

I wish to present a radical new model of the music entertainment industry and a unique opportunity for the BBC.

I believe this proposal can succeed significantly in the following areas;

- 1, Live & Recorded Entertainment
- 2, Job Creation
- 3, Education & Training
- 4, Product Creation & Development, Marketing/Sales
- 5, Generation of New Global Markets
- 6, Enhanced public interaction & benefits to the fabric of society

It is based on needs I had identified in the course of my experience in the music industry, both building & managing commercial rehearsal & recording studios, including extensive live sound & studio engineering/production and also as a musician, singer/songwriter and member of the public. The 'interim' Digital, and Creative Britain reports cover some of the issues here, and my proposals should be seen to offer some additional joined up thinking with the benefit of everyone in mind.

However, where the BBC is concerned, it of course provides for an engagement like no other in the world.

At this time, the opportunity exists in the UK to rescue the music industry from itself for the benefit of literally everyone - free music downloads for all, (as already blazoned by UK artists' Radio Head, Marillion etc) do away with Low Fi expectations on the web, Digital Rights Management and paying for an album thrice, first on vinyl, then on C.D. etc - and replace Audio product with a new dedicated live/playback experience par excellence, allied to education/training & artistic development, delivering creative production opportunities & internet driven entertainment locally - if not also for mass sale & dissemination.

We possess the technology and skills today to practically guarantee the delivery of a live music event - and certainly that of playback. Assuming the musicians don't suffer 'a bad hair day' and employ 21st century 'phase coherent' sound reinforcement systems - in a sympathetic environment, astonishing surround sound reproduction/playback can be achieved. This simply has to be heard to be believed & is beyond most people's appreciation of current technology. This - in tandem with today's 'leading edge' visual display systems can deliver entertainment on an entirely new level - simply not available in a 'home theatre' context - & I believe, could help restore a 'going out for the evening' culture, for all the right reasons, & improve social cohesion.

The driving force for this development is; the provision of the social, educational, philanthropic & commercially viable link, that I believe; both working creatively together - & being entertained together - can bring to society.

Like many countries the UK suffers from a series of disconnects. Modern day youth face many difficulties, gang culture, crime & teenage pregnancy, and the prevailing prevalence of drink & drug abuse, and perhaps more tellingly the lack of engagement in politics & the democratic system point directly at this.

Now more than ever, in this climate of recession, the UK ought to support both its creative talent, youth & education sector, music & television industries and all that this can entail, by inducing the Audio industry to deliver on its promise and lead the world in new entertainment platform development fit for the age.

Whilst the internet age offers great potential, the social benefits of this technology are not being utilized or its value realized.

And lastly... that these days the music industry doesn't know its b' side from its elbow... is in disarray, and as such should & could be reorganized, providing the financial structure and income stream to generate such development.

The BBC can play an all important role in helping to establish a new music infrastructure in the UK, better serving the people employed in the industry. By providing for a **free** UK / World alternative to the various ways of paying to download -music from the web will serve as an advert for the 'real deal' - available at your nearest auditoria... to book online.

'The writing is on the wall.' To paraphrase guest speaker Chris Anderson, editor of 'Wired' magazine, on Peter Day's Radio 4 programme 'In Business' at the beginning of this year, 'anyone under 25 knows intuitively that music on the 'net' should be **free**, they understand the online delivery costs of Mp3... but that one should expect to pay to attend a concert.'

The 'problem child' here is the music business as is.

This scheme, at its core, aims to support and celebrate the creative & technical skills inherent in both the BBC & the music industry by moving the industries up a gear. The public should be offered a proper product, and, as the recent sale of 750,000 Michael Jackson tickets show, few of us who might have wanted to see him, ever had a chance, however it is apparent to me that the component parts exist now, that can place one in the front row to hear/see 'almost live' practically the best performance he can deliver. The music industry would surely much prefer that he's seen & heard by the widest possible audience..?

The music industry must start to put its house in order, the artists that do 'make the grade' represent such a small minority of the worthy, those who will never fill a stadium but might be enjoyed by the masses, and their constant struggle to work in decent studios & venues that are themselves often endlessly tried by landlords and/or developers & some of the best of which must surely be suffering in the credit crunch.

What is needed is the harnessing of the best resources we already have and their many independent production strengths, with participation in a national network of provision. This ultimately means - the development of dedicated auditoria across the country that can deliver both production and entertainment opportunities to suit their local requirements. Suddenly everyone could have a chance to engage either with a local, regional or national 'up & coming' act or because having seen Michael Jackson dance 'really really bad' (very good) they are inspired to give him a run for his money - & do better - themselves.

These auditoria are to be of a standardized build, functioning both as a live performance/recording stage and alternatively as a sound & vision playback auditorium.

In themselves, they are probably the most important facet of this proposal, the success of which depends wholly on embracing these physical entities completely - appreciating their power to educate, create, entertain & produce independently & their strength as a network of technically predictable and repeatable environments.

Dedicated, standardized auditoria, allied to local College / University provision, would utilize today's sound reinforcement & visual technologies to create new forms of public entertainment. Each would be managed by a dedicated team of professional live sound/vision recording and reproduction staff together with a rolling intake of supervised students supplying ancillary support.

Technical specification, implementation & ongoing quality control would be overseen by the BBC so as to transfer the Corporation's ethos and high standards throughout.

Local education authorities would be provided with constant new work experience opportunities and a means of motivating the population by offering a tried, tested & well-beaten path to numerous real world skills & socially engaging training along with business & job creation.

The BBC is the obvious vehicle for the development of this strategy.

1, Due to its directly funded nature; online pod casts, listen again facilities, the 'iPlayer,' are leading examples of 'free' entertainment media, and internet delivery of these services is well understood.

2, Aside from the its highlight coverage of 'Live Aid,' the Corporation's sound production capability has maintained an impressive progression - witness 'Later with Jules Holland,' amongst others.

3, The BBC's archive is second to none... and is an extensive teaching resource in the making. The audio, film & video that could be made available as core teaching assets would enable a wealth of skills to be taught and the skills therein - properly appreciated - witness 'The making of Black Adder' programme shown at Christmas. The unpicking of the last episode's final scene is a perfect example of this skills base.

4, The potential to remix/reproduce BBC archive material for replay in new formats must be considerable and with copyright terms expiring all the time, a huge store of media will relentlessly become available in the public domain.

5, Given the BBC's unique position, in the country & around the world and it's charitable & educational status, it is perhaps the only institution that could properly champion a new music platform and construct a worthy alternative to the current pay-per-download model.

I write this letter to you now as it seems only a matter of time before some, if not all of these ideas come to market.

The issue therefore is that of commercial control.

I have spent many years developing this project and have considered approaching other organizations... However, I believe that the potential wealth generation to the UK, at this time, is too great an opportunity to leave in the hands of the private sector. Moreover, the successful realization of this scheme will ultimately best support the music industry, the BBC/television industries & society as a whole.

I would add that my colleagues & I have a reasonable grasp of all the technical component parts of this proposal & are both willing and able, with I would hope the assistance of the BBC & of course the equipment manufacturers themselves to practically demonstrate this new entertainment platform. Whilst this document is only a short précis of my ideas, I can produce further detail to support my claims and, with the proper provision of specific technology resources, easily provide a working example.

Yours Sincerely

Donovan Archer.

March 19th 2009