It’s often said that “cash is king”. I personally, think that’s right. A business which cannot pay its way because there isn’t enough of it will not be profitable. So when business gets difficult and cash gets short, are there things we should be asking ourselves?

For instance, might we ask “what are we in business for?” or “what is our core business?” because it is our core business in which we have, or should have, the most experience, the most skill and tends to be a distraction. The last thing we need when times are hard is distraction.

What is distracting I believe, is to understand what is unnecessary to keep the business going, what is the minimum sustainable core and do the core business. So when business gets difficult and cash gets short, then these things we should be asking ourselves.

For instance, might we ask “what are we in business for?” or “what is our core business?” because it is our core business in which we have, or should have, the most experience, the most skill and tends to be a distraction. The last thing we need when times are hard is distraction.

Being competitive is not in itself distracting. It’s a healthy pursuit which drives innovation, good practice, sustainable businesses strengthening the sector and, in turn, providing value and growth.
Bad Practice, Focus and Healthy Competition

How’s it going?

The pressure on delegates to undertake business meetings instead of attending sessions or having more informal conversations was evident. Our own conference tracking of e-mail traffic using the messaging system revealed between 8,300 and 10,000 e-mails were exchanged before the conference. It was a significant increase on the previous year – up by 40%. Should companies be worried about staff ‘slamming-out’ and what did companies need to do to sustain motivation and staff focus in times of prolonged stagnation? Perhaps this is the subject of a future members’ meeting.

I am sure you would agree that it is the right approach to make it work. “So we’ll just have to imagine doing anything else” reported one well-known New York manager, “I can’t bear it. I love the music and I am sure that is why I am doing what I do.”

Is the situation all doom and gloom?

We then have a fighting chance of banishing the three D’s: distraction, disharmony and dispute. We need to recoup office overheads. To tell the artist what he genuinely thought, not what he thought they might want to hear.

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There are so many things we would not do in our private lives without the correct paperwork at the outset. A house purchase, car purchase, insurance, holiday bookings, accommodation, legal advice, financial planning, travel insurance. I often think about this when I conduct business and never take anything for granted.

I think it is this sort of resilient attitude that will carry many through and there is better news on the horizon. Despite the poor forecasts, I have noted that there is a marked practical consideration aside, I have also noted that there is a marked consideration that there has to be an element of pick and mix.

I’ve been in the business over 35 years and this is the best time I’ve ever known. Every year is different and it is the challenge of the variable market conditions that keep business interesting.

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How’s it going? Business perspectives at this time.

If reports from members are a reliable indication, then there is little doubt that US managers have experienced some of the toughest times in 30 years. The Chief executive takes a view.

“Tough Times” – This is a double report of senior US members of the profession who have lived through many market cycles but it is not only the failure of the recession according to some. It started with the dot com bubble in 2000 and the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Since then, the market never really recovered. Some large companies have also experienced changes in staff and notably whether New York or London, there have been some significant moves by experienced people in the business. For example, Stephen Wright taking over Van Walsum Management, Ken Barrett leaving Van Walsum, then joining Van Walsum, and finally joining NY Freda’s new consultancy in the UK, Universal, Simon Carelton moving from BMI Artists to Intermezzo, Mark Newlands moving from Warner Chappell to Van Walsum, ferrying his company off to Universal, Rudolph Thomason moving from Van Walsum Management to Hazard Chase.

From my perspective, the number of significant changes recently is unprecedented but my records might not serve me well enough looking back at the 70s and 80s. People seemed to move very seldom back then within artist management or was this the start of a new business. In short, headhunting or the concept of changing employers has been the target and fleet-footed managers have not been sentimental about changing their situation as long as and when required. However, the most important part of our business is the relationship we build not only with our artists but also the promoters – to get their trust and to garner respect or they key is not to be afraid of being afraid to fail. Steps must be taken to nurture an artist despite the need to recoup overheads. To tell the artist what he genuinely thought, not what he thought they might want to hear.

We were acutely aware of the situation and wrote to our artists and made known our plans. They were not happy but they were understanding.

One of the managers to whom I looked up when I was both at EMI and the London Philharmonic Orchestra was Howard Hartog of Ingpen & Williams. What was it he did that made him a legend? Was it the fact that he never said goodbye at the end of a telephone call? I had such fun trying to get the phone down before he did. No, he understood the most important part of our business is the relationship we build not only with our artists but also the promoters – to get their trust and to garner respect or they key is not to be afraid of being afraid to fail. Steps must be taken to nurture an artist despite the need to recoup overheads. To tell the artist what he genuinely thought, not what he thought they might want to hear.

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60th anniversary

European Broadcasting Union

John Willan was invited to address the radio stations of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) on 7 May 2010 at the Palazzo Labia, home to RAI. The EBU celebrates its 60th anniversary this year and for the first time IAMA has addressed the assembly.

Members might remember that Dr. Spangemacher, Vice-Chair of the EBU Radio Committee addressed members at the 2009 IAMA International Conference in Graz. He requested that members consider the option to extend repeat relays from two to three broadcasts after the original public broadcast. This was agreed to but raised the question about the length of time a recording could be used. This issue was taken up in Venice and Pierre-Yves Trilotot, Head of EuroRadios and EuroClassics, EBU, cited the following guidance:

- The legal agreement is 18 months but from which date?
- The question: the recording date, the offering radio broadcast date, the dispatch of the offer from the EBU, the use of the offer by the EBU members. To solve the problem and have a bit of a security, one should make the offer with the mention: deadline for broadcast: one year or from the date of the dispatch of the offer.

John Willan made the following points submitted by the IAMA board and broadcasting committee members in his speech to the EBU:

1. IAMA recognises the value of the EBU’s need to promote classical music within its membership.
2. The extension from two to three repeats should not be an automatic right and it depends on the original broadcast.
3. An artist might want to move on in repertoire and earlier material can, in fact, act contrary to the aims of the EBU and artist.
4. Members of the EBU should be clear about how they will use recorded material.

Members of the EBU:

- should be clear about the use and storage of material
- should be mindful that artists are carrying the risk and therefore, their involvement in the decision to repeat a broadcast should be part of the decision-making process.
- and artist managers should be more engaged with how best to promote classical music without compromising technological/ethical standards.

3. The EBU has a remit to promote classical music within its membership.

4. Collaboration and consultation with the artist will, mostly, provide a better product both in musical and technical terms and this, when placed into the archive, provides a never ending resource of real value. But only if it is not apparent to those involved in the process.

In my address to the 60th International Conference in Venice last month I was at pains to stress the importance of the relationship – the partnership – which we, as artist managers need to build with each other – with our colleagues – despite the fact that we are in a mild form of competition with each other.

That the sharing of ideas and information about our necessarily intense business must be encouraged and using our business as a risk. On the contrary, by working closely together, maintaining standards and facing the pressing difficulties presented to us together, we are somehow stronger.

European Broadcasting Union

Extract from John Willan’s address:

We all know that the classical music recording industry is not in the best of shape compared with the past. Commercial companies, their work is both dependent on us as artists and dependent on the need to deliver commercial product. Second companies offer a different type of legacy: it has (and still is) largely delivery of a physical, tangible product to their market albeit with an increasing emphasis on virtual delivery. It is also necessary to remember that this performance reflects an artist’s career and development.

In many cases this is an understandable tax for the consumer. The difference is, however, that the findings of commercial multi-channel CD is influenced in its infancy by the process of mutual agreement and collaboration offering the best therein and record company can deliver. This is not always the case which makes for interesting discussion, criticism, comparisons and argument. But in the main, through mutual planning, playback and artist approval the performance reflecting the artist’s offer is of a quality with which all those involved are happy: artist, record company and consumer.

This does not mean that this process is always blissful but it reduces the risk of misunderstanding, conflict and downright unhappiness needing rather to foster valuable partnerships and maintain the quality of the coupled performance. Where do artist managers fit into this dialogue? If they are to be successful in their profession, they must know and understand the commercial and qualitative interests which are necessary to sustain a career. Many public service broadcasters also understand this relationship, although the requirements of what they do are very different but no less important. Collaboration and consultation with the artist will, mostly, provide a better product both in musical and technical terms and this, when placed into the archive, provides an immense resource of real value. But only if it is not apparent to anyone involved in the process.

Furthermore, the printed directory is also now available at a special member rate of £25 and order forms are available on www.ClassicalMusicArtists.com now available at a special member rate of £25 and order forms are available on www.ClassicalMusicArtists.com.

The Editorial Advisory Board consists of:

Andreas Braun (IAMA – Konzertbüro Andreas Braun, Germany);
Martin Müller (IAMA – Melos Konzerte, Austria) and
Christian May (IAMA – Melos Konzerte, Austria) and
Aino Turtiainen-Visala (IAMA – Fazer Artists, Finland).

Joachim Huber, Friedrich Spangemacher, John Willan

Classical Music Artists – Who Represents Whom

The AEAA elect a new board and président

Andrew Braun, Benedikt Weingartner and Martin Müller

The AEAA held their general assembly in Brussels during May and have elected Benedikt Weingartner (Benedikt Weingartner International Artists Management) as their new président for a term of three years.

The AEAA Editorial Advisory Board for the joint AEAA-IAMA directory Classical Music Artists – Who Represents Whom, continues with Andreas Braun and Martin Müller.

www.iamaworld.com

Members should be clear about the use and storage of material.

should be mindful that artists are carrying the risk and therefore, their involvement in the decision to repeat a broadcast should be part of the decision-making process.

and artist managers should be more engaged with how best to promote classical music without compromising technological/ethical standards.

need to be mindful that interests of the record company are an important partner to an artist’s career.

and artist managers need to work together to promote classical music using new media in a responsible way e.g. reciprocal clips on artist websites.

need to work alongside publishers and artist managers with a more open dialogue between all parties.

should always make artistic standards their benchmark.
**Articles of Association changes**

The members of the Board and members of the Annual General Meeting have approved changes to the IAMA constitution a copy of which is available on the board page of the IAMA website. The changes include the following:

**Chairman:**

1. From 1st year the board will be in position to determine who chairs the association. The possible term of the chair has always existed in the constitution and is seen by the board as an honorary position - a president but the change of the appointment of a Chairman implied that the President's appointment should also be changed.

**President:**

2. The position of president has always resided in the constitution and is seen by the board as an honorary position rather than to be elected. IAMA has never had a president, although the last BICA president was David Siddall. There are no plans to install a president but the change of the appointment of a Chairman implied that the President's appointment should also be changed.

**E-voting and recognition of e-communications:**

The constitution has been updated to accommodate electronic voting and recognition of e-communications.

**Reasons:**

- The position of president has always resided in the constitution and is seen by the board as an honorary position rather than to be elected. IAMA has never had a president, although the last BICA president was David Siddall. There are no plans to install a president but the change of the appointment of a Chairman implied that the President's appointment should also be changed.

**So far, enterprise - congratulations to all who contested and made it to the final!”**

Secondly, organise. Despite the absence of a number of colleagues, and the challenging climate (in both senses!), there was a level of enthusiasm that has been evident throughout. The artist management business is nothing if not resilient, as the 2010 conference shows.

**Electoral reforms**

There have been reforms to the UK holding its national election and France having had regional elections recently.

**The Association’s ability, like that of other associations, to find a suitable chairman always remains a challenge.**

We can blame Louis Quatorze, apparently, for creating a psychology in which commercial business in most of Europe sees it as the responsibility of the state to support culture rather than the ethical responsibility of all of us. As a take of financial crisis, with public subsidies for culture likely to be seriously curtailed in the UK, France and the US, that raises some serious questions for the industry.

**That leads to engagement, in the English sense of connecting and the Finnish sense of ‘commitment’. Engagement — especially with the broadest audiences — is something we heard a lot about. At the conference there was much especially by the committee, shown by Rosemary Noden, whose extraordinary and uncompromising engagement in the challenging urban environment of Soweto rang out with absolutely clarity.

**We’re here in Paris, where Georges Perec wrote his famous story ‘La disparition’.**

For those of you who don’t know it, it’s a novel written entirely without the letter ‘e’.

**Like the famous story ‘La disparition’.**

Given that this year’s IAMA International Conference has taken as its theme the ‘environment’ (in all its senses), I thought I’d put the letter ‘e’ back and encapsulate the discussions of the last three days through a series of words beginning with the letter ‘e’

**E-voting and recognition of e-communications:**

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Do I charge VAT on my commissions?

The European Commission has brought in new VAT rules that affect the way in which VAT is applied to fees and to commissions charged. Variations can occur from country to country but the move is supposed to make VAT application simpler and more harmonised throughout the EU.

Here are some of the determining factors that one must bear in mind before adding VAT to commissions:

1. **A VAT number is usually the best evidence.**
   - If an artist based in the EU does not provide a valid VAT Registration Number, then one should charge VAT which can possibly be reclaimed.

2. **VAT Registration numbers provided by EU based artists should be verified.**
   - This can be done by using the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/vies/

Here are some possible scenarios to give you practical guidance:

**Artist A** is a business person (artist) residing in Spain. His artist management company in the UK will apply UK VAT to their commission.

**Artist B** is a business person (artist) residing in the UK with a UK VAT number. His performance in Spain, his artist management company in the UK will apply VAT to their commission.

**Artist C** is a business person (artist) residing in Germany with a German VAT number. His UK manager will not charge him UK VAT but the artist will be expected to account for German VAT on the commission using the reverse charge mechanism, irrespective of where the artist performs. However, if this management is in Germany, German VAT would be applied to the commission by the manager.

**Artist D** is a business person (artist) residing outside the EU and may or may not have VAT registration number from an EU Member State. The EU manager will not charge VAT due to the fact that residence of the performer is outside the EU and therefore outside the scope of EU VAT. The golden rule is to determine the artist’s place of residence and obtain evidence that they are in business. Once you have this information the VAT treatment can be determined.

**Artist E** is a business person (artist) residing in the UK with a UK VAT number. He performs in Spain, his artist management company in the UK will apply VAT to their commission.

**Artist F** is a business person (artist) residing in Germany with a German VAT number. His UK manager will not charge him UK VAT but the artist will be expected to account for German VAT on the commission using the reverse charge mechanism, irrespective of where the artist performs. However, if this management is in Germany, German VAT would be applied to the commission by the manager.

**Artist G** is a business person (artist) residing in the UK with a UK VAT number. He performs in Spain, his artist management company in the UK will apply VAT to their commission.

A VAT number is usually the best evidence. Some artists have several VAT numbers depending on their level of earnings around the EU. If they earn below a threshold, some / some artists may not want to voluntarily register for VAT. In terms of EU regulation however, the artist is still treated as somebody in business. So a VAT number can help us but it is not the only evidence that the artist is ‘in business’. Other evidence could be a contract for performance or evidence of a longer term written contract for representation (a further incentive to have written contracts with all artists).

If the artist based in the EU does not provide a valid VAT Registration Number, then one should charge VAT which can possibly be reclaimed.

The principle difference to what was expected in 2009 is that the place where VAT is due has changed to where the artist resides, i.e. where the artist pays his resident taxes and claims to have his main home, irrespective of nationality. This is a change from the previous rule that VAT is due where the artist performs, i.e. where the artist’s performance takes place.

This means that from 1 January 2010 if the artist is in business and resides in a different Member State to the manager, the manager should not charge local VAT. If the manager is in the Member State where the artist resides, they should charge VAT based upon the local VAT rates which are not harmonised throughout the EU.

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described by some critics as the ‘original fusion music’. It reached its zenith in the late 1980s and early 1990s with “huge John Williams-style ensembles”, but has now been replaced by computer-generated soundtracks.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is a small but loyal following for Western classical chamber music in India. One musician and entrepreneur who has been exploring this scene over the past five years is Gautier Hermans, Director of Arties Event Management. “I was originally invited to give a concert in Pune, and this made me realize that there is a huge demand for chamber music in India. So I set up a company in order to bring in chamber music to entertain the Indian audience. We have already played in seven cities, and soon we will be creating a new label, Arties Records, to help to widen our reach.”

Classical musicians who are intrigued by India and audiences for their performances may be relatively easy to find, but numerous other challenges face promoters who want to enter the Indian market.

Most problematic for large ensembles is the lack of venues that promote their own seasons. With the exception of the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Mumbai, most venues are spaces for hire that offer little or no scope for the promotion of their own seasons. For the UK orchestras this can be a challenge, moving from the SCO and LPO Renga Ensemble tours, but was not formally involved with the LSO visit. This reflects a current focus on partnerships. The British Council has also established a partnership between the British and Indian arts sector, with a view to creating a network of venues, festivals, producers and educational institutions to help to make links.

Creation of such links is essential in India, where cultural differences can be especially problematic. “You need to be a very good listener and know your audience well,” advises Rani Bhansali, who has travelled extensively in India and written, “India has a very different culture from my own, and you have to be sensitive to that.”

Looking to the future, the LSO and LPO are both keen to build on the success of their recent tours to India, though Matthew Todd stresses that “The key thing is to keep on going. We feel there are a lot of opportunities on both sides, and we want to explore them as much as possible.”

Owen Mortimer

Owen Mortimer is a founding partner of C-Sharp Ltd, a UK and India-based partnership offering marketing and media relations, coproducing, editorial, research and special project management services to clients in the classical music sector internationally.

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