

# **A Festival in Disarray: The 2002 Adelaide Festival: A Debacle or Another Model of Arts Organization and Leadership?**

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The reason I came to Adelaide and the reason I was so excited to be here, and actually still am excited to be here, is because I think South Australia is where the future not only of this country is going to be written, but where the future of the industrialized world is going to be written. . . . Why I love that it says, “The Festival State” on the license plates here is: let us juice it, let us heat it up, let us get festive.

—Peter Sellars in a speech given to the Hawke Centre, Adelaide, 2000

State arts festivals are always top-down events, conceived by politicians and business interests, assembled by high-profile entrepreneurs and pulled into operation by committees. They are big, complex and expensive, so huge amounts of sponsorships are needed to pay for them, along with huge amounts of advertising to goad us into taking an interest. Meanwhile, we are reduced to being little more than spectators: passive consumers of arts product.

—P. Timms, “Woodchips are Down”

**W**hen addressing generic leadership, M. J. Wheatley suggests that we embrace the approach of the new sciences, which allows for chaos as a given and considers determining relationships far more important than making rules:

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The things we fear most in organizations—disruption, confusion, chaos—need not be interpreted as signs that we are about to be destroyed. Instead, these conditions are necessary to awaken creativity. (Wheatley 1999, 21)

Heifetz and Laurie also note how important the leader's role is in dealing with change: "A leader helps expose conflict, viewing it as the engine of creativity and learning" (Heifetz and Laurie 1997, 127–28).

Thus, leaders may, in the process of bringing about change, cause disruption and conflict to an organization; this, however, may be seen by the leader (and sometimes by the organization) as a necessary catalyst for creativity.

The style of leadership that has direct relevance to the arts and to the case illustrated in this paper in particular, has been described in the literature as "charismatic leadership." Conger and Kanungo comment that

[c]harismatic leaders differ from other leaders by their ability to formulate and articulate an inspirational vision and by behaviors and actions that foster an impression that they and their mission are extraordinary. (1994, 442)

Consequently, charismatic leaders create an inspirational and transformational aura that persuades others to believe in a different or changed reality. However, Conger also notes that "the success of a leader's strategic vision depends on a realistic assessment of both the opportunities and the constraints in the organization's environment and sensitivity to the constituents needs" (Conger 1990, 45). In discussing what he describes as the "dark side of charismatic leadership," Conger suggests that charismatic leaders can become somewhat narcissistic in their approach—for instance, by substituting personal goals for organizational goals (44). On the other hand, charismatic leaders can be so far ahead of their time that their constituents fail to appreciate their visions (48). He notes that these leaders, although excellent at generating ideas, may have difficulty in implementation (53). Charismatic leaders can also alienate their superiors through unconventional behaviors and ideas (53). If charismatic leaders are imported into an organization or situation, "their radically different values and approaches may alienate the rest of the organization" (53).

Arts management literature recognizes the major challenge arts managers face in managing creativity and creative people. Byrnes, for instance, writes, "in an arts organization keeping the creative spirit alive is a full-time job for a manager" (2003, 169). Exploring this dilemma further, I. Palmer concludes that "managing creative people and aesthetic products requires different management skills than those found in mainstream business. Curiously little attention has been paid in outlining what these different skills are" (1998, 435). On the other hand, L. Lapierre argues that the leadership of an arts organization resides with the artists:

Its [leadership] source is the work being conceived, created or performed. . . .  
More than any other type of leader, the artistic leader is engaged in a perpetual

struggle against the normal and legitimate tendency of management to apply a logic of organization, bureaucratization and rationalization. (2001, 6–8)

In Lapierre's view, the artist/leader is engaged in a constant struggle to maintain a vision within management while being reined in by organizational constraints. Arguably, this struggle has increased in recent years, with growing emphasis on bottom-line performance indicators and with both funding bodies and sponsors pressuring arts organizations to function like conventional corporate entities (Throsby 2001; Nugent 1999; Brokensha 1996). This raises questions about whether arts organizations identify themselves as businesses or makers of art (Protherough and Pick 2002; Caust 2003), to whom they feel accountable (Turbide and Laurin 2003), and how they are to be held accountable (Brokensha 1996; Gillespy 1999).

In this article, which is a case study of the 2002 Adelaide Festival, I present an example of arts leadership and management under pressure, the struggle between the vision of a charismatic leader and the management of the organization, and the influence of the leader's vision on both the arts organization and its local community.

#### THE HISTORY OF THE FESTIVAL

The first Adelaide Festival of Arts took place in March 1960. A local character and writer Bill Lindsay first publicly proposed the festival in a letter to the *Advertiser* (the main local newspaper) in April 1958 (Whitelock 1980, 33). The head of the Elder Conservatorium John Bishop, pursued the idea, and the managing director of the *Advertiser* Sir Lloyd Dumas, supported it. Bishop recognized "the value of staging an arts festival in a relatively small city. An Australian festival would be swamped in a city the size of Sydney or Melbourne. Adelaide's population in the 1950s was very much that of Edinburgh, while its climate about March was ideal" (Symons 1989, 264). Indeed, the Adelaide Festival was originally modeled on the Edinburgh Festival of Arts, and the artistic director of the Edinburgh Festival, Ian Hunter, visited Adelaide in 1959 to advise on the festival's establishment (Whitelock 1980, 27).

Several wealthy Adelaide businessmen financed the first few festivals through a guarantee against loss (Symons 1989, 267–70). To initiate this, in December 1958, the Lord Mayor "Gerry" Hargrave sent a letter to local notables requesting financial support for the concept of a festival. Hargrave noted in his letter that, as the purpose of the festival was to add to the prestige of Adelaide and to bring visitors to the city, with increased business, most firms would be able to charge any cost to expenses in the ordinary way (Whitelock 1980, 32).

Whereas business-sector involvement was solicited by the economic-impact argument, the artistic vision conceived of the festival as an opportunity to promote innovative aesthetic work (Whitelock 1980, 35). Given the

Calvinistic and nonconformist ancestry of the Adelaide's founders, it was judged that the city could provide "a reasonable environment for the fine arts. So long as they remained respectable, of course" (22). Bishop, the artistic director of the first three festivals, observed at the start that "it is important to keep up standards. It is important, too, to stir people up" (qtd. in Whitelock 1980, 40). In sum, from the outset, several different visions of the festival's purpose emerged. Some viewed it as a business opportunity and a way of bringing prestige to the city; others saw it as an opportunity to showcase new artistic work; and Bishop saw it as an opportunity to present a high quality event that nevertheless had the power to shock people.

These mixed expectations naturally led to conflict from the start. Prior to the first festival in 1960, the festival's board of governors rejected as unsuitable fare a proposal to produce *One Day of the Year*, a new play by Alan Seymour (Symons 1989, 274–75). At the next two festivals (1962 and 1964), the board of governors also rejected two plays by Patrick White, *Ham Funeral* and *Season at Sarsaparilla* (274–75). Although the Adelaide Festival attempted to present work that had never been seen in Australia and tried to lift the artistic standards expected of cultural production, tensions arose between the Adelaide establishment, who bankrolled the Festival, and the artistic advisers, who wanted to present cutting-edge work (Sloan 1988, 144). Tom Lehrer, the noted American satirist, when visiting Adelaide in the early 1960s for a festival, publicly congratulated the State of South Australia for having the best eighteenth-century government he had ever encountered (Whitelock 1980, 14). In her article, "The Cultural Mirror," Jane Sloan notes that

[t]he vast majority of artistic directors—Sir Robert Helpmann, Lewis Van Eyssen, Christopher Hunt, Elijah Moshinsky and Anthony Steele—were enticed from overseas to take up this demanding position. As a consequence most of them found it difficult to reconcile the contrast of organizing an arts festival of world stature with the small-time nature and organization of Adelaide—especially in relation to finance. (1988, 147)

The nineties saw some homegrown artistic directors: Rob Brookman, Barrie Kosky, and Robyn Archer, who all received a generally positive response from local media. Admittedly this response might be viewed by some as parochial. Peter Sellars was the first artistic director appointed from overseas since the 1994 Festival and the first American; expectations, therefore, were considerable.

#### PETER SELLARS

Peter Sellars is an internationally renowned and eminent American theatre and opera director. He has been the artistic director of the Boston Shakespeare

Company, the American National Theatre at the Kennedy Center, and the Los Angeles Festival. He is renowned as a director of twentieth-century opera and has worked at both the Salzburg and Glyndebourne Festivals (see the American Repertory Theatre Web site at <http://www.amrep.org/people/sellars>). He is also an iconoclast, and he describes himself as a “cultural activist” (Lloyd 1999a). When announced in January 1999, Sellars’s appointment created a general feeling that Adelaide was really lucky to get him, given his major international reputation as an opera and theater director. The *Advertiser* noted that

[t]he Adelaide Festival has again made an inspired choice of artistic director . . . an internationally respected director of opera, theatre, TV and film, Sellars is also the first American to take the challenge of the Adelaide Festival. (Nunn 1999)

Many felt that choosing Sellars as artistic director further served to affirm the Adelaide Festival as a major international player in the arts, and Adelaide felt justly proud.

The Adelaide Festival was not the first multi-arts festival that Sellars had directed. In fact, he had been appointed as the artistic director of the Los Angeles Festival for a ten-year term in 1987 (Breslauer 1993). In directing the Los Angeles Festival,

Sellars, who has said that he dislikes autocratic arts administration, claims to have turned his power over to 20 people (although considerably fewer than that appear to have the lion’s share of it). (Breslauer 1993)

A Ford Foundation study of the 1993 Los Angeles Festival makes it evident that some of the ideas that Sellars brought to the Adelaide Festival had already been explored. That report describes Sellars’s process as focusing on the importance of the “idea” and defining the nature of the festival as essentially a “dialogue about the ideas” (Ito 1995, 5). The report also notes that there were difficulties with the 1993 Los Angeles Festival, such as matching the organizational process with the artistic goals, reaching new audiences, and clarifying the central role of the festival (xxii–xxv). In addition, the report asserts that the festival had a problematic relationship with the *Los Angeles Times*, with the festival staff arguing that the newspaper equated success with box office returns, rather than the vision that was being promoted (Ito 1995, xi). Regardless, the Los Angeles Festival was discontinued for financial reasons after 1993 (Haithman 1994).

#### WHAT WAS SELLARS’S VISION?

Sellars came to Adelaide with a vision. He wanted to create an entirely new and different model of a festival (Lloyd 2001b). This model rejected the

“shopping trolley” approach to festival programming (Ward 2001a). Instead, the 2002 Adelaide festival would embrace indigenous work and community arts, arguably not given much prominence previously in what had been a mainstream, high-arts festival (Love 2001, 4). Central again to Sellars’s vision, as noted earlier with the Los Angeles Festival, was a process of power-sharing or collaboration (Nunn 2000b). He convinced the Adelaide Festival Board to accept a model where he worked with a group of associate directors and advisory committees in addition to administrative staff already employed by the festival (Nunn 2000b). His team of nine associate directors, plus various advisory committees, was to assist him in developing a program that addressed the themes of the “Right to Cultural Diversity,” “Truth and Reconciliation,” and “Ecological Sustainability” (Nunn 2000b). Sellars believed that these associate directors would bring to the table a broader range of expertise and knowledge than he could provide alone. They were also all Australians and, given his desire to make the festival authentically Australian, perhaps he believed that they would provide him with greater credibility as a visiting American. He also wanted to make the festival a product of Adelaide as opposed to bringing an overseas product to Adelaide (Nunn 2000a).

The nine associate directors represented a broad platform of interests, including indigenous arts, food, architecture, new technology, community arts, film, and performing arts. This structure obviously produced an additional expense for the festival with an estimated average cost of AUS \$80,000 per director per year, culminating in an expenditure of AUS \$1.8 million over the two years leading up to the festival. That AUS \$1.8 million was not available for programming. Furthermore, it was an expensive administration model for an arts organization that depended largely on public subsidy. Sellars originally envisaged that the associate producers would find private sponsorships to cover the costs themselves (Nunn 2000b).

It is relevant here to recognize that Sellars came from an American cultural context where relationships between arts organizations, corporate sponsors, and private givers differ greatly from those in Australia. Australian arts organizations receive their main unearned income from the government, whether the Australian Opera Company, the Australian Ballet Company, or a small dance or theatre company. The major funder of the Adelaide Festival was the state government; moreover, in South Australia, the involvement of the government in arts activity is structurally greater than in any other Australian state. The Adelaide Festival—a government corporation reporting directly to the minister for the arts—exemplifies this arrangement.

Furthermore, artistic philanthropy in the American tradition is rare in Australia, especially in a medium-sized city such as Adelaide. In addition, sources of sponsorship are also limited. Few major companies have head offices in Adelaide, and those that do, have limited resources to donate to the

arts. The Sydney Olympics in 2000 further limited an already restricted climate for sponsorship for several years. Various disasters then befell the global and national environment in 2001, including the September 11th attack in the United States and the subsequent collapse of Ansett Airlines in Australia in late September. Ansett served as a major carrier for arts organizations in Australia and as an official sponsor for the 2002 Adelaide Festival. Its collapse left a gap in the Festival 2002 budget of over AUS \$250,000 (Sexton 2001, 33). In sum, the general environment was poorer than usual for additional fundraising, while at the same time the festival was experiencing large additional costs that had not been budgeted.

The new organizational structure, with regular staff, contracted associate directors, advisory committees, and the artistic director, presented other challenges. Essentially, there was one group that was accustomed to working on a conventional festival model in which programming decisions were made eighteen months in advance. The task was to deliver the outcomes of those decisions. The other group of paid and unpaid people (associate directors and advisory committee members) focused on a process of participation and cultural enfranchisement. Although the associate directors had little previous experience producing a conventional festival, they were expected to find sponsorships to support themselves and their projects. Inevitably, irreconcilable differences arose between these two groups, both in terms of objectives and of practices. One group was less interested in process and more focused on implementation; the other group focused more on process and less on final outcomes.

At the outset, Sellars had encouraged broad participation in the festival (Nunn 2000b). This raised expectations from both the arts community and the general community (Nunn 2000a). Given the initial invitation by Sellars, many professional arts organizations and communities, both locally and nationally, approached the 2002 Festival to participate. However, the process for programming decision making was unclear, eventually excluding many organizations, communities, and individuals by rejecting or not acknowledging their proposals. Such poor communication caused tensions in the arts community. Leigh Warren, artistic director of Leigh Warren Dancers, an Adelaide based contemporary dance company, said: that “there was all this stuff about having wide consultation because it was going to be inclusive. . . . In fact, what I have experienced is just the opposite. I never even got to first base” (qtd. in Brown 2001, 21). In addition, visual artists were disappointed when they learned in late 2000 that “Artists’ Week” was to be abandoned for the 2002 Festival (Lloyd 2001a).

Regardless, Sellars had high goals for the festival. He believed that he was doing something revolutionary both in terms of content and process. He had invited eminent people such as Michael Baryshnikov, Susan Sontag, and Frank Gehry to Adelaide for the festival. He predicted that

this is a major watershed of programming and the program we will do here is going to change the way those people run their institutions in the future. . . . It's really exciting because these people are coming to South Australia to see a breakthrough. (Lloyd 2001a)

Sellars not only wanted to create something unique in artistic terms, he also wanted to create something new in philosophical and environmental terms (Sellars 2000). He also made the point that his festival would not focus on maximizing box office returns but on higher goals (Lloyd 2001a).

### THE CHALLENGES OF THE JOURNEY

From March 2001 onward, various events occurred that affected the festival organization dramatically. A deficit of \$1.5 million from the 2000 Festival was revealed, resulting in the departure of the then finance director of the festival (Lloyd 2001a). The state minister for the arts turned up unannounced at a board meeting in April and attacked the board for its incompetence in not disclosing the deficit earlier (Lloyd 2001a). In late April 2001, the chair, Ed Tweddell, a leading Adelaide businessman, resigned from the board, stating he had work commitments that prevented his continuation. A new chair, John Morphett, a retired architect, was then appointed immediately by the minister. In May 2001, the interim program for the 2002 Festival was released. The lack of detail in the program caused disquiet and anxiety about the Festival, which was to commence in less than a year (Debelle 2001a).

The finance director resigned in April 2001. In July/August 2001, both the CEO and the operations director announced their departures from the festival for other employment (Ward 2001a). When the CEO resigned, an interim CEO was appointed by the board in August 2001 for the remaining duration of the 2002 Festival. Shortly after this appointment, the festival announced that the length of the program would be reduced from the usual seventeen days to ten days. This decision created further disquiet in the media (Lloyd 2001b). In September 2001, the interim CEO revealed the AUS \$3.4 million shortfall in funding for programming. As a result, in October 2001, the festival board requested and received an additional AUS \$2 million in government funding from the state government to cover a part of this shortfall (Ward 2001b). However, this also meant that certain aspects of the program that had originally been planned were not deliverable and outraged the various communities affected by this change (O'Brien 2001, 8).

The festival's full program was due to begin in early October 2001, but world and local events impacted the timing of this release (September 11 and the Ansett collapse). The announcement of the festival program had to be pushed back to late October, which meant that Sellars would not be present, as he was committed to begin directing an opera in Paris at the same time. This was unfor-

tunate for both him and the festival. On the weekend prior to the program launch, the festival became embroiled in a new controversy about its media campaign (O'Brien 2001, 1). The *Advertiser* released a front page story on Saturday, October 27, revealing that the 2002 Festival media campaign featured the image of Adolf Hitler (O'Brien 2001, 1). The festival's major sponsor, Telstra, declared that its sponsorship would be withdrawn unless the image of Hitler was disappeared; the festival withdrew the offending images (Debelle 2001b). The whole issue provoked serious concern about the festival's judgment from the community, the government, and the media (Ward 2001c).

On October 31, the festival program was finally launched at the Aboriginal Tauondi College in Port Adelaide. Because Sellars could not attend, a video of him announcing the program had been produced. Unfortunately, it did not arrive from Paris in time, and the CEO had to preside instead (Debelle 2001c). There was a general feeling of negativity from both the arts community and the media at the launch, because the program, after all the preceeding hype, was very limited in scope and content (Harris 2001b). In addition, most local arts organizations had not been included in the program (Brown 2001, 21). Instead, there was emphasis on either amateur and community activity or high-art product, with little in between. On November 13, Peter Sellars resigned as director of the 2002 Festival. The previous weekend, he had spoken with John Morphett, chair of the festival, and was asked to widen the program content. Sellars allowed that he was happy to do so, but would need more money. Morphett said this was not possible; Sellars then resigned (Love and Kelton 2001, 1).

The festival also had one more problem: contending with staging the 2002 Festival. The Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, which historically was the main center for Festival activity, was under major renovation throughout 2001 and early 2002. In March 2002, at the time of the festival, the Festival Centre resembled a demolition site, creating a physical impediment for festival goers. It also meant that the festival was without a central meeting place or symbolic heart.

## THE FESTIVAL OUTCOMES

Most of the content of the 2002 Festival program reflected the themes of the right to cultural diversity, truth and reconciliation, and ecological sustainability. The opening ceremony of the 2002 Festival on March 1 was both spectacular and moving. It was called *Kaurna Palti Meyunna* and brought together indigenous communities from around Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, New Mexico, and Tibet. Starting from the four squares of the city Adelaide, processions of indigenous people, school children, and local communities walked to the central main square, or *Tandanyunga*, lit a huge fire, and celebrated in dance, music, and storytelling. Other highlights of the 2002 Festival included a film program that featured five new Australian films focusing on indigenous and

multiracial themes, specifically commissioned for the 2002 Festival. Although one of these films, *Australian Rules*, provoked divided feelings among the indigenous community, all the films were of high standard artistically and well-received by audiences. In particular, Rolf de Heer's *The Tracker* could be regarded as a masterpiece. It seems unlikely that these films would have been produced without the catalyst provided by the 2002 Festival. Other indigenous offerings, such as *Skin* from Bangarra Dance Theatre, *Bone Flute* from Mau Dance, and Black Swan's *The Career Highlights of the Mamu*, were also of high quality.

The major opera production for the 2002 Festival was Sellars's own production of John Adams's *El Niño*. Because of the lack of money for programming, this was only done as a concert version. Although acclaimed for its music, the production received mixed reviews for its concert staging. There were also major community projects at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and at the Parks Community Centre in the western suburbs of Adelaide, and a new arts project at the Oak Valley Aboriginal community in the north of the state. However, none of these projects were particularly visible to the media, the visiting arts community, or the community at large, given their location outside of the central city area.

Commenting on the festival, the *Adelaide Review* wrote:

[Sellars] and the associate directors made not only South Australians, but a national and international audience, pay attention to aboriginal culture and the themes of truth and reconciliation. . . but, whatever their merits these events did not add up to enough to justify the expense and the planning time of the biennial Festival. Having made a claim to raise questions and showcase culture, Sellars and his group bungled their opportunity. (Bramwell 2002b)

The *Advertiser* added that

[t]his would go down as the worst-run, worst financed and worst marketed Festival of all time. While there has been a popular move to sheet the blame home to Peter Sellars for the shortcomings of the Festival, he is just a convenient and not very deserving target. Instead, we have to look at the failings in Adelaide's ability to stage a Festival. (Lloyd 2002 b)

And a reporter from the *Melbourne Age* said that

[t]he events I saw were mostly fine and, in their way, challenging. What I missed, though, was the cumulative effect. For the first time, I did not feel there was a Festival happening all around me with a cohesive multiplicity of choices. (Shmith 2002)

## CONCLUSION

Although the story of the 2002 Adelaide Festival may be interpreted as indiosyncratic, it offers many reminders of the challenges facing leadership in

the arts sector. These include matching a creative process with an appropriate organizational model, achieving a healthy bottom line while pursuing a vision, addressing the nature of the relationship between funders and arts organizations, and finally, the nature of the relationship between an artistic director, the board, and the management of an arts organization. The history of the Adelaide Festival demonstrates that the festival enjoys an ownership that includes the media, the business community, the government, the arts community, and the general community. These various communities have different expectations about the festival, and inevitably, these will come into conflict. This conflict usually focuses on the artistic directors, and the 2002 Festival was no exception.

The heart of this conflict centered on Sellars's vision and the lack of success in its implementation. As is noted by Conger earlier (1991,54), charismatic leaders often have difficulty in the implementation of the ideas. There were obvious contradictions in Sellars's desires and practice and how the organization itself responded. Commentary at the beginning of this paper about the nature of arts leadership, notes the potential conflict between the "normalizing tendency of arts management" against the vision of the artistic leader (Lapierre 2001, 6–8). Sellars is an example of a charismatic leader (Conger and Kanungo 1994) who had a vision that he wanted to use to transform an organization. In fact it could be argued that Sellars saw his vision transforming the community also. The difficulties arose between Sellars's vision and his capacity to implement it.

Sellars wanted to have a different kind of festival that was not focused on major events imported from elsewhere. He wanted to have a festival organized to achieve very different kinds of goals from traditional festivals. He wanted the festival to operate within an organizational model that allowed for wide participation and consultation. He also wanted a festival that focused on communities not normally embraced by major arts festivals. However, from the outset, this plan presented difficulties. Insufficient thought was put into the marriage of the traditional festival organizational structure and the newly imposed structure of associate producers and committees. Consequently, an expensive and top-heavy administrative model was created without paying attention to the mechanisms that would make it work. Sellars seemed to want leadership from below, but did not know how to institute it (McDonald 2002a). The desire for broad participation and inclusion was also flawed in its implementation. The expectations raised concerning participation were disappointed in the final outcome. Significantly, many in the professional arts community, both nationally and in Adelaide, felt excluded or disenfranchised by the 2002 Festival (Debelle 2001a; Brown 2001).

In his desire to create a revolutionary festival, Sellars also raised an expectation that the festival in March 2002 would be a revelation for the audience.

As most of the unconventional elements of the 2002 Festival occurred outside of the city and were community-focused rather than event-focused, the festival itself seemed thinner and less substantial than usual. However, Sellars's desire to embrace the indigenous community in the process and outcomes of the festival did succeed in many ways. Certainly, the opening event and the film program were substantial contributions to raising the profile of indigenous art and artists in the broader community. Sellars championing of indigenous artists may have also indirectly contributed to the appointment of Stephen Page, noted Aboriginal choreographer and Artistic Director of Bangarra Dance Company, as the first indigenous Artistic Director of the Adelaide Festival for 2004 (although this appointment was seen by some as a "poison chalice" for Page [Debelle 2002]).

On the other hand, one of the associate producers appointed by Sellars, Lynette Walworth, comments that the process-oriented and community outcomes desired by Sellars are incompatible with a festival model (qtd. in Meehan 2002). This is something that needs to be considered. If the nature of a festival is about celebration and transitory activity, community cultural development is a long-term, process-oriented methodology and philosophy (Williams 1995). Is matching a transitory event with a long-term goal therefore unwise? Although the desire for broad community involvement in the festival was laudable, the nature of this involvement may have needed closer scrutiny.

There is no question that the Board of the 2002 Festival appeared to be unable to come to terms with the problems being faced by the Festival. Their action of forcing Sellars's resignation in November 2001, only served to humiliate Sellars and did not benefit the Festival as a whole. It would appear that the Board reneged on their responsibilities at an early stage of the proceedings and did not provide the leadership appropriate to their role. This resonates with earlier views about the appropriate requirements for successful management of creative people (Byrnes 2003; Palmer 1998). It would seem also that the festival could not adequately address the organizational and conceptual challenges Sellars presented to them. In addition comments by the then Chair of the Board, John Morphet, suggest that the board did not understand their role re financial matters. When an associate producer complained about the cancellation of an event that she had designed, the Chair commented that "[t]he board did know what the budget was. That's a matter of detail for the artistic director" (Archdall 2002).

Certainly Sellars destabilized the festival structure and organization, which caused a large turnover of staff and board members. As noted by Wheatley (1999) and Heifetz and Laurie (1997) organizational disruption is often congruent with creativity and change. This upheaval, although a disaster in the short-term, might force a re-evaluation of the role and structure of the festival

in the long-term. On the other hand, the festival's leadership post the 2002 festival, clearly tilted away from Sellars's visionary approach, as evidenced by the public statements of the new chair and CEO in mid-2002. They spoke of their desire to make the 2004 Festival a profit-making venture (McDonald 2002b). This would suggest that, instead of focusing on achieving exciting artistic outcomes, the focus of the 2004 Festival management shifted towards a bottom-line analysis. The 2002 festival also encouraged a punitive response from the newly elected State Labour Government, which used the Sellars imbroglios to attack both the festival and arts funding in general (Lloyd 2003; O'Brien and McDonald 2002).

Finally there is another important question involved: Has the traditional arts festival, of which the Adelaide Festival is certainly an example, become outdated? The Tasmanian Arts Festival, "Ten Days on the Island," in March 2003 engendered further debate on this topic, prompted by a controversy about sources of arts sponsorship. One commentator observed that

[p]oliticians and bureaucrats will be surprised and, I'm sure unsettled to learn that communities can put together their own professional Festival, paid *for* by themselves, just as long as it's *their* Festival and they feel passionately enough about the motivation behind it. (Timms 2003, 19)

The premise here is that large, expensive arts festivals on the model of the Adelaide Festival may now be too expensive to mount, as well as no longer relevant to the community that they serve in terms of cultural objectives. The original Adelaide Festival was designed to *bring* culture *to* Adelaide. Sellars wanted to reverse this model and design a festival *in* Adelaide that would *export* its cultural contributions to the world. Sellars felt strongly with his departure that Adelaide missed an opportunity in not understanding this vision (Lloyd 2002a). He felt that the media and the Adelaide establishment were locked in the past and, consequently, unable to see the possibilities that Adelaide and its festival presented for the future (Lloyd 2002a). Whether Sellars has made a lasting impact on the Adelaide Festival or the Australian community at large remains to be seen. He asserts that the impact of his presence will be felt ten years hence:

One of the things I'm sticking by is that this will be a festival of seeds and not trees . . . you will see the trees in 2010. (Sellars, qtd. in Lloyd 2001a)

Necessarily, one must wait and see.

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