

world music in England



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Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts in England. Between 2005 and 2008, we are investing £1.7 billion of public funds from government and the National Lottery. This is the bedrock of support for the arts in England.

Our vision is to promote the arts at the heart of national life, reflecting England's rich and diverse cultural identity.

We believe that the arts have the power to transform lives and communities, and to create opportunities for people throughout the country.

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Welcome to Arts Council England's guide to the world music industry in England. We hope that you will find this publication both a practical guide, and fuel for thought, as we examine some of the key issues for the sector in the 21st century.

World music has been around in England for several decades – the 1970 Fela Kuti record (see photo opposite) was produced by a British-owned label, EMI Nigeria Ltd. Fela Kuti himself was to be found studying music at Trinity College in London in the early 60s.

At the beginning of the 80s it was possible to count the major world music players on two hands. In the last 20 years the activity has grown exponentially to become a significant and vibrant part of this country's creative industries. The Arts Council has nurtured that activity and helped to build an exciting world music sector in England that is respected globally. This publication describes how it all came about and also provides valuable information for all those involved and interested in the world music industry.

The guide begins with an overview, looking at the current situation of the business and its infrastructure, as many world music operators perceive it to be. These views

indicate that the sector has many internal strengths, especially in how it self-regulates the quality of its own repertoire, the professionalism it applies, the value and respect it places on musicians, the commitment it shows in bringing new audiences to different musics and in the productivity of its networking. There are however opportunities for development, such as the extent to which the world music business synchronises and interacts with artists and organisations arising from Britain's own culturally diverse communities. Particularly when, in recent years, many great talents living in our towns and cities have started to appear on prestigious concert stages around the world.

Fela Kuti –
British label release
Photo: Elliot Jack



Support for culturally diverse and diasporic arts is a major part of Arts Council England's work and it is timely therefore, with the first Womex in the UK in 2005, to take stock. This publication does that by tracing the history of world music and providing a wealth of information on musicians and organisations and all those involved in the current business. The overview of the world music scene at the beginning of the guide is based on interviews and desk research. The second part is a directory of organisations arranged by type. The directory is selective and is designed to indicate the range and variety of activities that take place, and give some sense of their inter-connections.

The research focuses on England, but refers to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

We hope that you will find *world music in England* helpful, whether you are seeking some further context from a British perspective or looking over at our activities from abroad.

Whatever your reasons for using this book we hope you will agree that world music in Britain has made an important and dramatic impact – not just on the way we listen to music but on how we look at life.

Kim Evans, Executive Director, Arts
Alan James, Head of Contemporary Music
Arts Council England

World music: used initially by ethnomusicologists to refer to the diverse local musics of the world, **'world music' has also become a term for any commercially available music of non-Western origin,** and for musics of ethnic minorities; it is also applied to contemporary fusions or collaborations with local 'traditional' or 'roots' musics and Western pop and rock musics.

Oxford Dictionary of Musical Terms, Oxford University Press, 2004

Introduction

In July 2004, the MORI market research agency asked 1,577 English and Welsh public houses, hotels, inns, clubs, student unions, restaurants, cafes, members clubs, churches and community halls what kinds of live music they had presented in the last 12 months. Of those that said they had (47%), 5% said 'world music'.

There are, according to MORI, 151,176 public houses, hotels etc in England and Wales. Mathematics suggests, therefore, that throughout England and Wales between July 2003 and July 2004, there were at least 3,552 world music gigs. And this does not include the hundreds of events held annually in concert halls, theatres or at festivals in England.

Rita Ray and Max Reinhardt from The Shrine
Photo: Carol Sambili

But the accuracy of MORI's findings depends on whether these venue managers happened to have a copy of the *Oxford Dictionary of Musical Terms* or something similar to hand. Almost no other type of music is as difficult to define as 'world music'. There is, as DJ Charlie Gillett has said, 'no rule book' for world music. Perhaps this uncertainty of definition is the reason why world music featured so little in MORI's poll. Other, more definable styles such as jazz and folk scored 20% and 10% respectively.

A similar problem is posed by another recent survey for the *Observer Music Monthly* magazine (July 2005). ICM asked 1,083 Britons over the age of 16 about their music listening and buying habits. When asked what their favourite type of music was, 2% named world music. Unfortunately the interviewers didn't ask '...and what is your

next favourite?' Nor is it clear what the interviewees classed as world music. ('Pop', by the way, was the top choice at 27% – a category which is, of course, transparently clear to everyone.)

In Britain, the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) (see Support bodies) which provides annual statistics on record sales, reported in 2003 that world music as a 'genre' accounted for a 0.5% share of the total market sales (up from about 0.4% in the four previous years). But this is hopeless, says Ian Anderson, editor of *fRoots* magazine (see Media: Journals and magazines). 'The world music market must be a substantial part of the record retailers' income – look at how much retail space HMV and Virgin give it in their West End of London outlets – entire floors.' Certainly as much space as jazz and folk, one could add.

There is, as DJ Charlie Gillett has said, **'no rule book'** for world music.

Earliest references to world music

One starting point for a history of the world music sector in England might be found in the life and work of composer Cecil Sharp (1859–1924). From the first years of the 20th century he transcribed or arranged thousands of English morris dances, ballads, and folk pieces (as many as 3,000 by some calculations), and gave concerts and recitals of his discoveries, which generated much Edwardian media coverage. His international fieldwork began in 1915 when he made the first of four trips to America to collect folk music from the Appalachian Mountains. Sharp was not alone in his interest, and the foundations of the folk movement of the early 20th century, which he helped to cement, provided the first framework of concerts and recitals that enabled the earliest ‘world music’ (in the form of foreign folk music) to find its audience. The interaction between the British folk networks and world music continues to the present day, especially in the festival circuits.

During the mid 20th century, the rise of jazz and blues in Europe and America accustomed western audiences and musicians to certain forms of African, Cuban, Latin and Caribbean music. The stationing of many American troops in Britain during World War II brought these forms right into the heart of English popular culture.

The growth of Western academic attention to music of other cultures led to the creation of ‘ethno-musicology’ – a word first used in 1950 by Dutch musicologist Jaap Kunst. It was the ethnomusicologists (the hyphen was soon dropped) that seem to have first invented the term ‘world music’ to describe non-western musical forms – one of the earliest references can be traced to the Wesleyan University,

Middletown, Connecticut around 1953. York was the first UK university to adopt ethnomusicology into its undergraduate and postgraduate teaching programme and the other major UK centres for ethnomusicology are the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Goldsmiths College and the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh and Durham. The Durham Oriental Music Festivals, which were run by the university every three years from 1973 to 1982, were landmark events that raised national awareness of non-western traditional and classical music, alerted larger bodies like the BBC to a potential new audience and served as an inspiration to many world music festivals, including WOMAD (see Festivals: South East).

Influences from abroad and at home

In the aftermath of World War II, the shortage of labour led to the invited influx of peoples from the former British Empire, and created large immigrant communities in places such as Liverpool, Bradford, Leicester and Birmingham with the greatest concentration in the South East and London. This new population brought with it unfamiliar faiths, manners, social structures, attitudes, and, of course, styles of music. The first Notting Hill Carnival was held in 1964 (see Festivals: London). An incredible rise in the popularity of Indian classical music from the mid-1950s onwards began when the concert violinist Yehudi Menuhin championed the music of Ali Akbar Khan and Ravi Shankar in America and the UK: both masters deeply influenced a number of 1960s musicians, including George Harrison. When The Beatles used the sitar for the first time on 'Norwegian Wood' in 1965, it became clear just how wide the boundaries of popular music could be spread. In 1971 the first release on Rolling Stones Records was *Brian Jones presents The Pipes of Pan at Joujouka*.

Throughout the 1960s and 70s there were many examples of mainstream artists adopting non-western music, albeit sometimes as an

exotic novelty on cheesy flower-power anthems. English folk music also experienced a boom in the 1970s. (The British folk sector overlaps with the world music scene in England and the author recommends the *Direct Roots* directory [see Media: Books and reference guides] as the best and most detailed publication on that subject.) Andrew Cronshaw, a folk musician who works with many musicians from overseas recalls: 'Exploring your own roots was cool. All things seemed possible – John Peel on the radio was showing how open things could be.'

Because of an increase in racism from the 1960s onwards, successive governments were faced with the question of whether they should reduce racism by promoting assimilation or by promoting multiculturalism. The Labour Government (1974–79) took the latter route, passing the Race Relations Act in 1976 and creating the Commission for Racial Equality. From this point on, socio-political concerns also began to influence UK cultural policy. Bodies such as the Greater London Council actively promoted multicultural arts and music up until its abolition by Margaret Thatcher's Government in the mid-1980s.

In 1985, the Arts Council of England's Music Advisory Panel recommended the creation of two multicultural touring circuits – the Asian Music Circuit (AMC) and the African & Caribbean Music Circuit (ACMC) (see Support bodies) – to assist the nascent network of African, Caribbean and Asian music promoters. In 1986, the Arts Council announced that it was committing 4 per cent of its expenditure to African, Caribbean and Asian arts.

The social turbulence of the 1970s gave rise to a cultural phenomenon which played a big role in the development of the world music sector: punk rock. Punk has had a profound effect on many aspects of British popular culture, and the growth of world music is no exception. As punk began to wane, many of the audience and musicians looked for something else that was not mainstream or overtly commercial. Nigerian King Sunny Ade's *Juju Music*, for example, immediately attracted an audience in 1982 (described as 'worldbeat'). The careers of many world music luminaries began in the punk movement. Joe Strummer (The Clash) formed the world-oriented Mescaleros. Jah Wobble (Public Image) has been working with world musicians of late. Charlie Gillett was

once the manager of Ian Dury's Kilburn and the High Roads. And Billy Bragg moved from punk to protest (against Margaret Thatcher) to folk, working with many folk and world musicians along the way, including Eliza Carthy and Ben Mandelson. Radio DJs like Alexis Korner and the late great John Peel (although never fully-fledged world music DJs) had eclectic playlists including a diverse range of African, Latin and Caribbean music. And Andy Kershaw (a former roadie for Billy Bragg) first introduced such bands as the Bhundu Boys on his Sunday night show on BBC Radio 1.

Between 1980 and 1983 there was a period of rapid expansion in world music activity. 'Things seemed to happen very quickly,' Ian Anderson remarks. Hannah Horovitz, who was deputy director of Visiting Arts (see Support bodies) for 18 years, agrees and says that this sudden development should be seen in context. 'There was a growth of interest in international working generally. It was really a case of the UK catching up with the rest of Europe where people had been working across borders for some time. There was a new curiosity about the world's cultures.'

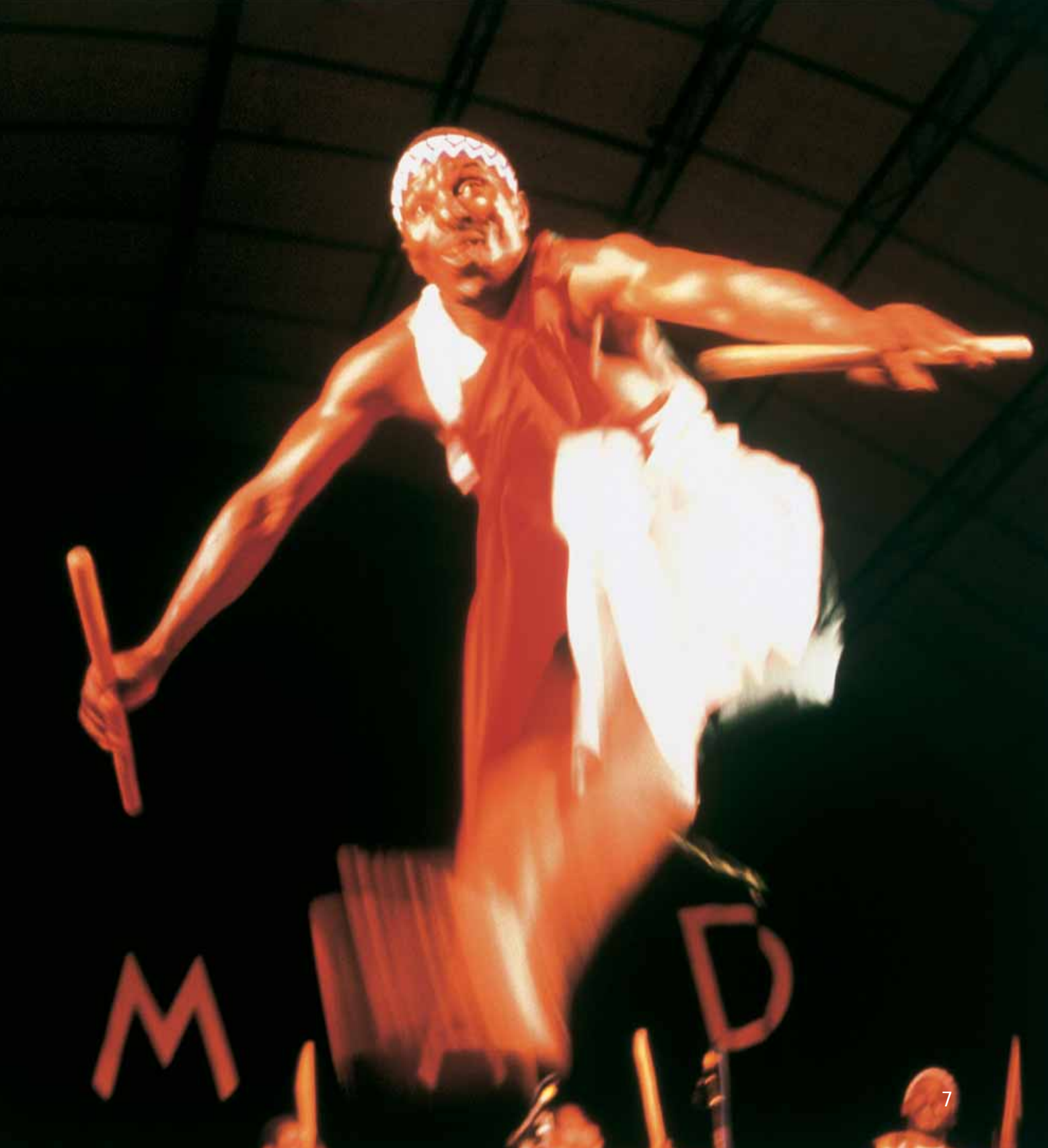
'exploring your own roots was cool.'

Investment in events

Visiting Arts' investments in the early period are a who's who of world music and the organisation gave a whole series of promoters their first 'government' grant. Visiting Arts funded its first African band in 1979 – the Makonde Pop Group from Kenya at the Hammersmith Odeon, followed by the Master Musicians of Joujouka in 1980, and its first officially entitled 'world music' event at the Commonwealth Institute as early as 1981. In 1982 it gave a grant to the first WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance) festival, and continued to give grants to a number of pioneering organisations, including the Music Village (a Commonwealth focus in 1984 and a Caribbean focus in 1986), various WOMAD tours and festivals throughout the 1980s, Indonesian musicians at the Durham Oriental Music Festival in 1982, and Arts Worldwide's UK tour seasons between 1983 and 1987.

Folk festivals also received support for international musicians: the folk festivals of Billingham, Cambridge and Sidmouth made pioneering presentations of music from overseas.

But of all the early events, WOMAD is the most significant. It was created in 1980 by Peter Gabriel, Bob Hooton, Thomas Brooman and others and held its first event in Shepton Mallett in 1982. WOMAD steadily grew throughout the 1980s to become the most significant UK gathering of its kind. In the 1990s, it established itself in its annual Reading site where it has capacity audiences (about 25,000) and there are now a number of WOMAD 'franchises' around the world. Alongside the festival, Gabriel also founded Real World Records to record and distribute the music of the featured artists.



The legend of 'the meeting that invented world music' ...

Creating an independent sector

Small, independent record labels also blossomed, such as Stern's, Globestyle, Earthworks, the roots label Cooking Vinyl and World Circuit (see Labels and distributors), and rapidly expanded their catalogues with both original and licensed material. Stern's record shop, in the back of an old electrical store on Tottenham Court Road, London, was the first major outlet for African music in the UK. There were a number of records that broke through to the mainstream at this time: indie label 4AD scored a major hit in the UK with Marcel Cellier's recording *Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares* (1986). But the most prominent mainstream breakthrough

came from America: Paul Simon's *Graceland* (Warner Brothers, 1986), which featured Ladysmith Black Mambazo and introduced African music to a wider UK public than ever before.

By the mid-1980s this group of enthusiasts and small organisations had formed a busy but disparate subsector of the music business. Reflecting their diverse origins in punk, folk, ethnomusicology, jazz and so on they had adopted a plethora of terms to describe the music they presented or recorded: worldbeat, ethnobeat, ethnic, international pop, international folk, roots, tropical, and of course, world music, to name but a few.

Billingham International
Folklore Festival programme



Confusion in the sector led to confusion in the record stores. Haphazard cataloguing made it difficult for the increasing number of record buyers to find or browse CDs of international music. Some kind of standardisation was needed. On 29 June 1987 a small group of promoters, festival producers, journalists and record label managers convened a meeting in the Empress of Russia public house in London to see if they could agree on a single overarching name.

The legend of 'the meeting that invented world music' is well known and is detailed in Ian Anderson's article 'World Wars' for his UK magazine *fRoots*; but it is worth retelling.

The meeting was completely practical and had no other agenda other than how CDs should be racked. It certainly was not a philosophical discussion about ethnomusicology. Having compromised on the term 'World Music' as the best description of what they were all presenting, the most significant decision came towards the end of the meeting when each organisation agreed to contribute to the fees of a marketing consultant and to cover the cost of creating CD dividers with 'World Music' printed on them. The *New Musical Express* (NME) (See Media: Journals and magazines) later agreed to carry a compilation cassette of world music on its front cover.

'I know a lot of people in world music, but I go to Womex and there are 2,000 delegates. **Who are all these people?'**

The marketing campaign was a triumphant success. The record shops finally had a convenient category for all these exotic recordings. The music press, after some initial carping – which in many cases still continues to this day – leapt on the concept of world music. A turning point came when the two most influential London listings magazines, *City Limits* and *Time Out*, both adopted the term in their pages. A new genre of music was born overnight. As Ian Anderson writes in his 'World Wars' article the initial world music media campaign in 1987 'bought more column inches and airwave hours pound-for-pound than any other campaign in the history of the music biz'.

One could speculate on what would have happened if the campaign had fallen flat or faltered. Would these competitors have gone on meeting or would they have broken up and gone their separate ways? Or would we

now be referring to the Tropical Music sector instead? It is likely they would have stuck at it, because by the time they met at the Empress of Russia in enlightened self-interest, they already had a shared enthusiasm. Most of the people at that meeting are still in world music and, far from being hard-bitten music execs, they still get emotional when they encounter something new and ring all their friends. It is this 'fan club' atmosphere that is the most obvious characteristic of the world music sector. And in every 'club' there is a committee. During the research for this publication several interviewees humorously referred to a group of individuals who formed the British 'world music mafia'. One interviewee remarked that if you impress 10 key people you will have a certain hit. He then went on to name the 10 individuals, counting them on his fingers (and modestly leaving himself out).



Jaipur Kawa Brass Band, 2005 tour

Photo: Kawa Music

Donna Vose, Arts Projects Manager at Visiting Arts, is in a good position to compare world music to other sectors. 'There is a strong informal UK network,' she says, 'much more developed than in theatre or dance, for example... There seems to be a group of people who trust one another's opinions, and are prepared to take a risk on work they haven't even seen.'

However, a novice coming into the sector may find this off-putting. In order to break in you have to impress and the 'world music mafia' very quickly suss out whether you are out to make a quick buck or are serious about your music. Nevertheless, the sector has grown organically and exponentially since 1987. Katerina Pavlakis (KAPA Productions, see Venues and promoters: London) is not alone when she says, 'I know a lot of people in world music, but I go to Womex and there are 2,000 delegates. Who are all these people?'

Throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, the new sector found its feet spectacularly well. Salif Keita's album *Soro* (1987) on Stern's and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's *Musst Musst* (1990) on Real World were two early high points in the new world music market, but there were many others, including the huge success of Fela Kuti. It became an age of collaborations and 'crossover' albums. World Circuit Records encouraged the collaboration of Ry Cooder with Ali Farka Toure, and Youssou N'Dour's crossover album *The Guide: Wommat* (Sony, 1994) scored him an international hit with his duet with Neneh Cherry, 'Seven Seconds'. But the biggest-selling UK world music record of the decade (indeed of all time) was World Circuit's *Buena Vista Social Club* (1997) which has sold (to date) just over 6.5 million copies.

Finding a larger audience

As the 1990s drew to a close a wider range of venues and festivals (big and small) were finding space in their programmes for world, traditional, folk and culturally diverse music. Events at the South Bank Centre and the Barbican in London grew in size and popularity. Across the country there was a steady rise in the number of world music events, most notably in local arts centres. Many of the venue managers currently working in the sector cut their first world music teeth in these arts centres.

The 1990s also saw the growth and increasing professionalism of melas and carnivals (many started out as independent entities and then became the responsibility of local authorities) which drew larger crowds than ever before. In 1997 the National Lottery introduced Arts4Everyone grants and many smaller, culturally diverse community organisations developed music events of their own for the first time. As some culturally diverse communities are in deprived urban areas, geographically-focused economic regeneration schemes see this kind of community-led arts work as a useful tool in their social cohesion work,

with music (arguably less elitist and more accessible than drama or literature) playing an important role, especially among refugee and asylum-seeking groups. Organisations like Arts Worldwide (founded by Anne Hunt in the 1980s) had moved from touring to creating larger projects such as their series of cultural festivals of refugee and diaspora communities in the UK (Afghanistan in 1992, Kurdistan in 1993, Horn of Africa 1994 and Armenia 1995). Cultural Co-operation's Music Village (see Festivals: London) received a grant from the Home Office, and the organisation began its mapping of London's Diasporic cultures.

World music (in a modified form) was now being **brought to** an even wider, even **younger audience**.

The rise of club and dance music throughout the 1990s sucked in and sometimes spat out various world musicians whose works were sampled and remixed to the thump of drum machines. 'Global' dance became a thriving sector including a hugely successful remix of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan by Massive Attack, one of the most influential British groups of the 1990s. World music (in a modified form) was now being brought to an even wider, even younger audience. And although many 'traditionalists' regarded it as the worst kind of commercial 'contamination' of traditional music (especially since the music was not live) the world music touring circuit easily expanded to take in clubs and dance venues, such as The Shrine (promoted by Rita Ray and Max Reinhardt, see Venues and promoters: London) created in the image of Fela Kuti's Lagos venue. Bhangra and Desi Beats also became popular forms.

The advent of the British Asian underground scene, centred around Talvin Singh's club Anokha and west London label Nation records, demonstrated that Asian dance music could compete with anything pumping out of Ibiza's clubs. Asian pop stars like Apache Indian, State of Bengal and Asian Dub Foundation made their first appearance in the UK Pop Charts and the Bollywood 'craze' began. In April 2001, British Foreign Secretary, the late Robin Cook, caused a stir when he said that Chicken Tikka Massala was the 'true British national dish' because it was 'a perfect illustration of the way Britain absorbs and adapts to external influences.' This ability to 'absorb' was certainly true of the British dance music scene as it entered the new millennium.

L to R: Mariza, Rita Ray
and Michael Nyman –
BBC Radio 3 Awards
for World Music, 2003
Photo: James McCauley



World music and the media

One of the most significant developments in the UK sector in recent years has been the BBC's showcasing of world and culturally diverse music, spearheaded by BBC Radio 3 (see Media: Broadcasting). This predominantly classical music station has developed a portfolio of world music-oriented programmes presented by the likes of Andy Kershaw, Lucy Duran, Verity Sharp and Fiona Talkington (to name only four). The BBC's World On Your Street project and the 2005 season of Africa Lives on the BBC are also seen as positive. But the most high profile of the BBC's commitments has been the creation in 2002 of the Awards for World Music, emulating the highly successful BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. The Awards are still in their infancy,

but it is already clear that they are influential in promoting world music to larger audiences and in promoting the careers of the award winners themselves. Mariza (winner in 2003) spoke at the 2005 Award ceremony of how much the award had meant to her: 'Something changed when [I] started working again...[the Awards] opened the door to a new audience.' And Audience Award winner Ivo Papasov returned home from the same awards and was snapped up by the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture to appear in a TV advert promoting Bulgaria's tourist industry abroad. 'It is the first time that I am meeting Bulgarian culture minister and I am extremely happy to see such a young person,' he charmingly remarked.

Perhaps a 'World FM'?

Yet the general feeling, in the sector, is that there is not enough airtime (on the BBC and elsewhere) to do world music justice. Some say that broadcasters are biased towards West African music at the expense of music from East Africa. Another frequent comment is that most of the regular world music programmes go out at non-peak times, and *World Routes* in particular was described as 'a bit anthropological and niche' by one interviewee. *Late Junction's* world music content is disappointingly low, said another. Another felt that Radio 3 approaches its world music output just as it does its classical music output – in the sense that it does not seek to popularise classical music in the way that the independent commercial radio station Classic FM does. Perhaps a 'World FM' might be useful? (It should be added that – in a manner typical of all world music professionals – all these individuals went on to express admiration for their broadcasting colleagues.)



In 2005, the **general public** have a **greater understanding** and knowledge of music from abroad...

The world music sector has always had an uneasy relationship with the UK media. Part of this uneasiness between the sector and the media arises from the way in which it came into being. World music has never disguised the fact that it was invented as a 'trick' played on the music press to get more attention. But that was when the artists themselves were not well known and the audience for world music was small. Now in 2005 many feel that it has simply outlived its usefulness. The general public have a greater understanding and knowledge of music from abroad (especially

Africa) and it is time to file world artists back in the hip hop, jazz and pop sections alongside their (supposedly) better known Anglo-American peers. 'The term world music is like a chain around the necks of some artists,' says Ian Ashbridge, director of Wrasse Records (see Labels and distributors). 'It is too easily dismissed by the mass media as "specialist" . You cannot lump Daara J, a hip hop crew, Ali Farka Toure, a blues artist, and Rachid Taha, a punk under the same musical category.'

A 'good seller'

Naturally others express a slightly different view. Yes, the boundaries of world music blur into jazz, folk and even rock, pop and dance, and it is important that artists have the opportunity to cross into those genres, but there is definitely something distinct and definable at the centre which needs to be preserved and be called 'world music'. Paul Fordham of Cactus Jazz and Way Art West (see Agents and managers) identifies this in terms of a kind of 'incubator' for culturally diverse artists. 'World music is a rich source for other musics – particularly for urban and dance. It maintains traditions, musical roots and identity, and inspires culturally diverse awareness in practitioners and the audience.' The British music industry as a whole is a major source of repertoire globally, second only to America. World music plays an important role in supplying new talent: the number of times world musicians are nominated for or win the big UK music prizes testifies to this. Many mainstream artists take

inspiration from world music: Damon Albarn (Blur and Gorillaz) and Robert Plant being the most high-profile new converts.

Nevertheless, record sales in the sector are generally low. A 'good seller' in UK world music is around 5,000–10,000 units, although there are, as we have seen, some problems in establishing definitive statistics. Another important aspect is that, unlike pop records, which generally have a short shelf-life, many world music records sell in good numbers over a long period of time: EMI are still selling records by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan nearly 20 years after they were released. But even if world turns out to be a 'cottage industry' within the UK music business, no one could deny that it contributes to the diversity of the UK's live and recorded music and is a consistent source of new, non-mainstream artists. In fact, if true, this would confirm a feature of world music in the UK: that it has always punched considerably above its weight.



Athena Andreadis
BBC Radio 3
World On Your Street
Photo: Michael Williams



Small is beautiful

With low record sales, live touring is therefore the main income generator in the UK sector, in direct contrast to the Rock and Pop industry, where live work is seen as a promotional activity to sell records. The world music's reliance on earned income from gigs is problematic as fees from the seated venues (where world music is mainly presented) and from UK festivals, are generally lower than in mainland Europe. In many cases, there is little money left over to carry out artist development. Several promoters and agents commented positively on the contribution of Arts Council England in this area. Arts Council England

concentrates on live touring and incentivising venues to work in consortia. 'Since the introduction of Grants for National Touring there has been a change in the way tour organisers are able to work' says Alan James, Head of Contemporary Music at the Arts Council's national office. 'Grants for National Touring has enabled some tour producers to act more like curators and artistic directors, generating their own projects. Smaller agencies working with emerging artists, or artists which are 'difficult to sell', can subsidise their touring programmes and strategically develop new markets for their acts.'

'Venues, agents and record labels are **working better** than ever together, whereas big promoters struggle to market this music because they do not have the **cultural diversity awareness.**'

Several of the regional offices of the Arts Council are proactively sponsoring consortia and networking activities to bring people in contact with each other. In the South East, a new world music consortium is being formed. And there are several national consortia which work cross-regionally; most significant of these are Live Roots and Music Beyond the Mainstream (MBM) (see Venues and promoters: National touring consortia). MBM takes in large venues like De Montfort Hall in Leicester, The Sage Gateshead and the Brighton Dome.

Yet some feel that the economic weakness and low fees in the live sector is a bit of a

two-fold blessing in disguise: first it keeps the larger entertainment corporations out of the sector along with all the 'distractions' they bring; and second, it draws the motivated enthusiasts (who are doing it for the music) together in order to do justice to the artists they are promoting. Small is, therefore, beautiful, guarantees quality and provides the safe space in which a new artist can develop creatively. David Flower of SASA Music (see Agents and managers) says that it is, again, a cultural diversity issue. 'Venues, agents and record labels are working better than ever together, whereas big promoters struggle to market this music because they do not have the cultural diversity awareness.'

Making an impact

At the same time, the sector is clearly learning the ways of the mainstream. Jason Walsh at Musicians Incorporated (see Agents and managers) refers to the recent Arts Council-funded Africa Soul Rebels UK tour (February 2005) of Tinariwen, Daara J and Rachid Taha. For him it proves that 'it's possible to promote world music in a rock and roll way.' And certainly the tour was very successful. Ian Ashbridge at Wrasse explains the approach: 'The Soul Rebels Tour was marketed in a very specific way and packaged for the media. By not marketing it as world music we attracted a different kind of crowd and a different kind of coverage. The age range was lower. By not having a "niche mentality" we were not in a niche.' The global music culture website Fly (see Media: Websites) agreed: 'This wasn't just the usual world music crowd...Many people in the crowd would normally consider themselves indie/rock fans looking for something a bit different but with attitude...'

So is history repeating itself? Just like the punk rockers came to world music in the 1980s are there a new generation of audiences about to discover it? And is world music ready for it?

Another recent UK event which demonstrated the impact of world music was more controversial. The LIVE 8 event, a series of worldwide 'rock' concerts designed to coincide with the G8 Summit, was announced by Bob Geldof, and instantly faced criticism that a campaign to end poverty in Africa involved no African musicians. In 1985, the original Live Aid event had been criticised for its lack of Black artists, meaning Black British and American stars: in 1985, no one had been particularly bothered by the lack of African artists. But, in 1985, there was no such thing as world music. By 2005, many were astonished and insulted that Bob Geldof and his crew could leave them out. Many said it showed a lack of respect and perpetuated the 'victim' image of Africa.

'By not having a "niche mentality"
we were not in a niche.'

Peter Gabriel and the WOMAD team rapidly put together the all-African LIVE 8 Concert 'Africa Calling' at the Eden Project in St Austell, Cornwall. The line-up included many African artists like Thomas Mapfumo who had spent their whole musical lives engaged in political protest, and yet none of them (except Youssou N'Dour) got an opportunity to appear on the main Hyde Park stage. (It also featured a number of UK-based artists such as Chartwell Dutiro.) But the fact that the Eden Project concert could happen at all, and become so controversial, demonstrated yet again how the 'tiny' UK world music sector with its handful of sector operators continues to punch above its weight.

But there was a sad and ironic postscript. LIVE 8 was upstaged just a few days later by the London bombings – terrorist attacks which threw the nation's attention back onto issues which lie at the very heart of world music: **cultural diversity and intercultural communication.**



Ethnomusicology 21st-century style

France is home to a large African community and as a result the popularity of music from Africa is enormous: Malians Amadou and Miriam are megastars of the moment and in Rai (often described as Africa's Rap) there are a string of names who made it big in France: Khaled, Faudel and Rachid Taha.

In the UK the largest ethnic group is Asian (2.3 million, 4% of the total population [ONS 2001 census]) and music from South Asia, if not part of the mainstream, is constantly nibbling at its edges. The BBC Radio 1 primetime show hosted by Bobby Friction and Nihal (see Media: Broadcasting) is a showcase of UK Asian talent. And alongside the dance-oriented work there is a popular growth interest in traditional musics of South Asia. Melas are growing in size and number. There are as many summer schools aimed at Asian youngsters teaching sarod, sitar, tabla and other traditional instruments (like Asian Music Circuit [AMC], and Chakardar in the East of England), as there are music technology courses teaching how to rap, DJ, sample and programme (like Asian Dub Foundation Education [ADFED] and Youth Music Action Zones [YMAZs]). Even on Bobby and Nihal's show, between the 'shout outs' and the 'big ups', there is a remarkable amount of

discussion of the traditional origins of the samples on the dance tracks – where does this tune come from? It is ethnomusicology – but not as we know it.

This interest in traditional and classical forms among young British Asians does not surprise Viram Jasani of the Asian Music Circuit (see Support bodies). 'It has always been the case that young people (in the Asian community) are attracted to classical music. It is only now with the increasing number of opportunities that it is becoming clear just how much. And there is simply not enough classical music in the market to satisfy the demand.' The quality is also high among the UK-based professional musicians. The fact that Cultural Co-operation was able to programme a high quality Music Village in 2005 entirely from musicians based in London (of the African, Asian and Middle Eastern diaspora) shows the strength of this indigenous talent.

Sewing things together

Given the strength of this home-grown 'world' music, it is surprising that there is not more contact between the culturally diverse and world music sectors. Journalist and musician Andrew Cronshaw takes the view that 'There are only a handful of people in the UK world music business and things fall between the gaps. Only a few people are going back and forth sewing things together.' The need to 'sew things together' is becoming more widely acknowledged. Ian Anderson describes the success of Cultural Co-operation's London Diaspora Music Village in 2005 as a 'wake-up call' to the world sector to take note.

In the North West, for example, Eddie Thomas, Arts Council Music Officer in Manchester explains that 'the promotion of world music continues to grow in the programming of the North West venues. To complement this, we have focused on developing the promoters emerging from the Asian and Caribbean communities who are proactively making networks and links between themselves in England and internationally, especially in India and Pakistan.' Investments of this kind in smaller, culturally diverse music promoters are

bringing about an interesting change locally, an example of which is the Multi Asian Arts Centre's links with the Alhamra Arts Council, Lahore, Pakistan (see Venues and promoters: North West). Thomas goes on, 'The bigger venues, who five years ago would not have been interested in supporting the smaller organisations in the region, now have a very open attitude, and there are many examples of partnerships, such as the Bridgewater Hall's relationship with Milapfest.'

The Arts Council's resources are highly sought after in contemporary and diverse musics, and there are several issues that the sector faces, which the Arts Council cannot answer on its own. There is some debate among the operators on the overall effectiveness of the various subsidies available to the sector, a lot of which is prioritised on getting the artist into the country and touring rather than on raising the business or fundraising skills of the sector. The UK lacks a central, long-term investment strategy for world music, which would develop the artists, the artforms and the audiences. In the absence of a dedicated fund or national development body, world music finds refreshment at many hands. Regeneration programmes and tourism/culture schemes by local authorities (they collectively put something like £500 million into the UK arts sector) are one source of funds: many local authorities are the major patrons or organisers of the melas, carnivals

and folk music festivals where world musicians are presented. A developmental system like that found in Quebec would be the ideal, say some, which is a mix of distribution (touring), developmental work and partnership building.

UK operators often look jealously at their colleagues in France where state support for artists travelling overseas is a regular aspect of the sector. More support for the practicalities would also be good. The UK visa, work permit and tax position is generally good, in the sense that if an agent or promoter can get the work permits sorted out (for a fee), the visa usually follows. However, the fact that the UK is not part of the Schengen Visa area causes some problems and Visiting Arts reports that it receives more complaints about visa difficulties from overseas musicians than any other group.

...local authorities are the **major patrons** or organisers of the melas...

Current position

In June 2005, the Arts Council published its first International Policy in order to clarify its commitment to the development of international collaboration between English artists and the rest of the world. It is too early to say how this policy may affect the range of international music in England, but it is an opportunity that many presenters and consortia are looking into, and will be something that overseas managers will pick up on. UK agent Rob Challice at Coda (see Agents and managers) says 'I note that a number of international managers are choosing, if they can, to sell an act direct into the UK and bypass using a UK agent. This has been made possible by venue consortia and venues networking at places like Womex. I see this as part of an evolutionary process and on the whole it has to be viewed that it's a positive development that these relationships are happening.

'However it's my opinion that an act cannot sustain a lengthy live career in the UK without using a UK agent that is representing their interests. A non-UK manager can 'cherry pick' one or two festivals or tours in the UK, but unless they are incredibly knowledgeable they will never match the knowledge of a good UK agent/producer.'

Just as there was no 'rule-book' describing what world music was when it was invented so there is no industry strategy describing how it should develop. The LIVE 8 drama underlined the continued marginalisation of world music within the bigger UK music business in an almost textbook collision with the forces of globalisation. The world music sector may have emerged as a moral victor in that clash but its clout was too small to dent Mr Geldof's rollercoaster. The world music sector in Britain has been very good at raising and maintaining production values and promoting internal collaboration, but, as it

...central government should be interested in the long-term contribution the world music sector has made...

currently stands, it is difficult for the sector to understand where it sits in relation to the larger music and creative industries policies of the UK, difficult for it to understand its internal strengths and weaknesses, and difficult for Government to see where and why investment would bring results.

What is needed is an internal self-assessment of the economics, skills and competencies of the sector, and this should be fed into a strategy which enables the sector to present a case for investment to the wider music industry, to public funders and to government.

One could argue that world music is a tiny sector and nobody in power would be very interested. But in fact the music and creative industries as a whole are tiny (despite the rhetoric) compared to say, the British pharmaceutical industry or the weapons industry and yet the level of government

intervention in the creative industries is considerable and deliberate mainly because of the spin-off effects they have on the image of the UK abroad and because it represents an area of sustained growth. In addition, central government should be interested in the long-term contribution the world music sector has made to cultural diversity, multiculturalism, inter-faith understanding and to cultural relations between nations over the years.

UK Trade & Investment (see Statutory agencies), the Government's trade agency, openly admits that the music sector is largely unaware of the kind of support it can offer small and medium-sized businesses. Perhaps this is the right moment for a delegation from the world music 'committee' and some of their friends from the folk circuit, the culturally diverse music sector and the club scene, to go and have a talk to the Minister and make some suggestions: like Ivo Papasov, they might be pleasantly surprised by their reception.