



1976 Tour-booking letters

This is a small selection of letters written to theatre venues early in 1976, to book the company's first tours - of *Scum*, initially, and then also of *Vinegar Tom*.

They were written by members of the company - Gillian Hanna, Mary McCusker and David Bradford - in the period before the appointment of its first administrator, Sue Beardon.

They were also written before the scripts for the shows they were trying to book had been completed - something that continued to happen quite often in later years.

As with the funding application to the Gulbenkian Foundation for administrative support, their style and content are quite illuminating.

These and other tour-booking letters can be found in the company's archive at the V&A's Theatre and Performance Archives.



Theatr Gwynedd

Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2ST Tel Bangor 0288 31701

3rd February, 1976.

Jo Barnes,
Theatre Gwynedd,
Bangor.

21, Rona Road,
London N.W.3.
5th January 1976.

Dear Ms Barnes,

Tony Haynes of Red Brass tells me that you have moved from Harlech to Bangor, so I am writing to tell you about a new company that will be touring in April/ May/ June. I don't know if he mentioned it to you.

I'm enclosing some basic information about the show and the company. Our reason for coming together is very simple: years of experience in the theatre, both 'straight' and 'fringe' have shown us that unless we do something about it ourselves, women are never going to be given their due, both in terms of what they can do, and in the content of plays. So here we are, committed to performing good theatre which gives women a chance...we're not going to leave men out of course! There will be men involved in all aspects of the company, and in fact our first show will be written by a man, C?G. Bond, whose work you may know from the Everyman Theatre Liverpool or the Victoria Theatre Stoke-on- Trent.

I don't know what your policy is at Bangor regarding visiting shows, but if you think we might be what you are looking for, please contact us at the address above.

Yours sincerely,

Gillina Hanna

pp. The Monstrous Regiment

Stuart Rogers,
5, Tower Street,
Newtown,
Birmingham.

59? Camden Square,
LONDON.N.W.1.
01-485-3860.

March 11th 1976.

Dear Stuart,

Having sworn that we had sent you our publicity material, I now discover that we perjured ourselves - and in Ruth Marks' office to boot! A routine check through our files reveals that you were indeed not circulated. I can't think why. A regrettable lapse.

Anyway, here it is. I think the sheets will tell you all you need to know. Contrary to what The Leveller says, we are NOT an all-woman group; we have fellers..woopee! Indeed the first show SCUM: Death Destruction and Dirty Washing is co-written by Chris Bond who you probably know from the Vic Stoke-on-Trent, and the Liverpool Everyman.

I know we look rather expensive. We do negotiate, and the longer you have us, the cheaper we are! We are trying to avoid one-night stands if we can possibly help it. If you were interested, I think Ruth might be willing to help with DALTA money.

Many apologies again,

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Hanna.

pp. The Monstrous Regiment.

Midlands
Arts Centre
for
Young People

Cannon Hill Park Birmingham B12 9QH 021-440 4221

30th March, 1976.

Dear Mary McCusker,

Your English has passed your letter to me - a woman and Programme
Manager for the Arts Centre.
I'm interested to read your literature and would have
liked to visit Cannon Hill, but, unfortunately, we are fully booked for
you.

John English
Director
Midlands Arts Centre for
Young People
Foyle House
Cannon Hill Park
Birmingham B12 9QH.

59 Camden Square,
London N.W.1.
01-485-3860.

March 26'th 1976.

Dear John English,

I've been checking through our files and it seems you have, up till
now escaped our publicity material, which is why I am writing to you.
As you can see from the enclosed information we are a new group,
not, new to the profession, we've all been in that for years. But we all
have lots of enthusiasm and ideas, so we have banded together to do
something definite about the quality and quantity of work offered to
women, not that we intend to exclude men, the show is being written by
one, and our group will include them, but, in the right proportion.

We are touring from May the 6'th till July the 10'th, and hope to make
the week of May the 31'st till the 5'th of June a (Midlands week) so far
we have a booking in Alsager on the 3'rd but ideally we would like to
have a couple of days in Birmingham.

I do apologise for the fact you are receiving all this information so
late in the day.

I hope we hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Mary McCusker.

ROGER LANCASTER

BROWN STUDIO

59 Camden Square

London NW1.

01-485-3860

May 27th.

Dear Roger, (LANCASTER)

I left Belt and Braces last December, and since then I have been helping Gillian set up 'The Regiment'. At the moment I am administrator pro tem.

As you will see from the enclosed the company has got off to a good start, and with tour number two coming up there is considerable interest in the company and the show. The second play-by Caryl Churchill will very probably change its title-doesn't feel right at all at the moment. No doubt, with the cut-backs really starting to hurt all round, the last thing you want is for me to twist your arm for a booking. I'd like to appeal to your purse; but even if we repeat the success we had at the I.C.A. it's unlikely that we would actually make money for you. However, SCUM: is well worth seeing, and I've no doubt the second play will be too. In fact, as the company plays itself in, it should be even better.

I'll be phoning you in about a week. However if I have any difficulty catching you, which I expect is more than likely, and you'd like to pursue matters, give us a ring.

Best wishes, hope to see you before too long.

David Bradford.