

## ***OUTWARD VISIONS, INC.***

### **Company History**

*Outward Visions, Inc.* is a not-for-profit arts and education service organization dedicated to innovative, pragmatic solutions to the problems that confront contemporary artists and arts organizations.

*OVI* was founded in 1976 to assist progressive artists in the development and supervision of their careers by offering management, booking and consultation services. *OVI* quickly enlarged its scope of activities to include producing individual concerts, entire festivals and recordings for major and independent labels. By 1981, *OVI* had broadened its range of services to include similar assistance to performing artists in other disciplines as well as to developing other service organizations.

That same year, *OVI* established a music business cooperative located at 611 Broadway in New York City. This facility included nine record companies, four booking agencies, three arts publishers, an accounting firm, a travel agent, two arts service organizations, two production and tour management companies and a rehearsal studio. Affiliated organizations spanned the entire musical spectrum, from R.E.M. and Bruce Springsteen to Peter Tosh and the Art Ensemble of Chicago.

*OVI* has successfully cultivated the careers of such groups as the Art Ensemble of Chicago and the World Saxophone Quartet, associated with both for over 14 years. Other management relationships include a 25-year relationship with legendary composer and MacArthur recipient George Russell, a six-year association with Grammy award-winning composer Steve Reich, a four-year relationship with Kennedy Center Honoree choreographer Alwin Nikolais and numerous stints with many of the most innovative figures in jazz of the late 20th century. *OVI* has also been involved in a number of groundbreaking recordings by such major figures as George Russell, the WSQ, the Art Ensemble, Sam Rivers and others.

With an emphasis on self-determination, *OVI* has trained many artists in business management in order to help them build and control their own careers. To this end, *OVI* has aided countless artists in establishing not-for-profit organizations, thus assisting them in achieving greater artistic, educational and societal goals. As of 2004, *OVI* has been involved in the establishment of more than 60 not-for-profits.

*OVI* has also initiated and produced community-oriented programs, beginning with a series of prison concerts in early 1979. That same year, *OVI* instituted a very successful program for incarcerated youth at five juvenile detention centers throughout inner-city areas of New York City. Ongoing weekly classes, concerts, workshops and lectures were presented by well-known contemporary jazz musicians under the sponsorship of the New York State Division for Youth and the New York City Youth Board, with the assistance of the National Endowment for the Arts, Citibank, Chemical Bank and Meet The Composer. The program continued until 1984, when severe budget cuts in the state and city youth agencies forced the cancellation of the program.

Throughout its existence, *OVI* has inaugurated a number of important creative performing outlets across the United States, many of which now rank among the major presenters of contemporary artists. *OVI* has also been involved in the production of highly successful concerts for the Kool Jazz Festival in New

York, and co-produced, along with the Kool Jazz Festival and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the *Los Angeles Kool Jazz Festival: New Directions in Sound and Rhythm*, which presented concerts featuring the Art Ensemble of Chicago, World Saxophone Quartet, James "Blood" Ulmer and other of contemporary jazz' most adventurous artists, plus Laurie Anderson and the Nikolais Dance Theatre in venues such as the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Beverly Theatre and the Santa Monica Civic Center. All of these activities further strengthened *OVI's* commitment to developing new opportunities for artists.

*OVI* has also provided extensive services to the dance community, both in general management and as a consultant, setting up and developing funding strategies, reducing deficits and restructuring entire organizations. *OVI's* ability to apply well-planned, pragmatic solutions to various arts business problems has helped pull more than one major dance company back from the brink of financial ruin, and was particularly helpful in assisting the Nikolais/Louis Foundation for Dance.

*OVI* has consistently furnished pro-bono consultations to deserving artists by providing the assistance necessary for them to establish their own not-for-profit corporations and giving them advice on all aspects of their business operation during their initial phase of operations. These consultations have concentrated particularly on innovative minority artists.

In the 1990s *OVI* was also the catalyst for previously unaligned musical aggregations, raising funds, touring and producing records to showcase these collaborative efforts. These couplings included the Art Ensemble of Chicago/Women of the Calabash and the World Saxophone Quartet with African Drummers.

Continuing to disperse its accumulated expertise, *OVI* over the years has offered consulting services to major organizations and has presented seminars and lectures on a variety of subjects at the New England Conservatory, Rutgers University, the National Jazz Service Organization, Jazz Interactions, Arts Midwest, The New England Foundation for the Arts, Yale University, Columbia University, the New School for Social Research (now the New School University), the Artists Collective, ASCAP, the Arizona Commission on the Arts and the IAJE Conference, and three days of seminars under the banner *Business As Unusual* for the New York Department of Cultural Affairs, among others. *OVI* conducted over 60 consultations for the Technical Assistance Program of the National Jazz Service Organization, directly resulting in the establishment of more than twelve new not-for-profit organizations.

The *Outward Visions Touring Program*, which was established in 1977 and ended in 1994, arranged over one hundred tours encompassing more than 100 cities and 35 states in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Europe and Japan for such notables as Steve Reich and Musicians, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, the World Saxophone Quartet, John Zorn's Naked City, Sam Rivers, Anthony Braxton, Sonny Fortune, Jack DeJohnette, Sun Ra, MacArthur recipients Ali Akbar Khan and George Russell's Living Time Orchestra and Kennedy Center Honoree Alwin Nikolais' Nikolais Dance Theatre.

A primary focus of *OVI* from 1993 through 1997 was *The Coltrane Project*, an initiative dedicated to the artistry, vision and spirit of John Coltrane. Launched in late 1995 following two years of extensive community planning in partnership with the Annenberg Center at the University of Pennsylvania and seven cultural organizations in seven geographically and ethnically diverse communities throughout the

City of Philadelphia, *The Coltrane Project of Philadelphia* presented nearly 200 events, including workshops, community concerts and residency activities throughout the city. The residency activities were conducted by internationally recognized artists connected to or profoundly influenced by John Coltrane, including Reggie Workman, Oliver Lake, Sonny Fortune, Larry Harlow, the late Makanda Ken McIntyre, Charles Gayle and choreographers Rennie Harris, Hassan Al Falak and Eiko & Koma, working with established local artists and ensembles

The first phase of *The Coltrane Project of Philadelphia* culminated on September 22, 1996 with a free all-day concert at Zellerbach Hall of the Annenberg Center at the University of Pennsylvania. This concert was also broadcast live on WRTI-FM and its affiliates throughout the Delaware Valley. More than 20 different works were presented in a variety of disciplines, including six newly commissioned works and new arrangements of Coltrane compositions. These works were developed through the aforementioned residency activities and performed by 12 different ensembles, together with the above-mentioned artists. This concert, in celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the birth of John Coltrane (on September 23), was attended by over 2000 people.

In addition to these activities and performances, firm partnerships were developed among the various participants. Additional projects included the creation of six mosaic murals, including four in various schools throughout the city, created by the students themselves and depicting their interpretation of the music and spirit of John Coltrane, and a benefit concert for the John W. Coltrane Cultural Society on July 17, 1996 (the 39th anniversary of the death of John Coltrane), featuring a special performance of a trio comprised of Sonny Fortune, Reggie Workman and Rashied Ali.

The second phase culminated in a second concert presented at Zellerbach Hall that featured Rashied Ali, Charles Gayle and Conrad Herwig, among others. Funders for this Project included The William Penn Foundation, the Meet The Composer/Philadelphia Music Project supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Meet The Composer/Reader's Digest Commissioning Program supported by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts, The Rockefeller Foundation's Multi-Arts Production Fund and The Nathan Cummings Fund.

*The Coltrane Project* was not simply a series of artistic events, but rather an initiative designed to bring opportunities to various communities under the auspices of cultural organizations who are dedicated to uplifting the community itself through cultural activity. To this day, *Outward Visions* receives comments from individuals in many walks of life who credit this Project for its profound influence upon them.

With similar intent and focus, in April of 2003 *OVI* partnered with the Sovereign Arts Society in Tucson to present the *Afro-Latino-Americas Festival*, an extension of *The Coltrane Project of Philadelphia*. Artists such as Oliver Lake, Ravi Coltrane, Dom Minasi and Mary Redhouse provided over 30 workshops and concerts in 16 different schools in Tucson. The Festival culminated in a free outdoor festival in an urban park where Oliver, Mary, Dom and other artists performed.

In the Fall of 2003 and Spring of 2004 *OVI* presented *The Transcendence Initiative* (Dedicated to the Artistry & Spirit of John Coltrane). An extension of the Afro-Latino-Americas Festival, Oliver Lake and

his Steel Quartet was brought back to Tucson for a series of concerts and workshops in schools and community centers.

From its offices in Tucson, Arizona (which were opened in 1994), *OVI* has also been involved in the following activities:

Developing new educational programs, working with other like-minded organizations throughout the U.S. utilizing the methods established in the aforementioned pilot initiatives.

Providing consultations to artists and arts organizations throughout the United States. Consultations with artists focus on a variety of issues, including helping them execute an overall plan that weaves together all the elements of their career, providing assistance in developing projects for presentation to booking agents, presenters, touring programs, etc., confronting special problems and troubleshooting, corporate options (especially 501(c)(3) not-for-profits), self-promotion, creating personal opportunities, project development and fundraising. Organizational consultations include board development and restructuring, fundraising possibilities, deficit reduction, long-range and short-term planning and general organizational structure and development.

Providing strategic planning and business assistance to outstanding artists, including the Craig Harris, Giacomo Gates, Oliver Lake and the late George Russell,

Working with the estate of the late multi-reedman/composer/educator Makanda Ken McIntyre to continue his legacy via the release of CDs, and the placing of his compositions and scores in high schools, universities and with professional ensembles, the dissemination of his educational writings and the creation of new ensembles to perform his music.

Providing similar services to Akasha, Inc., an organization *OVI* helped establish in 1999 on behalf of the late multi-reedman/composer Thomas Chapin.

Distributing Marty Khan's ***Straight Ahead: A Comprehensive Guide to the Business of Jazz (Without Sacrificing Dignity or Artistic Integrity)***, a comprehensive business manual for students as well as jazz artists and professionals for use in the field and the accompanying ***Teacher's Guide with Suggested Assignments***. A curriculum has been developed for its use in colleges and universities.

Working with Peabody award-winning radio documentarian Steve Rowland and CultureWorks to develop an innovative system of digital distribution for artist controlled product as well as the distribution of his own documentaries, including *Tell Me How Long Trane's Been Gone*, a 5-hour documentary on John Coltrane which was originally commissioned through *The Coltrane Project of Philadelphia*.

Assisting in the development of *doubledave music*, a production company and label dedicated to producing audio and video works of the highest quality in both production values and artistry.

Providing extensive strategic and conceptual development for the *Jazz Improv LIVE! Convention & Festival* and working to bring the Jazz Improv LIVE! Convention to a number of American cities.

Working on the development and establishment of a Jazz Research Institute at North Carolina Central University in conjunction with the African American Jazz Caucus.

Working with LiveWired, Inc a New York-based non-profit focused upon a wide range of activities in music, design and social enterprise.

Nurturing the artistic business activities of a variety of musicians, composers, filmmakers, writers and arts professionals in Tucson.

Working in a management capacity with vocalist/composer Rahe, whose first album - *Out of the Box* – will be released on Outward Visions Music in early 2011.

By continuing to be innovators in the not-for-profit field, *OVI* intends to bring significant change and improvement to the on-going search for clarity, inspiration, peace and understanding through the profound experience of the higher arts.

*Outward Visions* now has offices in New York City and Tucson, Arizona, with its main office located in Tucson.

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