

Grant Application to the APA for “a drama Project that will benefit the profession”.

1. AIM of the project.

Next year, 2011, is the sixtieth anniversary of the death of Ludwig Wittgenstein, arguably the best and most famous philosopher of the 20th century. We, the project committee, are seeking subventions that will enable us to stage a production of an award-winning drama about Wittgenstein in the Trafalgar Studios, central London, and perhaps elsewhere (depending on finance). If we can afford it, we would like to get someone of the calibre of the Oscar-winning Austrian actor Christoph Waltz to play Wittgenstein. The drama in question, entitled “The Crooked Roads of Genius” (the title is a quote from Blake, the visionary poet much admired by Wittgenstein), won the START Chapbooks full-length play competition funded by the Irish Arts Council in Ireland in 2005. The adjudicators, in the open-entry blind-reviewed competition, wrote that the play “has presented us with a unique insight into the life of Ludwig Wittgenstein. The characters are well drawn within a delicate and keenly crafted plot that both satisfies and informs the audience”.

We realize that this project is most unusual and not something with which the APA Grants Committee would normally be confronted. At the same time we suggest that its unusual nature is quite likely to work very much to its advantage “as a project that will benefit the profession” of philosophy. A well-publicised and open-to-the-general-public performance in a major city, of a drama focusing sympathetically and perceptively on the life of a major philosopher, is quite likely to do more good for the subject of philosophy than will any number of lectures or conferences or papers. It will draw in an audience that would not normally think of philosophy at all. In addition, at a time of severe educational budget stringencies across the globe, when the humanities in general and philosophy in particular are under threat, it will present philosophy with a simpatico human face.

It is a genuine hope that, given a favourable reception, the drama production will eventually travel both outside London and outside the United Kingdom, and be recorded in CD form.

2. Project Committee

The current committee consists of two executive members and two non-executive members.

The executive members are:

(1) **Nicholas Blackburn** who is part of the Young Vic (London) “Genesis” Directors Programme. He trained with Katie Mitchell and started his career as Associate Director at the Judith E Wilson Drama Studio, Cambridge. He has a Ph.D. in Renaissance Drama (Trinity College, University of Cambridge) and recently wrote the Young Vic theatre's guide to Assisting in Theatre. Recent productions of his include *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* (Southwark Playhouse) and *2 Graves* (Arts Theatre, London) which has just been filmed with a score by Michael Nyman. In short he is one of the best of the new wave of young theatre directors on the London scene (presently working with the ENO, English National Opera, on its production of *The Pearl Fishers*). (He can be contacted by email at: blackburn.nr@googlemail.com)

(2) Nick Blackburn will also approach the well known, very experienced and very well regarded producer associated with the ‘Out Of Joint’ Theatre Company, **Graham Cowley**, to organize and oversee the “nuts and bolts” of the production.

The two non-executive members are:

(3) **Dr Petr Mikl** who is the current Director of the Austrian Cultural Forum, London (28 Rutland Gate, London, SW7 1PQ, UK – email: peter.mikl@acflondon.org). He is a major and enthusiastic sponsor of the project and hopes to make the production of the Wittgenstein drama the centre piece of a mini-festival in 2011 to which he hopes to attract admirers of Wittgenstein from all round the world. As will be clear below, his Forum has provided major seed money for the production.

(4) **William Lyons** who is Emeritus Professor of Moral Philosophy 1837 and Fellow of Trinity College Dublin, Member of the Royal Irish Academy, and is the author of the drama “The Crooked Roads of Genius”. He has been a member of the APA in good standing for some forty years and is now an emeritus member. (Mail address: Department of Philosophy, 5th Floor, Arts Building, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland. Email address: wlyons@tcd.ie)

3. Finance

We have already been promised a “seed money” subvention of £7000 (c.US\$ 10,190) from the Austrian Cultural Forum in London and €6000 (c. US\$7,200) from private sources in Ireland. However to mount a professional production, we will need a more solid financial base (c. another US\$15,000). We have approached the Royal Institute of Philosophy in Britain (the nearest UK equivalent of the APA) for financial assistance but we will not learn of their decision until November-December 2010.

It would give this project great international standing if the APA, the largest and most prestigious philosophical association in the world, was willing to provide some seed money. Any financial support from the APA would be warmly acknowledged in any advertising material (posters, tickets, programmes, press packages, etc.) for the production and this would further enhance the international cachet of the APA. We would also, of course, provide the APA Grants Committee with a full report on the production (including details of where any APA money was spent).

Finally, in regard to finance, we should make it clear that the project is a completely non-profit one and that the project committee has been formed solely for this production. After paying the wages or fees of the producer, director, actors and backroom staff, and paying for the theatre rental, ticketing and advertising, any monies left over will be used to finance a further production or studio recording of the Wittgenstein drama.

This grant application has been submitted by William Lyons who is most willing to answer any queries about the above submission. With my best wishes,

Sincerely,

William Lyons,

(Emeritus Professor of Moral Philosophy 1837 and Fellow of Trinity College Dublin,
Member of the Royal Irish Academy and Emeritus Member of the APA.)

APPENDIX to the Grant Application to the APA for “a drama Project that will benefit the profession” (William Lyons et al).

Further details:

The schedule

The schedule for the production of the drama about Ludwig Wittgenstein has now been settled.

Workshopping – Cambridge Drama Studio - 12th - 22nd Dec. 2010.

Performances – Riverside Studios, London (“a renowned venue for new and innovative drama”) – 18th April – 8th May 2011.

It is anticipated that the timing will draw national newspaper notice to Wittgenstein and philosophy, as Wittgenstein died in England, on 29th April 1951, and the performances will coincide with the 60th anniversary of his death.

Additional staff

The award-winning young Austrian film director, **Christoph Rainer**, has joined the team and will work as an assistant director, introducing filmic aspects to the production.

American sequel

Given that the London production can cover its costs, there is a real possibility that the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York (at 11 East 52nd Street) will bring the production to New York. The ACF New York has a renowned 75-seat studio theater at its premises. Alternatively, our director, **Nicholas Blackburn**, has worked with the famous avant-garde Wooster Group with their “Performing Garage” in Soho, NY and could seek a production there.

William Lyons

(Emeritus Professor of Moral Philosophy and Fellow of Trinity College Dublin, Member of the Royal Irish Academy, member of the APA for some forty years, and an award-winning playwright specializing in “theatre of thought” drama.)