations such as the National Association of Volunteer Bureaux or the Volunteer Centre, UK - who will also provide practical advice concerning insurance, the payment of expenses, training and vetting etc - or alternatively from services such as The Guardian volunteer page or through ads in local newspapers.

## 2) MUSIC

Inner Visions should support any initiative to make music in all its forms more available to visually impaired musicians. This means encouraging the wider availability of large print music, and transcription of braille music. Current suppliers should be supported and funds could be found for expansion.

## 3) INFORMATION

Inner Visions could look for ways in which pre-existing information of use to musicians could be put into a more accessible form such as braille or many useful publications which are at present effectively unavailable to blind musicians.

Alternatively the same information could be provided over the telephone to anyone who needs access to it. This would mean summarising the most important news and data on an ongoing basis-a weekly diary, say and having an appropriate volunteer or paid person on the end of the line. If visually impaired musicians had speedy access to this information in this way it would surely help them in the work/funding market.

Inner Visions could assist with the research demands of visually impaired musicians. Researchers or helpers could be provided to undertake work on behalf of the visually impaired musician. This could be done for payment, voluntarily, or based on a system of mutual benefit. Inner Visions could, in effect, act as a kind of clearing house in which the ``interests and passions of blind musicians and helpers are matched and the latter is almost 'apprenticed' to the former.

## 4) NEW TECHNOLOGY

As far as new technology is concerned, there is the distinct impression that manufacturers will only look where the majority market seems to lie, and visual impaired users are neither majority or priority. Pressure therefore needs to be put on manufacturers, to produce equipment of adaptations for use by blind people.

The technology is not beyond reach and manufacturers should be encouraged to



acknowledge that there is a market out there for such products. Although modifications mean extra expense, the manufacturer may well be able to cover these additional costs. Alternatively Inner Visions could look to explore ways in which extra costs could be subsidised.

More visually impaired musicians should also be made aware of current events. Too many musicians are either unaware of what is happening, or else simply feel that they are the sole province of the sighted. This is wrong. The RNIB has already done much to spread the word, with a seminar, the formation of a VI MIDI User Group, and so on, but it is clear that more could be done in this area.

## 5) PROMOTION

Inner Visions could set about re-educating existing promoters and agents as to the quality of visually impaired musicians. A real change in attitudes should be effected, and the industry needs to be shown the extent of the talent which it is overlooking.

Inner Visions could set up an agency, acting directly as entrepreneurs. This, however, may be too ambitious in the short term, and an organisation which presents itself as an agency for blind performers might well end up falling into the same cultural ghetto that some perceive has afflicted Disability Arts in general.

This is not to say that Inner Visions should not work with Disability Arts organisations. Clearly, it should do all it can to support other organisations which already promote the work of visually impaired musicians.

Inner Visions could certainly offer a number of services which would aid promotion. For example it could:

i) give advice on publicity and presentation ii) operate a distribution service for the records or tapes of its members iii) arrange concerts which would give visually impaired musicians the chance to play in public.

## 6) EDUCATION

Inner Visions might not ever be in a position to offer courses directly.. However, it would be good if it could work with others to establish or support education which specifically serves visually impaired musicians. This would be particularly important in the twin

areas of sound recording and new technology.

Inner Visions would also aim to encourage students to enter music courses, and offer them advice throughout, possibly tackling some of the burdens currently levied on the students themselves.

## 7) SOCIALISING

Many organisations already exist which offer the chance for people to meet each other, but none which bring together visually impaired musicians in a professional environment.

Inner Visions could do this by offering some kind of regular venue or meeting-place. The service provided could:

i) have a purely social function ii) be a place to exchange information and ideas iii) centre around demonstrations and workshops iv) offer its members a much needed opportunity to play.

## 8) DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is an issue which needs to be confronted at all levels. Although there are a number of organisations which set out to tackle it, the music industry seems to have been largely overlooked as an area of prejudice.

The results of the Inner Visions survey highlights the extent to which blind and visually impaired musicians are discriminated against. For this reason there is a real need for an organisation to act as a pressure group and fight to level the playing field for visually impaired musicians.

# BLIND TO THE FACTS

## PART THREE - DIRECTORY OF ORGANISATIONS

There are many organisations already in existence which aim either to assist disabled people (including blind and visually impaired people) or to assist artists (including musicians) or both.

This section seeks to identify whether or not a vacuum exists in the provision of services to blind and visually impaired musicians which might be filled in whole or in part by Inner

Visions. It looks at what is offered by existing organisations, and what is not offered.

The main address of each organisation is given, together with a contact person and their telephone number (where available).

Artrage Intercultural Development Agency Ltd

Lincoln House Kennington

Park

1-3, Brixton Road London SW9

6DE

Beverley Marshall

Tel. 0171 735 2311

Art Rage Intercultural Development (formerly MAAS - the Minority Arts Information Service) is an advisory service for disabled people in the arts, concentrating mainly on the Afro-Caribbean experience. Its aim is to promote 'artists and arts groups of colour' which it does principally through the provision of short training courses. It also offers a general advice service as well as publishing a directory of cultural contacts and 'Art Rage', a listings magazine.

Artsline

54 Charlton Street Camden

London NW1

Tel. 0171 388 2227

Artsline is a London-based arts and entertainment information and advisory service for disabled people. It provides up-to-date information particularly on physical access issues, and produces a number of directories giving detailed listings on venues in the capital, some of which give a welcome focus on backstage access for performers. The organisation shows an increased interest in providing information for people with sensory disabilities.

Arts Council of England

24 Great Peter Street London SW1P

3NQ Tel. 0171 333 0100

also Arts Council of Scotland, Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

National Funding body for the arts. For comments on Arts Council policy concerning funding, see Part Four of this report, 'Funding'.

The former Arts Council of Great Britain recently produced the useful "Arts and Disability Directory" which provides information on training, employment and organisations specialising in the field. Available in print, large print, tape and braille.

The Association of Blind Asians

322 Upper Street London N1  
2XQ

Sandhya Hannay

0171 226 1950

ABA is a voluntary organisation working for the welfare of blind and partially sighted asians. There is also an office in Leeds. Their monthly meetings place prominence on music and cultural activities, though they do not offer specific help to musicians.

Community Music

60 Farringdon Road London EC1R  
3BP

Dave O'Donnell

0171 490 2577

Community Music describes itself as a 'quiet revolution in music education'. It basically offers a twelve month music tutor training courses, with placements in community settings (such as schools), which aims to turn musicians into music teachers. Its novel features are that it requires no formal entry requirements, and that it draws its students from mixed musical and cultural backgrounds. Their literature states more than once that the course is designed to include musicians with disabilities, and at least one visually impaired 'student has undertaken the course to our knowledge.

Jazz Services

5 Dryden Street Covent Garden  
London WC2E 1NW

Celia Wood

0171 829 8352/4

Jazz Services is funded by the Arts Council to support jazz. It does this by providing services in communications, touring, information and education. Of particular note is its work in producing a yearbook which contains all the information that a jazz musician could possibly need. It is a model of how such a guide should be, though it is sadly not available in any form which is accessible to blind people.

Live Music Now!

4 Lower Belgrave Street London SW1W  
OLJ

Virginia Renshaw

Tel. 0171 730 2205

Live Music Now! was founded in 1977 and now has branches throughout the UK and Ireland.

It has with 'two complementary objectives':

- i) 'to provide talented young professional musicians with a wide range of performing experiences'
- ii) 'to provide high quality performances of music to people who, for a variety of reasons could not otherwise have access to live music'. These are fulfilled simultaneously in specially arranged live performances.

It is only the audiences who may be disabled and generally not the musicians themselves. However, an organisation which is clearly sensitive to the problems faced by disabled people, Live Music Now! is also keen to utilise the services of disabled musicians. Certainly blind musicians have performed for them, and have enjoyed the experience. More visually impaired musicians should be encouraged to take part.

Live Music Now! pays its musicians well, and treats them as professionals. Entry is by audition only and so the standard of musicianship is high.

It is not the answer for all musicians, but clearly there are talented blind musicians out there who could easily cope with the demands made.

## Musicians Union

There are district offices in Glasgow, Birmingham, Leeds, Peterborough, Manchester, Bristol and London

London 60/62 Clapham Road  
London SW9 OJJ

Tony Lucas

0171 582 5566

The Musicians Union is the most important organisation representing the professional needs of musicians. It is most important in setting pay rates (which vary depending on whether you are dealing with 'gigs', live tv. work, recording sessions etc) and working conditions for the industry. For its members it also offers a free contract service (i.e. checking your contract to make sure it is not onerous); a careers service, and cheap insurance services including public liability insurance. As with most unions, they will also support members in any relevant legal proceedings.

However, the MU is less concerned with issues of equal opportunities. It has no disability policy as such. When requested it would not produce a list of its blind members (though it does produce its magazine 'Musician' in tape form, which strongly implies that there are visually impaired MU members). It is hard to imagine the union doing much to break down the barriers confronted by blind musicians.

National Disability Arts Forum London  
Disability Arts Forum

Diorama Arts Centre 34 Osnaburgh  
Street London NW1 3ND

Sarah Scott

Tel. 0171 916 5419/5484

The National Disability Arts Forum (NDAF) aims to advance the development of arts by disabled people by promoting musical, visual, tactile, literary and performing arts with events in which people with disabilities are the primary participants. For example, the London Disability Arts Forum organises a cabaret club which operates at various London venues, at which disabled artists are able to perform for near commercial fees.

NDAF also holds a highly useful database of disabled performers.

The National Disability Arts Forum does not see supporting mainstream arts as its role. It is highly involved in the political side of Disability Arts. It supports disability as a distinct culture and does not see its role as to encourage more artists to work professionally in the mainstream.

This is not necessarily to say that it is against the notion of, say, musicians making a living in conventional venues etc, merely that it lies beyond their ambit. Disability Arts movements such as the National Disability Arts Forum are the first to admit that they cannot meet the needs of those individuals who wish to make a career out of their art in the mainstream.

LDAF publishes a monthly magazine 'DAIL' (Disability Arts in London), which reports news and views from the disability arts community, gives listings and events of interest, and also carries recruitment and advertising.

National Music and Disability Information Service

Dartington Hall Totnes Devon  
TQ9 6EJ

Laura Crichton

Tel. 01803 866701

The National Music and Disability Information Service (NMDIS) is concerned more about information than performance work, but does good work in assisting disabled musicians.

It is a national charity 'established to facilitate the enjoyment and involvement of disabled people in music by collecting and disseminating information and advice'. A small-scale operation, it acts largely as a 'clearing house' - taking enquiries from the public (approx 1,000 per year) and passing them on to the most appropriate organisation for an answer.

In addition to this NMDIS also supplies information and advice directly, and produces a quarterly newsletter, 'Music News', in print and tape which gives information on upcoming events such as conferences and technical developments. It also produces a number of useful information papers. Of the latter the most relevant in this field are RP14 'Information on Music for People with Partial Sight' which deals mainly with the availability of large print music and RP20 'Sources of Grants and Funding'.

However, as the name suggests NMDIS does not deal exclusively with blind or visually impaired people. Many of the enquiries they receive are from those with a physical disability who require a specially adapted instrument, though they do deal with a sizeable quantity of enquiries from or on behalf of visually impaired musicians. Nor does NMDIS make any pretence of representing professional musicians. Their 'clients' are mostly non-professionals and many of them are children.

Organisation for Blind Afro-Carribeans

24 Mayward House Benhill Road  
London SE5 7NA

John Keise

0171 635 7483

No information was received from this organisation, but due to the specific nature of its work, it has been included here.

Royal National College for the Blind

College Road Hereford Herefordshire  
HR1 1EB

Tel: 01432 265 725

Contact: William Wake

The RNCB is the only college of further education specially for visually impaired students that offers music courses. Courses offered in music include GCSE and 'A' level, BTEC, piano tuning and a new course in Music Instrument Technology (based around a new recording studio with 32 channel mixing, vocal booth and drum booth, and a MIDI studio with 8-track recording. The course has had few 'graduates' as yet; to date four students have gone on to Sandwell College of Further Education to follow courses in sound engineering.

The college also provides concert recital opportunities.

The Royal National Institute for the Blind

224 Great Portland Street London W1N  
6AA

Music Officer (Leisure) Simon Labbett 0171 388 1266 Music Education Adviser  
Sally-Anne Zimmermann 0181 960 8600 Music Services Manager - Roger



Firman 0171 388 1266

The Royal National Institute for the Blind is the largest provider of facilities and services to blind and visually impaired people. The following is a snapshot of the services within RNIB that relate the issues under discussion.

#### i) Musical Notation

As mentioned previously RNIB is the UK's major transcriber of braille music. The braille music code is the world-wide recognised system of notating music in braille. Proficient users of it are generally to be found concentrated in the classical music world where the importance of braille music is on a par with the importance of the printed score.

Some problems surrounding production of braille music were voiced but the general consensus is that things are getting better and that the real 'horror stories' are a thing of the past. However, it is not clear that the RNIB will ever be able to achieve the turn-around speed or accuracy which musicians want, and their tutors require. One answer to this may be the development of a computerised system which would automatically transcribe a given score into Braille. RNIB has been attempting to develop a software system to allow this to happen.

Another answer may simply be to spread the braille transcription service to other organisations. It is perhaps over-optimistic to expect the RNIB to satisfy all wants, and it may be the case that others could help with the task.

The majority of visually impaired musicians have some residual sight and often are able to read a score if it is enlarged to a sufficient degree. Large print scores are available (NMDIS has a list for instance) but they are severely limited. The only practical alternative is to enlarge on a photocopier or using computer score writing software. Copyright is an issue here; however, the RNIB has recently struck up a deal with the Music Publishers' Association, the ethos of which acknowledges the particular special needs of partially sighted people vis a vis copyright. This is a useful step. The RNIB also produces a booklet called "music in large print" which gives general advice on how to get the best results from enlargement methods. Available from RNIB Customer Services.

#### ii) Student Support Service

RNIB student Support Service provides help and advice direct to students in further and higher education or the establishments themselves. Such advice, for instance, could concern the use of readers or the availability of state benefits for equipment.

RNIB is currently only aware of about ten music students in further or higher education, however, the numbers may well be larger since the RNIB service to a large extent is reactive to requests rather than seeking out students.

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### iii) Employment Network

The RNIB is fortunately increasingly concerned about the employment prospects of visually impaired people, and does much to help them into the world of work. For our purposes, its most impressive work has been done through its Small Business Unit which was set up in 1986 to 'assess the demand for specialist business advice and support for visually impaired people and has had many successes since.

Self-employed musicians are of course classed as small-businesses by the Inland Revenue, and the unit has supported many over the years, including some with international reputations. The help is mainly indirect and consists principally of advice with business plans and fund raising etc., it does not really make grants available. However, such advice is highly useful since presentation is often the key to getting a business started in music as in many other areas.

### iv) Music Technology

Although the RNIB can appear quite conservative in its outlook and old fashioned in its approach, it seems finally to have woken up to the potential of technological developments in music - such as sampling and MIDI- and now show a commitment to making them more accessible. The RNIB is currently involved in the development of adaptations for visually impaired people, and has held a conference in London where, for example, new software has been demonstrated.

### v) Information and Advice

Not surprisingly the RNIB receives many enquiries from blind and visually impaired musicians, and so spends much of its time steering people into the right directions. Information packs are available from the RNIB on various aspects of music performance, music appreciation, music and multi-disabilities, and music technology (MIDI) from the point of view of visually impaired people. The RNIB also has a database of visually impaired musicians which lists areas of expertise and knowledge together with professional/amateur status.

SHAPE/Artlink

(Artlink East, Artlink for Humberside and North Yorkshire, Artlink West Yorkshire,

Artshare South West, East Midlands Shape, Equal Arts, North West Shape, Shape London, South East Artability, Southern Artlink, West Midlands Artlink)

Shape London, 356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PA. Tel. 0171 700 0100.

SHAPE/Artlink is a loose national federation set up in the seventies to 'create opportunities for people who are mentally or physically disabled, ill, elderly or severely socially disadvantaged, to participate in arts activities and events and transformed itself into a network ten years later.

The various branches act as arts development agencies working to promote access to the arts at all levels for disabled people. It sets up workshop projects using professional artists in arts centres, day centres, residential settings and hospitals.

It also runs training courses - involving short courses, placements and workshops - and organises performances and festivals. In London it also operates its celebrated ticket scheme, already mentioned in this report, which provides volunteer escorts and ticket concessions for disabled people to over sixty London venues.

However, SHAPE's constituency is wide, covering all types of disability and all types of artists. There is no sense in which visually impaired people are given any priority, or that music has any predominance. There seems to be a heavy emphasis on the 'politics' of disability culture, and conversely a suspicion of the notion of disabled artists working in the mainstream.

Like disability arts generally this is also an organisation which seems dominated by the culture of deaf arts. As the deaf arts movement has successfully raised issues around deaf arts and the plight of deaf artists, this is understandable. However, some visually impaired people perceive that their own interests have been overlooked.

This is not to say that nothing is done for blind and visually impaired people. Emphasis on particular client groups varies from one SHAPE/Artlink organisation to another. SHAPE in Hammersmith and Fulham (part of SHAPE London) have recently set about setting up a short sound recording course for visually impaired musicians.

There is a real sense, however, that SHAPE/Artlink does not serve the serious visually impaired musician well.

As outlined in Part One, the needs of visually impaired musicians are numerous, but centre around the problem of getting more work in the mainstream.

In fairness, SHAPE cannot be held to task for not increasing employment opportunities,

as this is not one of its functions.

Stream Records

77A Hindmans Road East Dulwich  
London SE22 9NQ

Genie Cosmas

0181 299 2998

Stream Records' was formed in 1991 as a mail order company for the distribution of records and tapes made by disabled artists.

It receives funding from the Arts Council. It has its own recording artists which it promotes on its own record label, and operates a cabaret around Britain at disability arts venues to showcase the talent on its books.

Although the ideas behind Stream are good, participants in the survey felt that the organisation is too small to effect great change and that this source of distribution could not be relied on to bolster their profile.

Visually Impaired Musicians Association

Chairperson - Clare Gailans

0181 471 9639

The Visually Impaired Musicians Association (VIMA) is an unfunded organisation which was established in the 80s. Although it would appear to share the same aims as Inner Visions, VIMA's aims actually differ markedly.

VIMA serves a wide constituency: "blind and partially sighted musicians and music lovers, together with their friends, colleagues and wellwishers". Its brief is also correspondingly wide, and includes "putting on concerts...employment prospects... (and)...high tech opportunities".

In actuality, VIMA has a clear bias towards Western Classical music. Most of its members are Western classical musicians, and many of its major concerns - such as the production of braille music - are weighted, though not exclusively, to Western classical music.

VIMA also places a strong emphasis on social gatherings and self-help, rather than the

strategic improvement of job prospects for its members.

It does much good work as an unfunded organisation, and is run by membership subscription.

Local Societies of and for Blind People

(RNIB's Voluntary Agencies Link Unit can advise on geographical breakdown.) There are around 100 local blind associations in the UK, covering every part of the country, of various sizes and effectiveness. Few offer anything definite for the blind musician, and some even seemed unaware that there are blind and visually impaired musicians out there!) It seems unlikely that they would be able to offer the professional visually impaired musician the type of level of effective support needed, since their limited resources are directed to helping with the needs of visually impaired people in living their daily lives.

BLIND TO THE FACTS

## PART FOUR - FUNDING

### 1) General Advice

Raising money to work as an artist in your own right is never easy. For disabled artists, particularly working outside the main-stream, the task is even more difficult.

The funding of any project is something which requires a lot of careful thought and planning. You need to have established some kind of consistent track record, and a positioning niche in the marketplace.

To do this takes time, effort and investment of resources in publicity, administration, tour booking, and all the other things which mark you as a professional musician whose work should be taken seriously. Quality and originality sometimes get lost in the struggle to make ends meet, and the fight for recognition in a crowded profession.

As well as getting it right at the box office, it is worth looking at how you could solicit grants to help you cover the cost of arranging a tour, doing a series of workshops, or composing something new.

Remember, funders generally want proof that their money is going to be wisely or well spent, and that a project they invest in will actually take place, as well as achieving its aims. Hence the emphasis on sound finance and administration, and the thought you have to put into getting your project details exactly right.

Stating your case is important. After all, why should anyone give you money if all you can say in the asking is that you want it. Sometimes this might be enough, but generally you will have to be a bit more sophisticated in explaining your reasons for needing the support you are asking for. Be clear about what it is you want to do, for whom, when, where and how often. Also think about who you want to work with, what you want the project to achieve, and what makes the project special or unique.

Careful budgeting - comparing income and expenditure - is also crucial if you want any funder to give you a grant. But be financially realistic; a project that is financially and artistically over-ambitious is unlikely to be successful.

## 2) Support

Support can come in a number of guises, and from all kinds of different sources. This section of the report will take a brief look at grants, recognising that the whole area of fundraising is a specialised field which requires quite a lot of experience to be really successful.

A grant is money which is given to you for a specific purpose, and which does not have to be repaid.

Guarantee against loss is support which can be claimed only at the end of a project, provided your expenditure exceeds your income up to the amount of the guarantee.

Matching funding is support given which you have to find another supporter to match, in other words, give an equal amount again, before it is available to you.

The above usually come from trusts or other sources of discretionary/public funding, such as local authorities, or arts funding sources, such as the Arts Council or Regional Arts Boards. There will usually be conditions attached to the giving which you will need to fulfil.

A donation is an amount given by a company or individual towards a specific project or need.

Sponsorship is money given usually by a business or company for a project which that company can be publically linked to in some way.

### In-kind support

is support given via equipment or services, instead of cash (ie printing your publicity, or

giving you transport.)

Here too, there may well be conditions attached to the giving, which you will need to fulfil, although they might be different from the kind of conditions with arts funding organisations.

The approach in each case should be different, as those doing the giving will have different needs, and ask different things of you.

### 3) Where to go

Once you have decided what your project will be, you need to think about where to go to ask for support. There are a number of publications which give advice as well as the names and addresses of would-be donors.

The Arts Council 14 Great Peter  
Street London SW1P 3NQ  
tel. 0171 333 0100

The ACE Library has a bibliography of "Fundraising and Funding Sources" which is available free of charge from them at the above address. Send a sae.

The National Music and Disability Information Service (see section 3 for address) produces a list of sources for financial assistance in the field of music and disability entitled "Sources of Grants and Funds" (RP20). Please send £3 for a pamphlet which includes advice on sources of financial support for the loan or purchase of instruments and of tuition.

The Disabled Living Foundation 380 Harrow Road  
London W9 2HU tel. 0171 289 1266

The DLF produces an advice/information paper entitled "Raising Funds and Obtaining Equipment for People with Disabilities".

Royal National Institute for the Blind (see section 3 for address and nature of assistance)

A very wide range of directories and information on fundraising is available.

"The Central Government Grants Guide" (Anne-Marie Doulton) is a comprehensive guide to the grants, loans and payments for services available from all central

government departments (including grant making trusts founded wholly or partly by central government).

"The Charity Forum Directory" (Charity Forum) is a list of charities who are members of the Charities Forum which represents smaller charities

"Directory of Grant Making Trusts" (Anne Villmur) is the major source of information on grant giving trusts, arranged in alphabetical order, with a subject index. This should be in your local library reference section.

The Directory of Social Change 24 Stephenson Way  
London NW1 2DP tel. 0171 209 5151

publishes many directories and other fundraising information as well as running short courses and training

workshops. Call them for advice on which directories/workshops would best suit your needs.

#### 4) Funding Sources

Funding for arts projects comes at a variety of levels, from the purely local, to the nation-wide. Before you start, it is worth doing a bit of homework on the organisation you are asking for money. Find out what the funding criteria and guidelines are, and who the key contact person is.

If the application form is daunting, or you need help to focus your ideas, funders are generally only too happy to talk to you - just call them and ask for help (keep trying if you do not manage to get through first time, as staff of funding organisations are usually horribly over-worked).

Remember, too many applications fail because applicants fail to fill in the forms properly, or they have not supplied the right information.

Local Authorities All local authorities, whether county, district, city or borough councils, have the ability to make grants for the arts. Collectively, they are now the largest spenders on local arts in the country, but are not compelled to spend money on the arts, and so consequently provision varies across the country.

Some councils such as Birmingham, Bradford, Leicestershire and Hampshire have strong support for the arts, whereas Derbyshire and West Glamorgan, for example, hardly spend any money on arts provision.



Contact your local town hall or council office for information on the Arts and Leisure Department, and how you can apply for funding. Support will be given for work in your immediate area, for your local community.

Regional Arts Boards England is divided into 10 regions, covering the whole of the country. Each region has its own Regional Arts Board, working in partnership with the Arts Council of England, in the system of sustaining, promoting and developing the arts in England.

Most of their funds are available for groups or projects, but a variety of commissions, bursaries, fellowships and residencies are available for individuals (eg composers).

Each Board establishes its own priorities from year to year, though all boards are concerned to develop ventures in areas where arts provision is poor. Obviously your chances of receiving a grant increases if your activities/projects coincide with the current priority in content or location. Support will be given for work taking place in the region, and which is likely to have some kind of impact or leave a mark on the communities of that region.

Few boards have Disability Officers, though all have Equal Opportunity policies and claim that they wish to encourage applications from disabled artists.

Eastern Arts: Cherry Hinton Hall, Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB1 4DW (01223 215 355).

East Midlands Arts: Mountfields House, Forest Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3HU (01509 218 292).

London Arts: Elme House, 133 Long Acre, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9AF. (0171 240 1313).

Northern Arts: 9-10 Osborne Terrace, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE2 1NZ (0191 281 6334).

North West Arts: 12 Harter Street, Manchester M1 6HY (0161 228 3062).

Southern Arts: 13 St Clement Street, Winchester SO23 9DQ (01962 861 186).

South East Arts: 10 Mount Ephraim, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 8AS (01892 515 210).

South West Arts: Bradnich Place, Gandy Street, Exeter, EX4 3LS (01392 218 188).

West Midlands Arts: 82 Granville Street, Birmingham, B1 2LH (0121 631 3121).

Yorkshire and Humberside Arts: 21 Bond Street, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF13 1AX

(01924 455 555).

The Arts Council of England Address given previously

The Arts Council of England has grants available for African, Caribbean or Asian music (especially by British-based artists and organisations), as well as a number of other schemes which might be relevant to your work. The organisation is the national arts funder for England, with a brief to fund flagship companies, and other arts organisations to do work that has a national brief. Only apply to ACE if this is truly the case, or if your work will be toured nationally.

The Arts Council of Wales Holst House  
Museum Place  
Cardiff CF1 3NX Tel. 01222 394 711

Funds projects in Wales. There are also offices in Gwent (tel. 01633 875 075), in Carmarthen (tel. 01267 234 248), and Gwynedd (tel. 01248 353 248).

The Scottish Arts Council 12 Manor Place Edinburgh EH3  
7DD Tel. 0131 243 2444

Funds work taking place in Scotland

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland 185 Stranmills  
Road Belfast BT9 5DU Tel. 01232 381 591

Funds work taking place in Northern Ireland

Trusts There are literally hundreds of grant making trusts which regularly give to the arts. In many cases support is only given to registered charities, while others require an individual application to be supported or endorsed by a registered charity. Highlighted below are some trusts which have a track record of giving to visually impaired musicians, or which at least on paper, look as if they might.

Prince's Youth Business Trust 5 Cleveland Place  
London SW1Y OJJ

PYBT offers grants of up to £1,500 to people who are disabled, under 31, and who wish to start a business. In addition there is a government benefit available for those who

wish to set up a business (the name of which varies according to location), which is typically worth £40 per week.

According to the RNIB Small Business Unit, it is sometimes possible to negotiate an extra amount as it will take you longer to get your business started because you are blind or partially sighted.

Kate Mann Memorial Fund  
c/o 63 Hillside Crescent Harrow,  
Middlesex HA2 0QU

This is a trust fund established to grant aid to young visually impaired people under 25 (in some cases 30), who wish to pursue musical performance or appreciation. All types of music are included and grants can be used towards tuition fees, purchase of instruments or attendance at concerts, seminars or master classes. Contact David Mann at the above address.

Gardiner's Trust for the Blind Suite 118  
Canada House 272 Field End Road Eastcote  
Middlesex HA4 9NA

This trust makes grants available to meet specific needs of any sort, but gives a priority to vocational training, particularly in music. The maximum amount is £300.

Cecilia Charity for the Blind 61 West  
Smithfield London EC1A 9EA

This trust makes modest single financial grants towards the purchase of special equipment which cannot be funded by statutory bodies. The maximum amount is usually £250.

Action for Blind People  
14-16 Verney Road London SE16  
3DZ Offers a number of services  
to help visually impaired people,  
including cash grants. The  
maximum is usually £300.

Electronic Aids for the Blind Suite 4-B 73-75  
High Street Chislehurst Kent BR7 7AE

Specialises in raising funds for computers, CCTVs etc. Because the equipment is expensive, if they feel they can help you, they will contact other grant making trusts, and put together grant applications on your behalf.

Alper Charitable Trust 44 Finchams  
Close Linton Cambridge CB1 ONE

The Musicians Benevolent Fund 16 Ogle Street  
London W1P 7LG

Gives grants to professional musicians who need financial help due to illness or disability

Local associations for the blind may also be able to help with small sums of money. A list of these is available from the RNIB.

Action for Blind People 14-16 Verney  
Road London SE16 3DZ

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APPENDIX ONE  
QUOTES FROM VISUALLY IMPAIRED MUSICIANS (selection)

"Inner Visions should be a body which the professional could go to with a problem" - blind opera singer.

"There is always strength through the union and co-operation of people with similar objectives" - blind jazz guitarist.

"Inner Visions is a good idea if it is not just another wind-baggery organisation" - blind classical organist

"There are many inherent biases in the music business which need to be addressed" - visually impaired multi-instrumentalist

"Inner Visions must battle; it must throw its weight behind our needs" - blind keyboard player

"Inner Visions is a great idea if it embraces lots of different types of music and ideas and is not just classical" - visually impaired vocalist and harmonica player

"We need an organisation for professional musicians" - blind harpsichordist

"The strength to take things a step further - that's what we need" - visually impaired jazz guitarist

## APPENDIX TWO

### INNER VISIONS MUSIC COMPANY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name:
2. Address:
3. Telephone number:
4. Are you totally blind or do you have any useful vision?
5. Which instruments do you play?
6. Do you have any formal music training? (Please state where)
7. What type of music do you play? (eg classical, jazz)
8. How far do you travel to perform?
9. Do you use braille music? (If not, why not?)
10. Do you have any contact with other blind or visually impaired musicians?  
(Professional or social?)
11. Are you a member of the Musicians' Union?
12. Do you have an agent or promoter? (If not, why not?)
13. What are the main problems and difficulties you face as a musician? Does visual impairment have any effect on these or are they inherent in the music business?
14. Do you feel that your visual impairment has affected your approach to music making, and if yes, how?
15. Do you feel that there is a need for an organisation which would assist blind or visually impaired musicians in aspects of music making?
16. If not, why not?
17. If yes, how might it be of assistance in dealing with the problems of access to music and information and of transport to and from gigs?
18. What other assistance might it give?