

Wells Operatic Society Limited
Minutes of the meeting held on
1st December 2008

COMMITTEE

Richard Wright, Gerald Eyers, Mark Wall, Gordon Scott, Lisa Cope, Terry Delaney, Alan Hooley, David Papworth, Chris Spray, Jenny Hailes, Doreen Grant, Tina Eyers and The Mayor of Wells, Mrs Christine Borastero

1. Apologies

TE, DP

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Agreed

3. Matters Arising

- Funding application to Wells City Council for Foyer glass doors **RW. MW** has received a quote for £1400+VAT, plus £300 to fit, **RW** to put forward the bid to the City Council. Ongoing
- Database and website development **CS** ongoing
- Child Protection guidelines **DG**. Doreen will organise materials and present information, including the NODA guidelines, at the meeting in January. We need to look at a 'streamlined' system to fit our Society's needs and the law. **DG** ongoing
- First Aid FOH person **RW** ongoing
- Maintenance and New Projects checklist updating **GE and MW** ongoing
- Audio Systems assessment and recommendations (mikes, amps and speakers) **DP CS** ongoing
- Cyclorama repair **MW** ongoing
- Improving Pit and Orchestra area **AH** ongoing
- Lighting wiring - a professional assessment **DP TD CS** ongoing except that Peter Magor has had a brief look at our system and expects that we are probably ok, a report will follow. He suggests that we add a notice to the 'Conditions of Hire' that detail the power rating that our system can manage. Details are to be taken from the report. **RW GE** ongoing
- Fliers for Patrons publicity and applications **LC and TD** presented a draft flier and renewal forms these were considered by the committee, amendments noted; it was agreed to go ahead with printing.
- Pulse response re annual maintenance **RW** - confirmed inspection will take place in Feb09
- The back door will have a new code in the New Year **MW**. It was agreed that knowledge of the door code should be restricted to those that really need to know. **RW** to advise.
- Panto raffle donations to **LC**

4. Correspondence

- Reply received from NODA regarding insurance re helpers/volunteers who are not members. Cover is provided, copy of letter with Secretary, in handbook and with Theatre Administrator **RW**
- Letter received from Somerset Libraries advertising a new 'Vocal Sets Catalogue' at £3. Secretary to purchase a copy.

5. Treasurer's Report GS

- The VAT change from 17.5% to 15% will mean that - bar prices stay the same (due to a simultaneous increase in duty) and hire charges are amended as from 1st Dec. New list on notice board **GE**
- The Box Office Card machine service charge has increased to 2.53%
- Our accountants Webb and Co. have notified us of a change of time for the submission of accounts to Companies House from -10 to 9 months. The penalties for not doing so have gone up.

Norman Cowell attended the meeting to discuss various issues regarding the Box Office, key points are itemised here:-

There have been problems arising in the Box Office for the sale of tickets for the Pantomime and, to a lesser extent, the Spring Show. Bringing them to the attention of the Committee is in order to try and obviate the bad publicity for the Society arising out of the disappointment felt by many members of the public when so many tickets (often the best in the theatre) are sold before the Box Office is open to them, and at the same time save the helpers from the harsh criticisms that often accompanies such feelings.

There needs to be a rethink concerning BLOCK BOOKINGS prior to opening the Box Office to the Public. Particularly in relation to the Sunday Schools. This year they asked for 128 tickets, made up with 69 children's tickets and 59 adult tickets. Clearly this is out of all proportion and I think the Committee needs to implement some sort of rationale in cases such as this; my suggestion would be 1 adult ticket per 10 children's tickets, or part thereof, plus an additional adult ticket for every 20 children's tickets; i.e. 3 adults per 20 children. If this is difficult to impose then all the tickets must be solely for the use of regular Sunday School teachers and children and not guests! After all, the Uniformed Organisations invariably adhere to these standards.

The requirements to qualify for block booking privileges needs to be spelt out in order that all the Box Office helpers are fully aware of them.

It was agreed to **advertise the first Saturday matinee as block bookings only** until the Box Office opened to the public. Block booking defined as 10 or more with concessions only on the adult ticket. A **Non Returnable** notice to be added to the bottom of the ticket. For **all other performances**, pre-booking (postal or block or Patrons or Cast) can only be taken for **one side** of the auditorium –allowing anyone to book the 'other side' when the box office opens to the public. These restrictions will be for **all shows** starting with My Fair Lady. The exception being the 'Civic Night' of the spring show when the present arrangements will continue.

Is there a need to look at the privilege given to members of the Cast when buying tickets in advance? In some cases tickets are reserved/bought not only for friends and family but others such as workmates.

It was agreed to ask cast to **honour the spirit** of their pre booking privilege.

The ruling that reserved tickets must be redeemed within the week needs to be applicable to all, including the Cast, or they will revert to being unsold.

It was agreed to remind cast to **honour this condition**

Other matters surrounding the Box Office relate to the recent removal of the screen:

The counter is now being used for items of personal objects:

There is no longer any sort of barrier and the queue is less organised especially when two positions are operating:

The noise level has always been a problem, particularly on Show Nights, but without the screen the level is even greater.

Although it is already 'in hand' security of the Credit Card Machine and money need to be addressed.

The removal of the screen has also meant the removal of the Notices such as Tickets cannot be returned etc.

The committee agreed to look at these problems during the forthcoming redesign of the foyer. The notices are to be displayed in a prominent position. The committee thought that next year we could make an effort to support Box Office staff on the 'opening' day by helping to organise the queue (possibly using a ticket system), selling coffee and generally assisting. Norman to remind the committee.

Some suggestions that might help to overcome these problems;

Using the Dress Rehearsal, at reduced prices, for the Uniformed organisations and the Sunday Schools;

No telephone bookings until the Monday following the opening of the box Office to the Public:

The use of the Postal Booking Forms so that members of the cast can book seats immediately after closing to the public on the first Saturday.

Finally, I understand that Tickets X1 and X2 can only be used for wheelchairs and not ordinary chairs? If so the helpers need to know this.

Seats X1 and X2 can only be used by wheelchairs.

Norman reported that as of 1 Dec there were just 18 single seats left for this year's Panto! Great!

6. Membership

- **Dinner Dance – Sat 9th May 2009** – Venue and Date tba – Ongoing **AH** further enquiries are being made with the Swan possibly a change of date to the **23rd** Ongoing
- **Carnival Curry night – AH** a really great evening, now an established event on our Calendar, 58 people bought a curry - many thanks to Alan and Irene
- **MFL launch AH** Tues 30th Dec 7.30pm intro. and 9pm mince pies and mulled wine. ongoing
- **AGM** has been set for the **22nd May 2009**
- There were no new members this month.

7. Publicity ntr

8. Theatre Renovations ntr

9. Production/trifold/hire

- **Sleeping Beauty** 13-20th Dec 08 Dir – **Gill Kerton**, Choreography – **TE**, Child Choreography – **Sarah Neale**, SM - **CS**, Lights- **Graham Brown**, MD - **Russell Collins**. Budget agreed. Ticket prices at £8, £7 and £6 Rehearsal Schedule done. Request by Gill Kerton to increase budget for costumes and lighting by £100 for each. Gill Kerton and **DG** have been dealing with Local Authority (SCC) licensing forms for the children. Well done Gill for all here hard and stressful work.
- **My Fair Lady** 20-25th April 2009 – Dir - **Lois Harbinson**, Prod - **GS**, MD - **Sheila Ross**, lighting – **Simon Blaymires**, SM - **DP**. Wednesdays & Friday with some Mondays and Weekends as required. Tickets £10 & £9 Budget agreed
- **May 2009 'Tess of the d'Urburvilles' BOVTS - GS**
- **Seussical the Musical** 4th-6th June 2009 'Little Theatre Youth production' 7 –18yrs. Dir & Chor - **Sarah Neale** MD - **Russell Collins**, SM - **CS**, lighting - **Bob Rogers**, Producer – **Gill Kerton**. Rehearsal Schedule agreed (Sundays and Tues.) Starts in Jan 2009. Committee expect that there should always be enough adults present to deal with the number of children, no bar during reh. **DG** to advise re Child Protection Tickets £9 & £7 **Budget to be agreed**
- **Play** 8th-11th July 2009. **RW** has offered to direct Alan Ayckbourn's 'How the other half loves'. tbc
- **Good Gods**, musical 9th-12th Sept 2009 by Ken Edmonds –rehearsal schedule booked in. **Budget to be agreed** Tickets £10 & £8 tba
- **Play** 21st -24th Oct 2009. **Anyone interested should contact the committee. GE?**
- **Panto** 12th-19th Dec 2009 – Dir - **Chris Briton**, title to follow – Possibly a Treasure Island (aka **A Vast Behind**) Vicky, Katie and Chris are writing, Choreography – **Sarah Neale**, **need SM and MD, title & rehearsal schedule to follow. Budget to set. Tickets price?**
- **Spring Show 2010 – The King and I? Other suggestions to the committee** asap. **MD?**
- **Sept 2010** - Little Lights up part 2? A One Act Play could be second half at another time. **tbc**

10. Training ntr

11. Any other business

- **TD** informed the committee that NODA require notification 6 months before an event / production
- **MW** commented that there had been food items found in the workshop, could everyone take care not to leave food around we do not want to encourage the mice! Sign to made **CS**
- **GE** suggested we look into a more sophisticated Bar Till – possibly on that can have different tariffs built in and that might allow us 'club' prices and 'audience' prices.

- **AH** reminded us that we are at the end of the year and the financial support for programme printing from Thales will finish. He will bring together final figures for the next meeting. **RW** to write to thank Thales. Next meeting we will consider the next step.
- **CS** to get some dust masks for the workshop
- **JH** can spend up to £50 to replace the FoH Christmas decorations
- **LC** can purchase envelopes for general use.

Other items carried forward

- Theatre Hand Book.
- Adjudicator/Awards Book.

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 13th January 2009 and then Mon 23rd February 2009

Meeting closed at 10pm, many thanks to all who attended