

what's new?

JOHN ROCKWELL

THE ROMANTIC image of the artist is of someone both fecund and impractical, and most of the Greenwich Village artists one meets these days don't do much to dispel that image. No matter what medium they have chosen to work with, artists tend not unnaturally to concentrate on their art. Especially when they have abandoned the security that an academic environment can afford, they can sink all too easily into the clannish impoverishment of the Village's bohemian community. The material rewards are pitiful enough there, certainly, although it's sometimes amazing to find out how little it actually takes for an artist and his family to scrape by. Satisfied within his own subcultural world, the artist can create his art in skimpy circumstances, display or perform it in SoHo lofts, and hope for fame and success to single him out from on high.

Success to the hustler?

The trouble with all of this, however, particularly for musicians, dancers, theater people, even filmmakers, is that success thus tends inevitably to come more often to the persistent hustler. Not that hustling and talent are mutually exclusive: Some of the best artists around have an aggressive flair for self-promotion, and some of the soulfully diffident

types are as incompetent as they are passive. Yet we all know of essentially mediocre people who have managed to get public exposure for their work when better artists languish, unknown outside the in-crowd.

What performing artists need is skillful, disinterested management, but that isn't as easy as it sounds. Avant-garde artists are hardly money-makers, even when they are successful. Most managers are either the fulltime employees of a given company, which usually means that the artist must be successful just to hire him; or an alternative is a well-meaning amateur manager who may be working well below optimal efficiency. There are plenty of booking agents around who will take a commission in return for a booking obtained. But they aren't much help when it comes to the day-to-day tasks of budget-keeping, grant applications, fund raising and secretarial services, let alone such supposedly personal yet vital matters as collecting the mail and feeding the cat while the artist is away on tour.

Artservices

It is for this reason that Artservices, a non-profit management and administrative corporation located in New York's Westbeth, is of such interest. Artservices was founded origi-

nally in Paris and still flourishes there, with the Paris office now loosely but fruitfully associated with its New York counterpart. In the fall of 1971 Mimi Johnson, one of the founders of the Paris office, moved to New York and set up Artservices New York. Miss Johnson found as her initial collaborators Margaret Wood, who had worked in booking and management for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and Jane Yockel, who had served as assistant general manager and comptroller for the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Since then John Condon, who had been involved with Brooklyn Academy and the New York State Council on the Arts, and Narrye Caldwell have joined the original threesome.

Artservices works on the principle of "cluster management"—each staff member brings certain areas of expertise to the management affairs of a wide variety of clients, who in turn range through most every performing-arts medium. Clients pay fees ranging on their ability to pay, from nothing to \$6,000 annually during fiscal year 1972-73. The activities of the group are now partially supported by the New York State Council and by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Miss Johnson and the other Artservices staff members are determined to hold down the number of



Condon, Yockel (top); Johnson, Wood

clients in order to insure that each continues to receive the kind of personal attention that only a small organization can provide. They have never publicized themselves, and were in fact a little dubious about publicity such as this article, for fear that the number of artists begging them for their services would reach unmanageable proportions.

A Who's Who

The client list right now reflects the determinedly avant-garde tastes of the people who make up Artservices. Musicians include John Cage, Mother Mallard's Portable Masterpiece Company, David Tudor, Philip Glass and the Sonic Arts Union. The dancers are represented by the Cunningham Company, the Viola Farber Dance Company, the Grand Union, Barbara Lloyd, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown and Lar Lubovitch. From the theater there are Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, Joe Chaikin and Mabou Mines. And there are a number of other, miscellaneous clients and projects. It all amounts to a virtual who's who of New York avant-garde performing art, although the actual work Artservices provides varies enormously from client to client, from full management to one-shot errands. Artservices New York is not only associated with its Paris sister (helpful for European tours) but with TAG (Technical Assistance Group), a four-member team devoted to helping artists with production problems and organized on lines similar to Artservices.

Artservices is clearly filling a needed function, and should be lauded for that. But it is almost more important as a model. This country is full of people who want to make art but can't figure out ways to live while they're doing it; the country is also full of non-artists who are dissatisfied with what they are doing and would like to involve themselves with the arts. Artservices itself would welcome "competition," both in New York and elsewhere around the country. All it takes is someone with a feeling for the practical side of life who is willing to put up with a little initial self-sacrifice. One hears lots of complaints about how present-day artists have lost touch with their audiences; perhaps all they need is an enlightened middleman. ▲

RODGERS
The Rodgers Organ Company,
Builders of the world's most
authentically voiced electronic organ
and exclusive representative
for

ORGANS

Fratelli Ruffatti
of Padua, Italy,
World's most distinguished pipe organ builders

Ruffatti

For free information, write:
RODGERS ORGAN COMPANY
Department AB,
Hillsboro, Oregon 97123

MUSIC ACADEMY OF THE WEST

MAURICE ABRAVANEL, MUSIC DIRECTOR

ADVANCED TRAINING AND PERFORMING PROGRAM

July 1 - Aug. 24, 1974

orchestra—opera—piano—harp
—chamber music—master
classes—woodwind ensemble
—brass choir—individual
instruction

CATALOG:
on request

1070 Fairway Road, Santa Barbara,
California 93108
(805) 969-4726

INSTRUMENTAL FACULTY

Maurice Abravanel, Conductor
Irving Beckmann, Assistant Conductor
Lawrence Smith, Assistant Conductor
Zvi Zeitlin, Violin
Oscar Chausow, Violin
Milton Thomas, Viola
Gabor Rejto, Violoncello
Peter Mercurio, Double Bass
Burnett Atkinson, Flute
William Criss, Oboe
Mitchell Lurie, Clarinet
Norman Herzberg, Bassoon
James Decker, French Horn
Thomas Stevens, Trumpet
Ned Meredith, Trombone, Tuba
Forrest Clark, Tympani & Percussion
Suzanne Balderston, Harp

VOCAL FACULTY

Martial Singher, Director
Irving Beckmann, Opera Coach
Natalie Limonick, Opera Coach
Lawrence Smith, Opera Coach
Dorothy Allen, Apprentice Coach
Martha Massena, Apprentice Coach
Jean Barr, Song Rep. & Coaching
Gwendolyn Koldofsky, Song Rep. & Coaching

PIANO FACULTY

Reginald Stewart
Jerome Lowenthal

The Academy's admission policy is non-discriminatory