

ENGLISH OPERA GROUP
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MINUTES of the DIRECTORS' MEETING held at Crown House, Aldwych
on May 16th 1947.
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Those Present: Directors: Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttleton, M.P. (Chairman)
Sir Kenneth Clark, K.C.B.
Ralph Hawkes
Hon. Mervyn Horder
Denis Rickett
Hon. James F.A. Smith, O.B.E.
Erwin Stein.

Artistic Directors: Benjamin Britten
Eric Crozier
John Piper.

General Manager: Anne Wood.

1. The Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted and approved with the following amendment:

"It was resolved that Barclays Bank, Langham Place branch, be appointed bankers to the Company".

2. Mr Crozier reviewed the plans for the 1947 season. He said that the B.B.C. Third Programme had arranged five broadcasts with us during the Glyndebourne season; three from the Opera House at Glyndebourne, one from the studio on July 15th, and one of a programme to be called "How an Opera is made". They were also very hopeful of taking further broadcasts later on.

With regard to Holland, plans were going ahead. Our representative in Holland was expected in London during the week-end after which we should have more details.

Plans for further continental work had crystallised into an invitation to perform at the Lucerne International Festival. The British Council were sponsoring this visit and were to make good any loss up to a total of £2,500. The economics of the visit were such that this offer might just enable us to break even.

H.M.V. and the British Council have now agreed with us to record excerpts from 'The Rape of Lucretia'. The recording will take place between July 16th and 19th, and would be ready for publication in the autumn.

With regard to the autumn, the month of October would be taken up with one and a half weeks at Covent Garden, and visits to Bournemouth, Newcastle and Oxford. Contracts with these theatres were in process of being negotiated. This would bring the company's 1947 playing season to 11½ playing weeks.

*Eric Dullis White -
from Sec
Am. B. S. Co.*

3. The Chairman said it would be helpful to have a detailed account of each transaction showing to what extent each transaction met running costs and wrote off some production costs. The Manager agreed to do this as soon as it was practicable.
4. With regard to the financial situation the Manager said that the Company had in loans and subscriptions just enough to keep going and meet our initial expenditure up to the time when takings would begin to come in. But we had no margin. We were waiting to hear from the Bank whether they would allow us to overdraw against our guarantees. This would give us the necessary margin.
5. Mr Rickett reported that he had got us another guarantor, Mr J.H. Lawrie, who in addition proposed to loan us £1,000. This was felt to be a most generous offer and it was resolved to invite Mr Lawrie to become a member of the Board of Directors.
6. With regard to Switzerland it was decided to approach one or two firms with Anglo-Swiss connections and ask for their financial assistance. Mr Stein undertook to approach two persons.
7. It was resolved that Eric Crozier be appointed Artistic Director at a salary of £500 and an expenses allowance of £150 per annum; and that Anne Wood be appointed General Manager at a salary of £700 and an expenses allowance of £200 per annum.
8. It was reported that the Certificate of Incorporation of the Company had been received. Copies of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company had already been circulated.
9. It was resolved that the Registered Office of the Company be at 115 Chancery Lane W.C.2. The Manager was instructed to file this address with the Registrar of Companies. It was reported that the particulars of the Directors of the Company had been duly filed with the Registrar of Companies. The Manager was instructed that the names of the subscribers to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company be entered upon the Register of Members of the Company as Members, distinction being made between 'A' Members, 'B' Members and ordinary Members.
10. It was resolved that pending the formal appointment of Auditors by the members at the first General Meeting of the Company, the firm of Chenhalls, 115 Chancery Lane, be asked to act in that capacity.
11. It was resolved that Messrs Hamlins Grammar & Hamlin of 4 New Square Lincoln's Inn W.C.2. be appointed Solicitors to the Company and that they be paid the ordinary professional charges for their services.
12. It was resolved that the first General Meeting of the Members of the Company be held at Crown House on July 14th or 15th simultaneously with the next meeting of the Directors.

*Beaumont & Co. Chartered Accountants (not for Veritas)
San Diego - London.*

ANNE WOOD
General Manager

ENGLISH OPERA GROUP

MINUTES of Directors' Meeting held at Crown House, Aldwych,
on July 15th, 1947.

Those present:

Directors: Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttelton, M.P. (Chairman)
The Hon. Mervyn Horder
James Lawrie
Erwin Stein

Artistic Directors:
Benjamin Britten
Eric Crozier
John Piper

General Manager:
Anne Wood

1. The Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted and approved.
2. As a full statement on the 1947 season had already been made by Mr. Crozier at the General Meeting, held immediately prior to the Directors' Meeting, the Directors confined themselves to some discussion on the 1948 season.
3. Mr. Crozier and Mr. Britten reported that we were already having to give thought to the 1949 season, as in the first place enquiries were coming in, and secondly because we wished to ensure the services of the artists we wanted. At the moment we were thinking in terms of a six weeks' tour of the Continent under the sponsorship of the British Council; some weeks in England, including, it was hoped, a visit to the Edinburgh Festival; and possibly the making of a 40-minute film of "Albert Herring". This last possibility had arisen from a day's filming of "Albert Herring" (in order to get 3½ minutes of the opera to include in a picture to be called "Booming Culture") by "This Modern Age" Film Unit, who were now anxious to negotiate the making of a longer film. This might bring us in a considerable sum of money.

It looked as though we were unlikely to negotiate a Dominions tour until 1949. This was also true of America.

With regard to a new production by the Group, the Artistic Directors had practically decided on "The Beggar's Opera" to be re-arranged by Benjamin Britten. It was unlikely that any composer could have a new opera ready in time for the 1948 season, but we should still hope to put on a new opera in 1949 by some composer other than Mr. Britten.

4. The Directors agreed that these several possibilities should be pursued until a concrete plan was arrived at.
5. At the request of the General Manager it was resolved that the General Manager's signature on cheques up to £30 would suffice, but that for cheques over that amount a Director's signature in addition would be necessary. It was explained that this could not come into effect for some little time until we could get new cheques printed.
6. The General Manager was urged to present as full and comprehensive a balance sheet as possible to the next Directors' Meeting, so that the Directors might be enabled to see the situation as of that date.
7. It was resolved to hold the next meeting either just before or during the Group's season at Covent Garden early in October.

MINUTES of the General Meeting held at Crown House,
Aldwych, W.C.2, on 15th July, 1947.

Members present: Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttelton, M.P. (Chairman)
David Higham
A representative of the English Electric Co. Ltd.
The Hon. Mervyn Horder
James Lawrie
Erwin Stein

Artistic Directors:
Benjamin Britten
Eric Crozier
John Piper

General Manager: Anne Wood

1. The General Manager reported that as all the returns had not yet come in from the Glyndebourne season, it was impossible to give a full financial statement. It was, however, possible to say that the Group will have made some profit over running costs for the 3½ weeks' season there, to be accounted against production and management costs. Audiences had been good throughout the season but it was only on Fridays and Saturdays that every seat was taken. This was also true of the Glyndebourne production of Orpheus and it was felt to reflect the difficulties arising out of the high prices for seats and the very early start. Press criticisms of the new opera had varied from some that were extremely favourable and others that were both very critical and flippant. The bad criticisms, and in particular that from The Times, were unfortunately having an immediate and bad effect on the Group's bookings in Holland.

2. The B.B.C. had been very generous to us during the Glyndebourne season. They had broadcast in the 3rd Programme three complete performances; that is, the two first performances of "Albert Herring" and "The Rape of Lucretia" and a second performance of "Albert Herring". In addition they had made a programme on "How to Make an Opera" which included a discussion between Mr. Britten, Mr. Crozier and Mr. Piper, and a recording of a rehearsal of "Albert Herring". This had been broadcast twice immediately prior to the first performance of "Albert Herring". It was hoped that the B.B.C. would broadcast further performances during the Covent Garden season. These broadcast brought the Company a substantial profit over and above what had to be paid out in fees to the performers.

3. Arrangements have now been concluded for the Group's visits to both Holland and Switzerland, the latter under the auspices of the British Council. Though arrangements were not yet finalised, it was expected that in addition to the opera performances, we would be doing broadcasts in both countries, and a concert in Zurich.

Now that details of cost were beginning to come clear, it was apparent that the Company would stand some loss on both visits, which would be slight in the case of Switzerland and considerable in the case of Holland. Estimating the costs of these tours was extremely difficult since the Travel Agents were so short of information about the situation on the Continent that, for instance, they could give no estimate whatever for cost of travel of scenery between Holland and Lucerne, nor whether it would be best accomplished by train or lorry. Both visits were felt to be very well worth while from the artistic point of view, but the Artistic Directors had consulted Mr. Lyttelton, Chairman, before concluding arrangements with Holland in view of the loss likely to be incurred.

4. With regard to the Group's work in October, contracts had now been concluded with Covent Garden, Bournemouth, Newcastle and Oxford. With regard to Bournemouth and Newcastle, the Group would take 55% of the takings plus Entertainment Tax, while at Oxford the Group would take 65% of the takings plus Tax. Arrangements with Covent Garden were on a different basis. Here the Group was put at a slight disadvantage by having to guarantee £1100 per week to Covent Garden to cover their basic costs. However, the seating capacity at Covent Garden is such that with good bookings the Group stood to cover its costs, whereas on tour it expects to make a small loss every week.
5. The Group had decided to give its first London concert on September 26th at Friends' House. The programme would be entirely of English music and would include the first performance in the U.K. of a new work commissioned by the Group - Stabat Mater by Lennox Berkeley.
6. With regard to the financial situation, the General Manager stated that it was impossible at this juncture to predict what the final position would be, since we had as yet only finished $3\frac{1}{2}$ weeks of a 12-week playing season. It was hoped, however, that with the subscriptions and loans received, totalling in subscriptions £6,300 and loans £3,300, the Company would just cover its costs for the season. The present credit in the Bank was approximately £1,000. Everything now depended on "takings" in the coming period.
7. The General Manager was urged to present a balance sheet as soon as possible, so that the position might be reviewed.
8. It was resolved that Messrs. Chenhalls, of 115, Chancery Lane, be elected as Auditors of the Company.

ANNE WOOD,
General Manager.

MINUTES

of Directors' Meeting held at Crown House, Aldwych, W.C.2, on October 13th, 1947.

THOSE PRESENT:

Directors: The Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttelton, M.P.
(Chairman)
The Hon. Mervyn Horder
James Lawrie
The Hon. James Smith
Erwin Stein

Artistic Directors: Benjamin Britten
Eric Crozier

Arts Council: Steuart Wilson

General Manager Anne Wood

1. In presenting the Minutes the General Manager apologised for mistakes in the list of names of those present. They should have read:

Directors: The Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttelton, M.P.
James Lawrie
Sir Kenneth Clark
Artistic Director: Eric Crozier

With these corrections the minutes were agreed and signed.

2. In para. 5 of the Minutes, Mr. Lawrie raised the question of the undesirability of Directors signing blank cheques. The General Manager explained the difficulty of getting to a Director for a signature on the salary cheque, for instance, when the Company is on tour. It was agreed that in order to meet that situation a signed blank cheque must have on it the words "Not exceeding £ ."

3. The General Manager then presented the interim report on the Group's work which was generally discussed, particularly from the financial point of view. Mr. Crozier stressed the point that takings were generally disappointing and did not meet the Company's running costs, quite apart from paying off any proportion of production costs. The result of this was that whereas we had hoped to gain by performing as long and as often as possible, in practice the Company lost on every performance given. Some of the loss had been offset by profits to the Company on broadcasts and recording, and by the profits (amounting to something over £1,000) from the Glyndebourne season of 3½ weeks.

With regard to the probable position at the end of the playing season, that is, November 1st, the General Manager estimated that the Company would finish up with an overdraft of something over £2,000, which might, however, be more if the bookings for the second week at Covent Garden did not improve and if the takings at Bournemouth and Oxford were as unsatisfactory as at Newcastle.

4. The Chairman said it looked as if the Company would have lost rather more than had been anticipated. He was, however, not so concerned with this as how to meet the overdraft without calling on the guarantors in order that the Company might start the next season with a clean slate and with the confidence of the guarantors. He asked Mr. Steuart Wilson to approach the Arts Council with the request that they grant the Company a further £2,000 to cover this year's loss and to explore the probability of a larger grant for next year.
5. Mr. Crozier and Mr. Britten reported on recent negotiations and developments with regard to film interest in Mr. Britten's operas and in the future work of the Group.
 - a) Mr. Michael Balcan, an independent producer but connected with the J. Arthur Rank organisation, was proposing to underwrite the whole or part of the production costs of the Group's production of "The Beggar's Opera". In return for a sum of money still to be agreed, he would want the option on the film rights of Mr. Britten's version; option on use of designs, etc.; freedom to study the production in detail, and access to the advice of the Artistic Directors. His interest in the matter was connected with a future film of "The Beggar's Opera".
 - b) Gabriel Pascal had made a definite offer to Mr. Britten for the film rights of the opera "Peter Grimes". These rights, or part of them, Mr. Britten proposed to invest in the Opera Group in some way.
 - c) Pascal was also interested to obtain the option on the rights of all Mr. Britten's operas.
 - d) "This Modern Age" Film Unit, which had made a 3-minute film of Albert Herring at Glyndebourne were anxious to make a 40-minute film of the opera.
6. With regard to underwriting the production costs of "The Beggar's Opera", the Directors felt this was a most desirable proposition, and the Chairman undertook to see Mr. Rank on the matter. It was also felt that by making over part of his rights, Mr. Britten was proposing to make a very generous gift to the Group, and though it was realised that such an action might be partly in his own favour, he was warned to go into the matter very carefully with his tax adviser. The Chairman and Mr. Lawrie agreed to investigate the financial background of Mr. Pascal's company.

With regard to the 40-minute film of "Albert Herring", it was agreed that this scheme had many disadvantages - in particular that the making of a short film of the opera would prejudice a full-length film later on.
7. Mr. Crozier reported that a move had got under way to start a Festival of Arts at Aldeburgh, a small seaside town in Suffolk and the present home of Mr. Britten. A local executive committee had been formed under the chairmanship of Lady Cranbrook and they were now wishing to investigate the possibility of the English Opera Group taking financial responsibility for the festival. The programme for the Festival was planned to include 3 to 4 opera performances, 6 recitals, 4 performances to schools, etc.

After a general discussion on the seating capacity of the available halls, the petrol and transport arrangements, the probable financial losses, etc., it was decided that the English Opera Group could not, in the light of its own present financial situation, take responsibility for this venture, and that if the Festival was to go ahead, it must do so under its own steam.

8. It was agreed that the next meeting should take place on Monday, November 17th, at 11.30 a.m., at Crown House.

ENGLISH OPERA GROUP

M I N U T E S of the Directors' Meeting held at
Crown House, Aldwych, on November 17th 1947.

Those Present:

Directors: Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttelton, M.P. (Chairman)

Tyrone Guthrie
Ralph Hawkes
James Lawrie
Erwin Stein

Artistic Directors:

Eric Crozier

Arts Council: Steuart Wilson

General Manager: Anne Wood.

1. The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed.
2. As business arising out of the Minutes, Mr. Crozier pointed out that para. 5 of the Minutes needed some amendment and apology to Mr. Hawkes. The film rights of Mr. Britten's operas were in fact issued by Boosey & Hawkes. Mr. Hawkes went on to say that he did not think the agreement with Pascal would go through. Nothing had been heard from Pascal for some time. Mr. Lawrie and Mr. Hawkes agreed that Pascal was probably insufficiently capitalised for such a big venture as filming an opera.
3. Mr. Steuart Wilson reported that his Council found it impossible to provide the English Opera Group with further funds in this financial year, but would almost certainly give a larger grant next year. The English Opera Group should know this in time for the next Directors' Meeting.
4. The General Manager reported that the overdraft at the Bank was £3597 and that the final figure when the accounts were settled would be approximately £5,000. In addition to our loans this meant that we were overspent to a total of about £8,000. The loss at Covent Garden had

been approximately £1,000, and our loss on each provincial week had averaged £400. With regard to money coming in for next year, it now seemed fairly certain that a sum of £5,000 would come from the Arts Council and probably £4,000 from Mr. Michael Balcon who was now prepared to draw up an agreement for underwriting the production of "The Beggar's Opera". This made prospects for next year seem fairly bright but there remained the problem of how to write off all or part of this year's losses without calling on the guarantors.

5. Mr. Hawkes described the kind of points which would arise in the Balcon agreement - option on singers, option on designs and designer, option on services of Artistic Directors etc. There was a general discussion on this and it was finally agreed to ask Mr. Hawkes to go ahead with drafting an agreement with Mr. Balcon.
6. Mr. Crozier reported that Glyndebourne had approached the Group offering to take the Group back under its own Management. The offer was tied up with an approach from the Champs Elysées theatre in Paris whose Management had suggested to Mr. Bing that Glyndebourne might bring the company to Paris. Mr. Bing also suggested a separate season in June at Glyndebourne. (Glyndebourne were unlikely to put on any production of their own at Glyndebourne and were concentrating on Edinburgh and Bath.) It was made clear by Mr. Bing that Glyndebourne could not offer any financial assistance and it was hinted that the appearance of the Group at the Edinburgh Festival might be contingent on a closer association with Glyndebourne. After some discussion the Directors agreed with Mr. Crozier that the offer should be refused as there did not appear to be any great advantages and there would probably be considerable disadvantages to the Group's separate artistic existence.
7. Mr. Crozier described his discussions with Cambridge. The Arts Theatre were interested in having the opening week of a new production, The Beggar's Opera, and had been asked by us to pay a guaranteed fee of £1250. This would cover our running costs and on their side required a heavy subsidy owing to the smallness of the Theatre and the consequent small takings. In addition, they were interested in expanding the Cambridge Festival which they had started in a small way last year and proposed asking the Group back for this purpose in July for two weeks with three productions, and on the same financial basis. It was agreed that these plans seemed very desirable.
8. Mr. Crozier reported that he had been informed that the Wagnervereeniging were interested in inviting the Company to Holland. We had given our figures and stated that we should require a guaranteed fee and we now awaited the answer.

If the scheme materialised it would be a signal honour to be invited twice in three years by this society.

9. The General Manager described the Opera Classes which Miss Joan Cross with the full backing of the Group proposed to hold from January to March 1948. They were designed to give singers essential training in stage work, movement, and, in view of the problems of dialogue in The Beggar's Opera, stage speaking. A budget for the scheme was submitted. Mr. Steuart Wilson said that much as he approved such a scheme his Council was unable to give a grant for educational purposes. If the Directors agreed, however, he thought it was very desirable for a small part of the increased Arts Council grant to be used in this way. It was agreed that a full scheme should be submitted to the Directors at the next meeting for their approval.
10. The Chairman said that he felt that effort must be made to meet our overdraft. He proposed talking confidentially to a publicity and appeals expert in order to get his unofficial views and advice. In the meantime, though he saw that plans must go ahead, the Management should not enter into any financial commitment before the next meeting.
11. The next meeting was fixed for December 15th at 11.30 a.m.

ANNE WOOD
General Manager.