Shocking the System: The Arts Council, the British Council, and the Paradox of Cherub Theatre Company

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Theatre History Studies, Volume 35, 2016, pp. 73-94 (Article)

Published by The University of Alabama Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/ths.2016.0004*

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The Arts Council, the British Council, and the Paradox of Cherub Theatre Company

—BRIAN E. G. COOK

On its surface, this article is the story of the Cherub Company, London, which between 1978 and 2003, under the leadership of Andrew Visnevski, premiered nearly forty professional productions of British and European classic plays in London. Many of those productions subsequently toured nationally, and several were sent overseas by the British Council to tour internationally to countries including Germany, Spain, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Iraq, and Pakistan. The company won a Fringe First at the Edinburgh Festival for its production of *Kafka's THE TRIAL* (the production's official title) and had several national theatre critics as champions, especially B. A. Young of the *Financial Times*. Visnevski, the company's founding artistic director, is now ensconced at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts as the head of the academy's MA programs.

However, this is not the story of a company that is widely recognized for its successes, and, in fact, it is currently one of the few published stories of this company in any scholarly or critical record. In this article, I will provide a brief historical accounting of the company and its work, though my larger purpose is to expose the process by which it (and potentially other companies like it) has been excluded from the historiographic record. Cherub's case prompts a reconsideration of the connection between "success," financial stability, and historiographic importance, for its history is still accessible through archival research and interviews, and those records provide a window into the way artists either

become canonized by the cultural field or are forgotten. By telling the story of a company that almost no one has ever heard of and whose work has largely been forgotten, I will begin to unpack the motivations that drive canonization.

Despite Cherub's exclusion from the historical record, an examination of the company's work reveals much about the human biases inherent in processes of artistic validation, especially validation connected with receiving a monetary subsidy. Cherub produced much of its work over its twenty-five-year history without any consistent government subsidy or corporate sponsorship (which is arguably a success in its own right). From August 1979 to May 1982, Cherub gave nearly four hundred performances of eleven different productions at theatres all over Great Britain and Europe. Audiences were receptive, newspaper critics generally positive, and touring-house producers satisfied.[1] But agencies responsible for funding artistic work were mixed on whether Cherub's work was successful, and a key part of Cherub's story is how two government agencies looked at the same company and saw something completely different. Its lack of success with the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB), the primary agency providing subsidies to artists within the United Kingdom, meant that Cherub could never grow into a stable company with a consistent group of actors and a permanent home, which was its goal. Faced with rejection after rejection for its subsidy applications to the ACGB, the company had little of the funding needed to develop new productions, and the resulting instability caused its productivity to slow in the mid-1980s. Visnevski constantly had to recruit new young actors and technicians willing to work for what Cherub could afford to pay instead of being able to work with actors already accustomed to his style, and the company began to focus on remounting old productions for overseas touring.

Unlike the ACGB, the British Council (BC) was happy to send Cherub to tour abroad, and though it wasn't able to pay for the company to develop new productions to be in seen in Britain, its largesse served as a lifeline for the company. The BC was part of the Foreign and Commonwealth department and had been created in the mid-1930s "to promote abroad a wider appreciation of British culture and civilization," and it regularly funded international tours of existing productions by companies like Cherub.[2] These two agencies saw Cherub completely differently, and that's partially because Cherub was, and is, a notoriously a difficult entity to pin down and define. Because Visnevski sought a company that would be artistically diverse and that enabled him to explore the scripts he chose to produce, the company actively resisted codification. If Cherub's story tells us anything, it is the importance placed upon definition in historiography and upon artistic branding in the British theatre economy in the last decades of the twentieth century. That quality is likely the most important factor

in this story, for the company's reluctance to brand itself meant that others were free to do the defining, leaving Cherub particularly subject to external opinion.

Cherub was started by Visnevski and actor Simon Chandler in 1978 with a mission "to prove against all current odds that great plays can be made accessible and exciting to a wide audience at comparatively low production costs."[3] Their choice to produce "great plays" (read: classics) caused the company to be viewed in a specific way by audiences, critics, and government representatives in the British context. Cherub was not, by and large, a company focused on producing new work but rather one that wanted to reinvestigate or revive often-ignored English and Continental classics. The company's artistic choices were predicated on the founders' view that mainstream British theatre in the late 1970s was overly naturalistic and hidebound. In particular, Polish-born Visnevski sought to reinvigorate it by using a more physical, Eastern European approach to his productions of classic texts. It was this artistic choice that doomed the company. As I'll show, representatives of the ACGB largely viewed Cherub's attempts as unnecessary and unsuccessful, and rejected nearly every request the company made for a subsidy.

Visnevski had come to Britain after being exiled from Poland in 1971, and he initially struggled to fit into the culture in which he was now immersed. During a 2010 interview, Visnevski remembered: "I became very very conscious of the fact that in the United Kingdom there was an obsession with pigeonholing. And in my personality-forming years, I developed a resistance to the idea that anybody should be able to pigeonhole anything—certainly not me. I suppose this came to a head while I was studying at [the] Central [School of Speech and Drama], where I had certain difficulties as I was classed as 'stylistically incompatible' for a while. I knew that I was marrying in me at the time—this difficult time—I was trying to marry what I had brought out of Poland and my admiration for certain styles of theatre and ways of performing with what was being instilled to me at Central, which was trying to be the 'boy next door.'"[4] Visnevski brought with him the methodologies of the theatre he had grown up with: a focus on actors' physical and emotional investment, a willingness to fully engage the body, the use of mask and mime, and the view of the play text as but one of many equally important parts a director might utilize to tell a story. Those methodologies formed and marked Cherub's style and approach. Visnevski directed nearly all of Cherub's productions over its twenty-five-year history; it is nearly impossible to see Cherub independent of Visnevski. Some of his most notable early work with Cherub includes a production of John Fletcher and William Shakespeare's *Two Noble Kinsmen* (1979), in which Visnevski used an all-male cast and the London punk style of the era to create a potentially dangerous and

certainly edgy world. The actors wore tight leather pants and little else; female characters were denoted by painted breasts and male characters by leather codpieces. The central story of two knights' battle over the same "woman" thus took on more complicated meanings in an era when homosexuality on British stages was hardly commonplace (though no longer illegal).[5]

The company's 1980 adaptation of Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial* played to sold-out crowds at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, some of whom brought their own ladders to see over the multitudes. *Kafka's THE TRIAL* put Kafka's protagonist Joseph K in the center of a world empty of trappings but full of malice, suspicion, and fear. The novel was adapted by Visnevski. Five actors played twenty-odd characters on an incredibly simple set, with masks and white makeup distorting their features, inspired by the paintings of expressionist George Grosz. The production of *Macbeth* (1981) utilized Japanese theatre's stylized movement, with actors wearing long wigs, grotesque make-up, and heavy fur costumes reminiscent of Medieval European garb. The production featured ten actors playing all of the various roles and lasted just under two hours without an intermission. The set comprised a white shag carpet (part of which had been cut up to make the costumes), three sets of footlights, and "weird sounds and anguished cries of an alien, hellish world[, which] echo from the shadows and silhouettes that flit across a white screen [upstage]," noted Keith Nurse in his review for *The Daily Telegraph*.[6]

Cherub's productions were usually both lauded by newspaper critics with a fondness for continental European theatre AND castigated by representatives of the ACGB, who felt that Cherub's physicality had no place in text-centric British theatre. As the reports and correspondence in the ACGB's archive show, the ACGB's staff and advisers had trouble deciding what Cherub was and what it could become. It was purportedly a fringe company doing classics in an "alternative way," but alternative in this case did not necessarily mean political. Unlike other, now-famous companies producing with European models like Cheek by Jowl (founded 1981) or the later Complicité (founded 1983), who were both founded by British people who had studied European methods, Cherub was founded by someone who was tailoring his native Eastern European-ness to fit the British cultural field. As a result Cherub's aesthetic gave the ACGB's staff pause because it was so different that they couldn't often figure out how it could be improved, and generally they just labeled the company's work "bad." One noted report, written by ACGB drama officer Jon Plowman, criticized the physicality in Visnevski's work as being derivative of the 1960s European-inspired "experiments" of Peter Brook.[7] "No clear reason for treating the play in this way beyond a visual one," Plowman writes about *Two Noble Kinsmen*, "and I think one might put it in a new category along Brookian lines marked jerk-off

theatre. Should not be encouraged in front of a paying public—they might not go blind!"[8] Cherub was a British alternative theatre company that avoided the blatantly left-wing political play favored by much of the rest of the "alternative" segment, and it utilized "foreign" techniques that often did not maintain the integrity of the classical texts it chose to produce.[9] It was an alternative company that didn't do typically alternative work, a British company that didn't work in a British way, an ensemble of young theatre people who produced work more "foreign" than many of the ACGB's officers seemed ready for.

The ACGB's leadership and staff had worked hard from the agency's postwar days to cultivate its place within the British theatre mainstream. From its earliest days, it had struggled to find the right balance between two parts of its chartered mission, one being "to improve the standard of execution of the fine arts" and the other "to increase the accessibility of the fine arts to the public."[10] In other words, it was supposed to both make art "good" and make it available to everyone, a mission it found to be completely challenging to fulfill. The ACGB had to both "raise" and "spread," and eventually, the ACGB adopted a specific policy that chose to prioritize the former over the latter. It was elaborated by Secretary General William Emrys Williams (served 1951–1963) in an annual report: "Might it not be better to accept the realistic fact that the living theatre of good quality cannot be widely accessible and to concentrate our resources upon establishing a few more *shrines*. . . . In reconsidering the exhortation of its Charter to 'Raise and Spread' the Council may decide for the time being, to emphasise the first more than the second word, and to *devote itself to the support of two or three exemplary theatres which might re-affirm the supremacy of standards in our national theatre*. . . . High standards can be built only on a limited scale."[11] With its new policy, the ACGB was, in the 1950s, merely heeding a call that had already been fairly prominent in arts circles since the nineteenth century, essentially a trickle-down of culture. John Christie, founder of the Glyndebourne Opera, an organization fully supported by private donors, wrote a letter to a member of the Arts Council, in which he said, "Our view is that the method, which can achieve this purpose, is to light incandescent fires in a few places, the sparks from which will fall far and wide and are likely to set alight whatever material will burn."[12] The danger for Christie in opting to spread the arts without first raising firm centers of excellence was that "mediocrity" would reign. "Mediocrity will set nothing on fire. . . . Mediocrity is like damp sheets. The way to distribute Art is by creating great Artistic achievement. Light a few fires in the Country and raise these to incandescence."[13]

Within the theatre segment, the ACGB of the 1980s could look back and attribute many successes to the focus on raising specific institutions. Public

subsidy had been given to sustain the Royal Shakespeare Company and for the establishment of the Royal National Theatre, and these would become two of the primary centers for excellence. A subsidy had also been used to support the work of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court, the site of the "revolution" of 1956 in British theatre with the production of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. Through the 1950s and 1960s, "Raise and Spread" helped to reestablish British theatre on the world stage. As Dan Rebellato has documented, London's stages would usher out the posh and supposedly soulless work of Noel Coward and Terrance Rattigan to welcome the work of "Angry Young Men" like Osborne, John Arden, and Edward Bond.[14]

Cherub came on the scene in the midst of the great upwelling of theatrical practice that had followed the withdrawal of official censorship in 1968. Many British alternative theatre companies emerged in the 1970s and sought to open up theatre's potential to revitalize society by depicting and reflecting what the mainstream theatre had previously ignored. Indeed, many of the most noted companies also sought to provoke radical political revolution through theatrical production. Interestingly, most of these artists still acquiesced to working with mainstream institutions like the ACGB, choosing to not directly challenge the notion that such agencies had the authority to make distinctions about who should have funding and who should not. That is not to say that the ACGB's funding decisions were welcomed without controversy; indeed, widespread outrage often came with specific subsidy announcements, becoming especially pronounced as the Thatcher government's budget cutting reduced the overall amount of subsidy the ACGB had to give away, thus forcing it to make tough decisions about which companies it would cease to support. Nevertheless, the ACGB held a tremendous amount of cultural (and economic) capital, and it was not an entity that could be avoided in the 1970s and 1980s. Its granting of subsidy was a de facto acknowledgment of a company's acceptance by the mainstream, even if the company remained alternative in mission. Thus, a company granted a subsidy could see itself (and be seen by others) as "successful" and to have won a tremendous victory by being granted legitimacy.

The ACGB developed specific funding streams to direct to the new "alternative" segment, though many both inside the ACGB and elsewhere wondered about the wisdom of supporting companies whose quality was sometimes secondary to political motivation. The ACGB often paid lip service to the idea that it was working to "develop" such companies, at least those that it generally found to have value. Both mainstream and alternative companies pressed for funding, and the ACGB did its best to acquire as much information on all of the various companies who wanted something from it. The ACGB was

hierarchically organized, with the full council meeting regularly to make "decisions" based on the work and reporting of the full-time staff. Each "art" had a department, and theatre was funded by the Drama Department. Generally, the ACGB Drama Department would send reviewers to report on the performances of any company who wished to seek a subsidy. Those reviewers were sometimes direct employees of the ACGB: officers, who did the daily work and were the immediate face of the ACGB that most companies saw regularly; or the drama director and his assistants, those in charge of the departments and who oversaw the work of the officers. Other reports were written by members of the drama advisory panel, who were unpaid "professionals" from whom the ACGB saw fit to request advice. Sometimes even full members of the council itself were asked to write reports, and occasionally reports were requested from people outside the council, especially from those who worked for Regional Arts Associations (RAAs) or who were notable figures in the field.

The ACGB's decision-making was an intensely human process, fraught with both the benefits and deficits of human interpretation. The various reports on Cherub's productions place the ACGB's staff and advisers squarely in the position of producing and defending particular theatrical production practices within the cultural field of Great Britain to the exclusion of others. Cherub's alterity was synonymous with its foreignness. The company was never overtly political; instead, Visnevski in particular saw himself as opposed to the dominant theatrical practices within mainstream British theatre, seeking instead to use his native East European aesthetic in his productions. "Maybe I lacked the vocabulary at the time to express what I would want my company to be seen as," Visnevski told me. "I've always hated this Arts Council question, 'But what are you? What is your identity?'" For Visnevski, definition was, and is, confining: "The identity has the right to change, and it should otherwise you're dead creatively. And I've tried to change my way of looking, my interpretation, my way of communicating with an audience from show to show. . . . The word alternative means that you are an option. The theatre's not an option; there are many kinds of theatre. I am one of many, I represent one of many kinds of theatre . . . which has a right to shift and change. And at one point I may be seen as more mainstream and another point as less mainstream, but again, what is mainstream theatre?"[15] Although Cherub sought funding from the ACGB, it was never granted it because of the ACGB's misrecognition and rejection of their foreignness. Even so, Cherub could likely never have conformed to the ACGB's expectations, largely because the ACGB did not articulate them and partially because Cherub did not initially recognize the consequences of defying those unspoken expectations and refusing to define itself. The company's aesthetic prompted a

specifically different style of theatre and performance that the ACGB, ever in its pursuit to reward excellence, decided to define as "bad."

From the company's earliest days, the ACGB's officers were flustered by Cherub. Because they could not place the company's work in a style or genre of performance they were accustomed to seeing, the Arts Council's reviewers would often attribute the intentional rawness of the company's productions (usually arising out of the visceral and emotional nature of the actors' performances) to "youth" or "inexperience." The Arts Council of Great Britain drama officer Jonathan Lamede noted that for Cherub's first production, *Life is a Dream* (1978): "This new young company had bitten off far far more than they could chew. . . . It was surprising to learn afterwards that the majority of the cast had had professional experience; the standard seemed to me to be that of a group of people barely out of drama school, raw, unvariegated and without much grasp of rhythm, pace or inflection."[16] Only about twenty years before, in 1949, the ACGB's Llewellyn Rees was horrified by the "debasing [of] human nature" that he witnessed in a training session at the Old Vic School, and Simon Shepherd has documented the rejection of the "physical" in acting across the 1960s with the emergence of the Royal Court's emphasis on "kitchen sink realism."[17] As many of the ACGB reports demonstrate, this realism was the norm by which they judged Cherub's performances.

Drama officer Plowman, responsible for the "jerk-off theatre" review of *Kinsmen*, reminisced in his report on *Life is a Dream*, "It reminded me in production of nothing so much as the Eastern European films which were shown for children on the BBC in the early 60's [*sic*], were always presented by Peggy Miller and seemed always to be dubbed by the same four radio actors."[18] Plowman associated Cherub's productions with East European performance techniques, though by saying the production was "nothing so much as" these films, he reveals that he views such techniques with little regard. Indeed, Plowman's particular conceptualization of Eastern Europe and its culture would be a yardstick that the ACGB would continually use for Cherub's productions. The films Plowman refers to were shown on the BBC in the 1960s and 1970s under the collective series title *Tales from Europe*.[19] Most of the films shown on *Tales from Europe* had been heavily subsidized by various European governments, and thus were inexpensive for the BBC to purchase broadcast rights to. Former BBC executive Edward Barnes said that after purchasing them, the BBC "would re-edit them into short series, and because we couldn't afford dubbing we'd add narration over the dialogue. This became virtue from necessity, because the viewers could hear the original language and it gave them a taste of other cultures and other worlds."[20] It is not accidental that Plowman should

specifically recall in his report the overdubbing of the German actors' lines by the narration of a British actor. In *The Singing Ringing Tree*, for example, the European-ness of the film is foregrounded and is virtually unobscured, with only a hastily added Britishness (the narration) scrawled over the top of it. I think that a similar case could be made for many of Cherub's productions, especially the early ones like *Life is a Dream* and the next production, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. As Visnevski has said, he felt that he was always trying to marry his Eastern European self with the British milieu he was now in, sometimes uneasily. A Cherub show was like a *Tales from Europe* episode; its European-ness was writ large, and its lack of Britishness was perhaps off-putting to those accustomed to traditional British performance.

The ACGB tried numerous times to put Cherub in a box by asking the company to define itself, something it refused to do; and because the staff did not sympathize with Visnevski's mission and could not associate the company within conventional designations, they began to see Cherub as a problem.[21] As Plowman's reports particularly make clear, when the ACGB's staff was left to draw its own conclusions, the reviewers often imagined the worst. Because the ACGB could not both fund the company and keep it marginalized (as it tended to do with other "token" companies), they opted to ignore the company's need for funding in the hope that Cherub would just go away.

On its side, Cherub's biggest fault was that it didn't play by the ACGB's rules, and its desire to be contrary showed up both in its work and in its interactions with the ACGB. The company's determination to be different was what drew critics and audiences to its productions, but it also alienated the ACGB. To be able to do what one wanted in the 1980s (and probably still today), companies had to be very adept at "playing the game" with the ACGB to get financial support. Those who could not or did not play the game successfully were often in trouble. Cherub's founder, Visnevski, tried to walk the line between his own artistic principles and the ones that he could perceive the ACGB was placing on his productions, but even he admits now that he was not a good politician with the ACGB. That, coupled with the fact that the company did not know specifically what the ACGB's objections were because the ACGB officer reports were not available to the artists, placed them at a severe disadvantage. All Visnevski knew was that his company wasn't being funded, and in desperation, he and his company made some decisions that led them into an even more complicated relationship with the ACGB.

Cherub's first misstep came when Visnevski attempted to obtain a program rather than a project subsidy on a couple of occasions. The ACGB preferred to test the waters when working with a new company by offering a project subsidy,

or small grants only for specific projects, a fact that Visnevski did not understand. After a number of project grants, a company could be considered for a program, or annual, subsidy, a more sizable grant intended to support the work of a company over the course of a year, as Lamede explained to Visnevski in a letter dated May 31, 1979.[22] In its early days, Cherub didn't operate on a traditional, seasonal model, and in part, the misunderstanding between Cherub and the ACGB seems to have come out of the rather chaotic nature of Cherub's production schedule. Without a subsidy, the company had to constantly perform *something* if it was to stay alive (the more tickets sold, the more money to produce). Having become a cooperative in 1979 before *Two Noble Kinsmen*, the actors and crew were being paid only from box office receipts, after expenses were deducted. In its first five years of operation as a cooperative (1979–1984), Cherub put up seventeen new productions, half of the total number of shows that Cherub would produce over its twenty-five-year lifespan.

Cherub's hectic schedule of performances and rehearsals and organizing tours didn't line up with the Arts Council's timeline. "You will of course be entitled to submit project applications in 1980/81, once the Council makes funds available," ACGB drama officer Jonathan Lamede wrote to Visnevski in August 1979 after noting that the company's application for program subsidy had been denied. "I would suggest you contact me no later than January 1980 if you intend to put in an application for the period starting April 1980."[23] At the time, Visnevski was preparing to leave for Edinburgh for the premiere of *Kinsmen* at the Festival Fringe, a production produced and subsequently toured without a subsidy. He was also planning the company's next productions. In February 1980, Visnevski sent a letter to drama director John Faulkner, seeking "financial support for . . . work in 1980–81." The letter also detailed the company's plans for *Barabbas* and the two children's plays, *Donkey Work* and *Monster Man*, which were planned to tour to schools. Visnevski, because he had so many plans for future productions, hoped the council would extend program funding to continue his work so that Cherub didn't have to wait for the project grant deadlines. Lamede's response, sent through his assistant Sarah Golding, was to once again explain that the company had already applied for a program subsidy and had been rejected. Individual project applications, Lamede said, were only to be used for future, as-yet-unproduced work as "the Council cannot offer subsidy in retrospect."[24] Lamede's written responses increasingly express frustration with what he perceives as Visnevski's incompetence.

Although it made several other applications over the next year, Cherub did not receive a subsidy until 1981. This was £5000 for a tour of Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. The tour followed the premiere and subsequent

positive response at Edinburgh and in London to *Kafka's THE TRIAL*, and this probably assured the funding for *Chaste Maid*. Lamede admitted in a letter that he "managed to see *THE TRIAL* at the Young Vic recently and enjoyed it a great deal."[25] Significantly, Lamede's report on *THE TRIAL* also notes that it was "a Cherub show which I actually liked." He goes on to write, "Being an old Kafka buff, I was inclined to be even more critical than usual, so I'm being won over against some odds when I say that this show was the closest to the feel and spirit of Kafka's works that I've seen on stage."[26] Although the funding application was handled by the touring department, Lamede was aware of the application, and likely the combination of a different set of officers in touring and the positive response to *THE TRIAL* greased the wheels for the application to be accepted.

However, the grant for *Chaste Maid in Cheapside* was the only project subsidy Cherub received from the Arts Council in its twenty-five-year lifetime. In May 1981, just two weeks after Cherub had received the news that the previous application had been accepted, Drama Director John Faulkner notified the company that two project applications (for productions of *Macbeth* and an adaptation of Daniel Defoe's *The Journal of the Plague Year*) had not been funded. In his letter, he writes that "advisers and officers had the benefit of referring to no less than sixteen written reports and two verbal reports on seven different productions," a number, he assures Visnevski, that is more than average and that "the balance of these reports was not favorable."[27] The rejection put the company into a couple of binds. First, since plans were underway for a tour of *Macbeth* prompted in part by the ACGB-funded tour of *Chaste Maid* (including some promised bookings for the production in theatres across the country), Cherub's ability to meet the scheduled demands of the *Macbeth* tour was greatly in doubt. Second, and more importantly, the company was once again in the position of having to defend itself to the ACGB, a state Cherub believed itself to have surpassed once it received the £5000 for *Chaste Maid*. Visnevski and his team assumed that the funding meant that the ACGB had finally relented and that they'd have less trouble in the future securing a subsidy.

The company found itself in a rather Kafkaesque position: The ACGB had funded one application and then rejected another based on the same set of reports that Faulkner claimed were "not favorable." Visnevski responded to the rejection letter by writing: "Based on [the advisers' and officers'] reactions the Company was at that time [one month earlier when *Chaste Maid* had been funded] judged worthy of financial support, and we have done *no new work since then* which might have led them to change their opinions. Does this mean that decisions are again based on reports made in 1978 and 1979, and the consideration recently given to the reputation we have built up since last September

over twenty weeks touring and several highly successful London appearances is no longer valid?"[28] Visnevski has a point. Of the sixteen reports, most of the stridently negative ones are from the company's early productions in 1978–79. Later reports on Cherub's work had been much better, which should have indicated precisely what the ACGB said in numerous letters it was looking for: the company's "development," or an improvement over time. That these improvements were being made essentially without subsidization should have boded well for the company. If one filtered out the oldest responses, Cherub at least should have warranted a second look based on its newest productions. Visnevski was pointing out a flaw in the ACGB's rhetoric: if we've done such poor work, why did you give us money? And, of course, the real question underlying everything was a clarification of the *specific* objections the ACGB used in determining that Cherub was not worthy of subsidization. Since Cherub was not allowed access to the confidential ACGB show reports, it had never received a straight answer to this question, one Visnevski asked repeatedly.

Lamede's response to Visnevski's letter was typically understated. He notes that "the Drama Director's letter was quite clear about the reasons for the rejection of your applications," and that there was "leeway within the system for us to proceed as we did in your case" by funding the tour of *Chaste Maid*. He concludes, "When the advisers and officers together considered all the information, it was felt that in the final analysis Cherub's work was not in the forefront when compared with that of other applicants."[29] This letter prompts a huge question of what "leeway" existed and why the ACGB saw fit to use it to fund a Cherub show when they felt the company's work was "not in the forefront." It also implies that there's far more at issue in the granting of a subsidy than just artistic quality. Cherub had, of course, made some rookie mistakes: for one, repeatedly asking for program subsidy when it had been warned against doing so, perhaps "demonstrating" to Lamede that the company was not administratively ready for subsidy. The company was beginning to develop a reputation for fighting back against the ACGB and for questioning its decisions, and this surely did not ingratiate them with Lamede and Faulkner. This refusal to "play the game" would come back to haunt Cherub as it repeatedly sought subsidies from the ACGB in future years.

The Stage caught wind of the controversy (perhaps tipped off by Cherub), and in an article a spokesman for the ACGB provided another Kafkaesque twist. The article's author summed the explanation up by writing: "Touring money and project grants come from separate funds and applicants had to meet different sets of criteria. She [the spokesman] said the touring department had decided there was a good case for taking 'A Chaste Maid' on the road and had recommended

it a guarantee. When the two project applications . . . were received, the drama department had given them a low priority in the present financial climate. But the *decision was no reflection on the company's work*, the spokesman stressed, only comparative importance of its chosen projects. Cherub should feel free to seek support for its next production, she added."[30] In its explanation to *The Stage*, the ACGB's spokesman directly contradicted the explanation Cherub had been given by both Faulkner and Lamede.[31] The spokesman did not mention "leeway" within the system and specifically said that the decision was not based on the company's work, despite the fact that Faulkner had so clearly articulated that it was. The spokesman's acknowledgement that the touring department and the drama department had separate, yet unspecified, sets of criteria must have been maddening for Cherub. Visnevski didn't know on what basis the ACGB was rejecting his applications, though he now knew that one department's criteria were so different that it allowed the company to receive funding when the other's did not. Like Joseph K in *The Trial*, Visnevski knew that the company was disliked, but he didn't know who was writing about their productions or what these people's complaints were. The ACGB also had no specified policy for specifically addressing complaints or any appeals process for those companies who were denied subsidies.

The reports in the ACGB archives reflect the view that if Visnevski (and by extension Cherub) could be made to conform to the ACGB's expectations, whatever those were, then this would yield a "better," more fundable product. In many of the ACGB reports, the company is patronizingly described, with officers using words like "young" or comparing the cast to "students." The status afforded to those writing the reports (both the drama officers and the advisory council members) allowed them to see themselves as significantly above those who would otherwise have been their peers, who would never gain access to the reports. The association with Eastern Europe—which, for often blatantly political reasons, even scholars have considered "backwards"—made it even easier for the ACGB to view Cherub and its productions as less than capable. This view persisted over time, with officers and advisers often listing in their reports the things they felt Cherub lacked, sometimes agreeing and other times contradicting one another. One adviser wrote of Cherub's *Journal of the Plague Year*: "He [Visnevski] hasn't the experience or the knowledge to function as the artistic director of a company; it all ends up like a show by students. He has a strong visual sense, might develop into a most interesting director, but needs to work as a subordinate for a while."[32] For the company's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* in 1981, a drama adviser wrote that the production "reminded [him] of a University drama group" and that he'd "like to see him working with

better actors."[33] Another adviser writes of the same production that the acting was "good," though he says, "I'd like to see more of the company's work. They still seem to be searching for the right play." Exactly what type of play this reviewer or the ACGB in general would have liked to see is unclear, though he does say that he feels "the company has a tendency to swamp content in technique."[34] Lamede himself, in his review of *Kafka's THE TRIAL*, commented on "the aptness of this company's style to the work of Kafka," and I wonder if the ACGB would have been happier if Cherub had not been producing "classics" but instead adaptations of modernist literature.[35] However, the ACGB never made its wishes clear, and Visnevski chose to produce the plays he was interested in, thus missing another opportunity for the ACGB to provide feedback that could have positively impacted Cherub's suitability for funding.

Several reviewers praise aspects of Cherub's productions, and a few even say that they're surprised the company isn't yet receiving subsidy. Sometimes a sense of doubt would creep into the reports: a sense that though a firm decision had been taken about the company, some officers and advisers were having second thoughts. One drama officer wrote: "I was of course anxious to put to the back of my mind the discussions I had heard in Projects Committee about Cherub, but I found it difficult to do so. I find I am no nearer an answer to the question: 'should this company be subsidized by us?' This is precisely the kind of theatre I do not like. . . . BUT lots of people think otherwise. They had houses of 600 at Leeds, I was told. Is it possible that the demand for this work is so great that the company's style and standard is *disregarded* by its audiences?"[36] This report is especially revealing, because for the first time, someone from the ACGB intimates that there might be something the council isn't seeing in Cherub's work. He rationalizes this by saying that the *audience* must be "disregarding" the problems otherwise apparent with the company's "style and standard." He does not consider that his (and the other ACGB officers') expectations for style and standard might not jibe with that of the audiences or theatre critics who admired Cherub's work.

In short, the company felt that the ACGB was backing it into a corner. Its shows were popular, and between recurring appearances at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and national tours, the company was known and respected by both national theatre critics as well as small regional touring venues. The company's international profile was also increasing: it had been invited to take *Kafka's THE TRIAL* on tour to the Netherlands by the British Council, and it had already taken *Two Noble Kinsmen* to Stuttgart, Germany. Yet Cherub could not secure funding from the ACGB, and despite those successes, Cherub's issues with the ACGB would continue. In a January 1982 article in *The Stage* titled

"Cherub Seeks Grant Support," Cherub's funding issues with the ACGB would be writ large, as *The Stage* once again discussed the question of Cherub's receipt of money for *Chaste Maid in Cheapside* but subsequent rejection for a subsidy for a tour of *Macbeth*. "I am not fighting the Arts Council," Visnevski was quoted as saying, "but I want them to be more aware of outside opinion, particularly the opinion of critics and directors."[37] Cherub also began to seek support directly from its audience, asking them in programs and lobby displays to write to the ACGB and tell them to reconsider Cherub's funding. A move made out of desperation, it irritated the ACGB's staff and likely solidified already widespread opposition to granting the company any further subsidization.

Without a subsidy, the company had no choice but to produce as rapidly and as often as it could. Increasingly desperate for funds to create new productions that could tour, the company posted letters from the council in the lobby in the theatres it performed in, and handed around circulars that explained the company's financial status and listed the Arts Council's address with the plea, "If you have enjoyed the show, please help us by writing to say so. . . . Your enthusiasm will help to persuade them we are worthy of support."[38] The ACGB's officers and advisers saw the display when they attended performances, and the ACGB received many letters from audience members, and from RAA representatives, theatre critics, and theatre producers.

Eventually, the head of the British Council's Drama and Dance Department, Robert Sykes, decided to write his own letter to the ACGB in support of Cherub. Writing in March 1983 that he wanted to "take an opportunity of noting formally a British Council view of this Company's value," he specified that the BC can only support artists overseas, and that it thus must rely upon artists who have the ability to develop their work within the United Kingdom prior to tour. This required a subsidy from the ACGB. He then detailed Cherub's history with the BC, complimenting the company for both its efficiency and its quality. He also wrote, "Sometimes [Cherub] may shock the systems of a conventional theatre going public, but [it] has a proven track-record of communication with the minds of young audiences." He concluded the letter by saying: "In view of the British Council's association with Cherub Company's overseas visits, I think it is probable that my staff have a rather closer contact with the development of its work than other Advisers or Assessors. If, in the course of looking at future applications from Andrew Visnevski for Arts Council support you wished to get an opinion from any of us, we would be very happy to help."[39] In a remarkable moment, one government agency in support of British arts (the one sending artists abroad) was defending and promoting a company that had been derided by another (the one supporting artists at home). Further, the BC was offering

its own assessment criteria as a basis for an ACGB reassessment. Sykes's letter seems to have had little impact, for the ACGB continued to defend its position and did not take Sykes up on his offer. Acting Drama Director Dennis Andrews replied by saying that the ACGB *had* taken into consideration outside views, and that these outside views are the only reason why Cherub is so heavily scrutinized, "since I have to add that the main burden of *our* reports has not and does not recommend support for the company."[40]

A holdover from Britain's imperial project, the BC sent British artists overseas to encourage "the study and use of the English language, and thereby, to extend a knowledge of British literature and of the British contributions to music and the fine arts, the sciences, philosophic thought and political practice."[41] This mission required that the BC work to make connections between Britain and other countries, and the fact that exchange, and not just dissemination, was involved meant that the BC was much more amenable to difference than was the ACGB. In contrast to the trenchant ACGB opinion of Cherub, the BC found value in almost everything that comprised Cherub's ethos: small, efficient, visual, inventive. The BC sent Cherub overseas eight different times between 1981 and 1989, and as a result Cherub made a decisive but necessary shift toward international touring in the mid-1980s as the BC welcomed them with open arms. By 1989, an article in the *Independent* dubbed Cherub "cultural ambassadors,"[42] a phrase picked up for an article on the company in *Direct*, the journal of the British Director's Guild.[43] The company would later use "Britain's cultural ambassadors" in much of its subsequent publicity. In a way, the BC and Cherub were perfect partners, and the relationship was somewhat symbiotic. In the midst of a budget crisis prompted by Thatcherite cuts, the BC was particularly attracted to small companies with efficiently packaged shows. In a memo to the BC representative in Iraq, the BC London representative pitched: "[Cherub's] production of *Twelfth Night* is one I would recommend . . .. The production has a bright, visual impact enlivened by an attractive musical score. It is inventive without being particularly bizarre or esoteric and its inventiveness is not . . . of a kind which would offend any Iraqi cultural taboos . . . Cherub may not be cheap but you won't find cheaper. Their costings are very economical."[44] The memo praised the company's work ethic and described them as being very "devoted to the Council" as well as flexible and understanding of working in difficult conditions. The BC found Cherub to be a useful commodity: Its productions allowed the BC, for comparatively less money, to send what it considered a quality production overseas for the delight of overseas corporate sponsors and foreign nationals. Further, though Cherub produced plays in English,

its "visual" approach bridged the language gap, and thus its productions could more easily be sent to non-English speaking countries.

British Council tours like Cherub's to Iraq in 1988 reflect that the BC's motivation to send theatre companies abroad was as much political and economic as it was artistic: the end of hostilities in the Iran-Iraq War brought untold opportunities for British business. Cherub's crews would become, as several memos in the British Council's archive note, some of the first Westerners to go into Basra and Mosul following the end of the conflict. To fund the overseas tours, the BC coordinated with corporate sponsors in the receiving countries as part of the work of developing ties between Britain and countries abroad. Much of the company's time was spent attending parties that the sponsors used to show off the company to their associates and employees. Cherub did find the time, however, in both Iraq and Pakistan, to accept invitations to performances at the local theatres and to perform for local audiences. The corporate sponsors were induced to arrange matinees for school audiences, and in Iraq, the company did several workshops with school groups. Similar arrangements were made for Cherub's later tour to Africa in 1989.

The pretour newspaper coverage (with copy likely supplied by the BC) often made Cherub's visit seem an important cultural event for those who would be able to see it. *The Herald* in Harare, Zimbabwe, wrote that "the chances are that tickets for the second evening performance will be at a premium" and profiled the "impressive six-person cast of highly seasoned professionals" who were featured in *Twelfth Night*.[45] In Karachi, Pakistan, the *Morning News* described Cherub as having "an ongoing reputation as a leading medium-scale company specializing in lively productions of the classics."[46] Overseas, the buzz around its performances remade Cherub into something it was not acknowledged to be in the United Kingdom: an important company of substantial skill and reputation. While this narrative certainly suited Cherub, it also suited the BC and its corporate sponsors. Unlike Cherub's shows in small, cramped theatres in the United Kingdom, where the audience was made aware of the company's financial plight, the audiences abroad entered some rather grand theatres with the expectation of seeing an important international company. Where Cherub had seen itself as pioneering a particular type of theatre within Britain and been rejected by the ACGB, the company was now being sent into former war zones to showcase its style of theatre as some of the best of Britain. And the audiences in those countries were being told that they could like Cherub and appreciate it for what it produced. The difference in how the ACGB and the BC saw Cherub can perhaps best be summed up by how they expected Cherub to be understood by

specific audiences. The ACGB thought Cherub unfit for mainstream British audiences and refused funding that would have allowed the company to grow and move off the Fringe. The BC, on the other hand, funded overseas tours because it saw the possibilities for Cherub to impact diverse audiences and reflect well on arts in the United Kingdom.

The BC tours didn't change the ACGB's mind, and the regularity with which the ACGB turned Cherub down caused the company's status as unworthy to become definitive. Without the imprimatur of the ACGB, most other (private) funders followed suit and refused Cherub's requests for money. That the company managed to continue on for twenty-five years is remarkable in and of itself. Indeed, the company's duration begs the question of its influence upon the cultural field. Cherub, though it saw itself as "innovative" and perhaps even aspired to be "avant garde," never gained enough symbolic capital to be able to modify or escape the classification placed upon it by the dominant forces of the cultural field. It *seems* to have had no clear influence in reshaping the definitions of theatre practice in Britain between 1978 and 2003, but the company did produce nearly forty shows seen in countries around the world. Can it really have had no impact on the cultural field? Did its productions truly fail to alter the landscape?

In *Staging the UK*, Jen Harvie writes an "alternative British theatre historiography" that locates a wide range of performances in Britain by foreign artists as potential sites of influence. Her examples include the Berliner Ensemble in London in 1956; the Comédie-Française at Edinburgh in 1948 and in London in 1951; Peter Daubeny's World Theatre Seasons on the West End from 1964 to 1973, featuring major companies from Western and Eastern Europe, Asia, the United States, and Japan; the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre; London's Gate; the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT); and several other "important (if often repressed) instances where twentieth-century mainland European theatre in particular has been introduced to and has influenced British theatre."[47] Cherub does not have the symbolic capital of any of these companies, but does that mean it had no impact on the cultural field? Most of the theatrical performances Harvie cites were one-time occurrences (or short runs) in London or Edinburgh. The only interaction any British audience member might have had with those companies was to view their performances or (for those lucky enough) to participate in a workshop or talkback event that may have been scheduled. This is no different than how anyone might have experienced Cherub's work.

The primary difference is in how each event was sold (their branding): those viewing Brecht or attending the LIFT festival understood that these companies were important because they were told as much through the marketing of the productions. Cherub could not make that claim for itself at its own

productions in the United Kingdom (though, significantly, the British Council had done exactly that on Cherub's tours abroad). The importance of the event in both instances comes out of a desire to convey a type of meaning to the audience in advance of the production. That it can be applied contextually is an indicator that it is a subjective designation and can thus be employed at will; importance is, after all, granted by the primary arbiters of the cultural field. Importance is also a means by which historians prioritize the history they wish to tell. One cannot tell the entire history of the world; one must pick and choose what will be included in the narrative when everything cannot possibly be included. That we will inevitably leave some history out of our narratives is not in doubt, but that doesn't mean that we must base our own priorities exclusively upon those who have gone before. By continually reinscribing the notion of importance, we cannot imagine what we have lost.

Despite the disjunction between the ACGB and the BC in supporting the company, Cherub's story enables us to see how institutions tend to reaffirm the standards set by another, more powerful institution within the cultural field. Institutions (families, schools, churches, the military) shape people. The field of cultural production contains numerous institutions engaged in assorted cultural projects, and these institutions train people to develop likings for a particular type of cultural good and to train people to create that type of good. Over time, certain practices within the field become normalized, and various institutions are expected to cater to those norms. In Cherub's case, one institution, the ACGB, made a determination about Cherub and its work. The ACGB's stamp of approval was a significant determining factor for how other institutions came to understand the company. For a time, Cherub's productions were able to convince enough people (especially media institutions and the British Council) that the company was worthy of attention in spite of the ACGB's decisions. This position was not ultimately sustainable, because with little money Cherub could not continue to produce enough shows to keep themselves in the minds of the media and the British Council. Over time, especially as the critics and British Council staff members who were sympathetic to Cherub moved on, even the institutions that supported them began to look elsewhere. By the time of Cherub's *Edward II* in 1998, most of the media ignored Cherub's shows, and some of the few critics that did review the production were hostile. The ACGB's determination ultimately was adopted by all of the other institutions within the field, save for some educational institutions that now view Visnevski as a worthy candidate to train their students in a different type of performance mode.

Cherub's success, then, is in the eye of the beholder. The company did not develop into a theatrical powerhouse like Cheek by Jowl or Complicité.

Visnevski has never been asked to direct at the RSC, the Royal Court, or the National (nor at any regional theatre, for that matter, though he has directed numerous productions abroad for other companies). Neither he nor any other member of the Cherub Company ever became rich or famous directly as a result of their work with Cherub. In conventional terms, Cherub was not successful. And yet, as I've shown, if one looks at Cherub genealogically, we cannot even begin to calculate the company's impact. The company managed to create thirty-six productions over twenty-five years without government subsidization. The company's shows were seen in England, Scotland, and abroad, and we cannot calculate who saw these productions and what impact their attendance might have had. Visnevski and many other members of the company have since entered the theatrical mainstream, going on to work with, teach, and potentially influence multitudes of others. We may never be able to estimate how the company's practices spread through the continued work of the various company members as they've moved from institution to institution within the cultural field. The so-called innovations that became "physical" theatre in the late 1980s and early 1990s and that have now become canonical are often described as being dance-inspired or the result of Britons going abroad to study with European practitioners. However, Cherub was already utilizing many of the methods that would become hallmarks of the later physical companies ten years before. If historical importance is rooted in notions of conventional success, Cherub cannot be considered important. However, a wider view of the circumstantial evidence lends weight to a reassessment of Cherub's historical value.

Notes

1. See reviews from B. A. Young, "Life is a Dream," review of *Life is a Dream* by Cherub Company, *Financial Times*, March 1, 1979; "The Two Noble Kinsmen," review of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* by Cherub Company, *Financial Times*, November 26, 1979; "Young Vic Studio: *Barabbas*," review of *Barabbas* by Cherub Company, *Financial Times*, May 9, 1980; and "Twelfth Night/Upstream," review of *Twelfth Night* by Cherub Company, *Financial Times*, October 18, 1982, among many others. Several critics, audience members, and producers wrote to the ACGB in response to a plea from Cherub; I found letters from Stephen Boyce, Christopher Hudson, Raphael Gonely, and others as well as responses from ACGB officers to those letters in the ACGB archive.
2. Frances Lonsdale Donaldson, *The British Council: The First Fifty Years* (London: J. Cape, 1984), 1.
3. "Cherub Company at the Upstream Theatre Club," undated information guide, ca. 1982. Cherub Archive (currently privately held by author).
4. Andrew Visnevski, interview with author, December 12, 2010.

5. The Lord Chamberlain began allowing homosexual themes in 1958 prior to the abolishment of theatre censorship in 1968. Homosexuality was generally decriminalized in 1967. Specifically gay companies like Gay Sweatshop, which was touring its productions *Mr X* (1975) and *As Time Goes By* (1978), were actively performing at the same time as Cherub, with a more direct mission to bring homosexual storylines to the stage. The appearance of homosexuality in the theatre was not without controversy. From October to December 1980, the production of Howard Brenton's *The Romans in Britain* appeared at the National Theatre, directed by Michael Bogdanov. The play featured the homosexual rape of a Celt by a Roman soldier, and while the rape was simulated and not literal, moralistic gadfly Mary Whitehouse filed charges of indecency against Bogdanov for directing the scene. While the prosecution was ultimately abandoned, the judge in the case ruled that simulated acts in the theatre could be considered for prosecution as indecent acts, setting a precedent that has not yet been overturned in British law (though no additional prosecutions have been brought).
6. Keith Nurse, "Macbeth in an Alien World," Review of *Macbeth* by Cherub Company, *The Daily Telegraph*, November 20, 1981.
7. Perhaps not insignificantly, Visnevski's key productions fall perfectly between Brook's 1960s work and the "emergence" of physical theatre companies like Complicité in the late 1980s.
8. "PJP" [Jon Plowman], Drama Officer's Report, March 26, 1980, ACGB Archive, V&A Theatre and Performance Archives, London, UK. Plowman is actually implying that audiences would prefer to go blind rather than see this show. See also Brian Cook, "'They Might not Go Blind': Cherub's Kinsmen and the Drama Officer's Report," *Performing Arts Resources: A Tyranny of Documents: The Performing Arts Historian as Film Noir Detective* 28 (2011): 314–21.
9. For more on the literary bias of British theatre, see Jen Harvie, *Staging the UK* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); and Alison Oddey, *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook* (London: Routledge, 1994).
10. Andrew Sinclair, Arts and Cultures: The History of the 50 Years of the Arts Council of Great Britain (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995), 51.
11. Ibid., 88. Emphasis mine.
12. Ibid., 118.
13. Ibid.
14. Dan Rebellato, *1956 and All That* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
15. Visnevski, interview with author, December 12, 2010.
16. "Jonathan [Lamede]," Drama Officer's Report, June 25, 1979, ACGB Archive.
17. Simon Shepherd, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 81–82.
18. "PJP," Drama Officer's Report, March 22, 1979, ACGB Archive.
19. "Tales From Europe," http://thewhitehorses.angelfire.com/002-talesfromeurope1.html (accessed September 15, 2011).
20. Mark Hudson, "Return of the Teatime Terror," *Daily Telegraph*, March 30, 2002, 7.
21. Visnevski told me that after *Two Noble Kinsmen*, Jonathan Lamede asked him if Cherub was a "gay" company. Visnevski was offended at the question, because he said his personal life was none of the ACGB's business. If he'd said yes, what might that have meant for the company's funding prospects? The full answer will have to be explored elsewhere,

but the ACGB did fund many companies with a specifically political mission, as part of demonstrating its inclusiveness. But Visnevski did not wish Cherub to be "political" and to play only to a specific demographic community; Visnevski wanted the company's work to have a wide appeal. He rejected the label "gay" for his company because he felt it did not match his company's mission, which he never viewed as a political one.

22. Jonathan Lamede, letter to Andrew Visnevski, May 31, 1979, Cherub Archive.
23. Jonathan Lamede, letter to Andrew Visnevski, August 7, 1979, Cherub Archive.
24. Sarah Golding (for Jonathan Lamede), letter to Andrew Visnevski, February 27, 1980, Cherub Archive.
25. Jonathan Lamede, letter to Andrew Visnevski, January 30, 1981, Cherub Archive.
26. Jonathan Lamede, ACGB Drama Officer Report, April 2, 1981, ACGB Archive.
27. John Faulkner, letter to Andrew Visnevski, May 14, 1981, Cherub Archive.
28. Andrew Visnevski, letter to John Faulkner, May 26, 1981, Cherub Archive. Emphasis in original.
29. Jonathan Lamede, letter to Andrew Visnevski, May 28, 1981, Cherub Archive.
30. *The Stage*, June 18, 1981. Emphasis mine.
31. The identity of this person is a mystery, though the fact that the author writes "she said" leaves out the options that it's either Lamede or Faulkner.
32. John Bowen, Drama Department Show Report, November 9, 1981, ACGB Archive.
33. Nicholas Barter, Drama Department Show Report, July 7, 1981, ACGB Archive.
34. John Bond, Drama Department Show Report, September 18, 1981, ACGB Archive.
35. Jonathan Lamede, Drama Officer's Report, January 15, 1981, ACGB Archive.
36. "AMcK," ACGB Show Report, July 6, 1981, ACGB Archive.
37. "Cherub Seeks Grant Support," *The Stage*, January 21, 1982, Cherub Archive.
38. Undated program insert, ca. 1981, Cherub Archive.
39. Robert Sykes, letter to Dennis Andrews, March 9, 1983, Cherub Archive.
40. Dennis Andrews, letter to Robert Sykes, March 17, 1983, Cherub Archive.
41. Donaldson, *British Council*, 1.
42. Emma Crichton-Miller, "Getting on Famously," *Independent*, August 12, 1989, 30.
43. "On a Wing and a Prayer," *Direct: The Journal of the Director's Guild of Great Britain*, October 1989, 9.
44. Paul J. Smith, memo to Peter Elborn, October 8, 1987, British Council Archive, British Council, London, UK.
45. Ian Hoskins, "Theatre: Man with the Midas Touch," *Herald* (Harare, Zimbabwe), April 28, 1989, British Council Archive.
46. "Cherub Theatre Challenges Rigid Approach towards Classics," *Morning News* (Karachi, Pakistan), November 25, 1988, British Council Archive.
47. Harvey, *Staging the UK*, 119.