

Minutes of the Executive Committee, held at Broadcasting House, on Thursday 18th January, 1951.

Present:- The Earl of Harewood (in the Chair).
Miss Joan Cross.
Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Norman Del Mar (part time).
Mr John Piper.
Mr Erwin Stein.
Mr Harold Wallis.
Mr Basil Douglas.

- 57: Minutes. Read and signed.
- 58: Storage. No advance in Islington. Two possibilities being investigated: one in Northwood and the other near the Elephant and Castle.
(Minute 38).
- 59: L.C.M.C. Concert. In abeyance, as the B.B.C. cannot broadcast.
(Minute 39).
- 60: Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. In his letter of January 11th Mr Perry had broken off negotiations for the May season, but they were now resumed and he had sent a draft contract. This was examined and approved, with minor reservations.
(Minute 41).
- 61: Copenhagen. Mr Blicher-Hansen had resigned negotiations to Mr Dietrichson who had written to express continued interest and the hope that financial assistance would be given by the British Council. Mr Douglas to take soundings.
(Minute 42).
- 62: Cheltenham. Mr Wilkinson considered that Mr Douglas' reduced estimate of £2,100 would be acceptable, but doubted whether the Cheltenham Festival would be able to afford the English Opera Group another year. Agreed that this raised an important question, which should be referred to the next Directors' Meeting, (with consideration also of Aldeburgh, Holland and Liverpool).
(Minute 43).
- 63: Holland Festival. Mr Diamand had been sent five alternative estimates on December 27th, but had not yet replied.
(Minutes 30 and 45).
- 64: Combattimento. Mr Piper reported that John Cranko could only undertake the choreography if it can be prepared in mid-April. Agreed that this might be possible. Mr Piper would discuss further with Cranko and had also consented to design the set and costumes.
(Minute 49).
- 65: Dido. a) Sophie Fedorovitch had agreed to design the set and costumes.
(Minute 50). b) George Malcolm was accepted as a possibility for Deputy Conductor.
c) The Westminster Recording Company is interested in recording the whole Opera.
- 66: The Sleeping Children. a) Mr Coleman had agreed to produce.
(Minute 51). b) Brian Easdale prefers to allow the Group to pay for the material and own it.

- 66: (Continued) c) Roderick Jones and Raymond Nilsson were approved for the parts of Assistant Master and Head Master respectively.
- d) Ralph Kaltai's model for the set was accepted, with certain reservations.
- 67: Let's Make. Mr Wallis forecast a profit of £300 to £500 on the current run at
(Minute 52). the Lyric, Hammersmith.
- 68: Australia. Mr Dan O'Connor is interested to present the Group in Australia
(Minute 53). and New Zealand in 1952. He advises a tour of at least four months, (July to October would be possibilities); Chorus and Orchestra could be recruited in Australia. He is visiting Australia shortly and will report reactions. Possible repertoire "Dido", "Beggar's Opera", "Herring", "Lucretia", and "Let's Make an Opera".
- 69: Film. Mr Douglas had sent rough estimates of recording costs to Mr Eric
(Minute 55). Parkyn, (Producer).
- 70: Aldeburgh The estimate for the running costs had been slashed to a
Festival. dangerous minimum but were still £125 in excess of Miss Sweeting's maximum offer of £1,200. She is looking for a Guarantor to cover this amount.
- 71: Liverpool Alfred Francis had registered his dismay at the estimate of £2,750,
Festival. which was £1,200. in excess of Mr Foy's estimate. He thought it reasonable, but despaired of persuading his Aldermen to agree.
- 72: George Roth. Agreed that he should be re-engaged for 1951. Mr Britten to interview him.
- 73: Paris. Monsieur Dugardin is interested in presenting the Group at the Theatre des Champs Elysees for five performances at the end of May. He was sent an estimate on December 29th, but had not yet replied. Agreed that he should be offered "Lucretia" (with Krips conducting) and "Herring" in preference to "Dido", (Britten or Del Mar conducting). The question of Maupassant's copyright would have to be investigated.
- 74: Miss E. Agreed to send her a cheque for £50 in consideration of her work
Sweeting. for the group last Autumn.
- 75: The Wandering Accepted by Cheltenham and Liverpool to precede "The Sleeping
Scholar. Children".
- 76: Broadcasts. Relays scheduled as follows:-
May 12th: "Lucretia".
July 11th: "The Sleeping Children".
July 12th: "Dido".
?August 3rd: "Herring".
?August 4th: "Dido".
- 77: Musicians' Miss Wood is in touch with Mr Thistleton.
Benevolent Fund
Concert.

78: Auditions.18.12.1950.

Miss Stella Hichens (soprano).	Possible Rowan - Bear in Mind.
Miss Helen Watts (contralto).	Chorister.
Miss Estelle Johnson (mezzo-soprano)	No.
Mr John Graham (tenor).	No.
Mr George Chitty (tenor).	Headmaster No. 2.
Miss Tatiana Preston (soprano).	Belinda, etc.
Mr Raymond Nilsson (tenor).	Headmaster No. 1.
Mr H. Shuttlewood (tenor).	Not for Group.

79: Auditions.19.1.1951.

Miss Esme Sandford. (mezzo-contralto).	No.
Miss Muriel Smith. (coloured mezzo-soprano).	Difficult to cast, but possible chorister & understudy for Sorceress and Dido.
Miss Eugenie Castle (coloratura soprano).	No.
Miss Gladys Whitred. (soprano).	Recommended for Rowan.
Mr Douglas Parnell. (baritone).	No.
Miss Mary Grimmett. (mezzo-soprano).	No, but hear again.
Miss Eilidh McNab. (soprano).	Recommended for Chorist and 1st Witch.
Mr Florian Vallee. (baritone).	No.
Mr John Wynton (tenor).	No.
Mr Raymond Nilsson. (tenor).	Disappointing, but still the best choice for Headmaster.
Mr Richard Standen. (bass-baritone).	Disappointing, no personality.
Mr Andrew Gold. (tenor).	Disappointing on top, but could be recommended to understudy in "Wandering Scholar" for Chorist & Sailor in "Dido" & as cover for the Mayor.
Miss Doreen Orme. (soprano).	Disappointing, but possible chorister.
Miss Pamela Woolmore. (soprano).	Agreed to ask Krips to hear as "Lucia".
	Recommended for chorist & Attendant (& to understudy Belinda).
Mr George Prangnell. (bass-baritone).	Recommended to understudy Lumsden as "Budd".

80: Next Meeting.

Wednesday 14th February at 22 Melbury Road, at 10.0 a.m. precisely.

Minutes of the Executive Committee, held at 22a Melbury Road on Wednesday
14th February.

Present: Mr Erwin Stein (in the Chair).
Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Basil Coleman.
Mr Norman Del Mar.
Mr John Piper.
Mr Basil Douglas.

81. Minutes. Read and signed.
82. Storage. Negotiations pending for the store in Northwood.
(Minute 58).
83. L.C.M.C. Concert The L.C.M.C. still hope to bridge the gap between their
May 23rd. maximum receipts and our costs.
(Minute 59).
84. Lyric Theatre, The contract is now signed.
Hammersmith.
(Minute 60).
85. Copenhagen. Unofficial encouragement from the British Council, without
(Minute 61). much hope of financial assistance.
86. Cheltenham. The Cheltenham Festival Committee had accepted our figure
(Minute 62). of £2,100 and a contract is being prepared.
87. Holland Negotiations still in progress.
Festival.
(Minute 63).
88. Combattimento. No choreographer nor translator yet appointed, although
(Minute 64). Walter Gore and Professor Dent are both said to be
"interested".
89. The Sleeping Mr Stein reported that the material might cost about
Children. £250. - £300.
(Minute 66). Agreed that the Group could not and should not bear the
whole cost. Mr Douglas was asked to suggest to Mr
Easedale.
(a). that he finds someone to pay for the material,
e.g. a publisher, or a private individual,
or
(b). that all performing and mechanical rights and
hiring fees should accrue to the Group until the cost
of the material is offset. This will of course also
require Tyrone Guthrie's agreement.
90. Australia. A provisional estimate had been sent for Mr O'Connor to
(Minute 68). take to Australia with him.
91. Film. Temporarily shelved.
(Minute 69).

- 92: Aldeburgh Festival. Nothing further from Miss Sweeting. Mr Douglas to
(Minute 70). pursue.
- 93: Liverpool Festival. Alfred Francis had been offered an extra matinee of
(Minute 71). "Let's Make" with which to soothe his Aldermen.
- 94: Paris. Visit abandoned, as M. Dugardin cannot afford us.
(Minute 73). The British Council has been notified.
- 95: The Wandering Scholar. Agreed (a) to ask Ralph Kallai to take charge of
(Minute 75). the visual side of the production.
and
(b) that Gladys Whitred should be offered the part of
Alison.
- 96: Musician's Benevolent Fund Concert. Nothing further.
(Minute 77).
- 97: "Tales of Hoffmann" Premiere. Sir Arthur Jarratt has offered the entire proceeds
(Minute to the E.O.G. Agreed to accept enthusiastically and
that a fine audience should be organised, if necessary
with professional assistance, e.g. Mrs Madge Clarke.
Provisional date - April 19th.
- 98: Publicity. Agreed that the Group requires energetic and intelligent
publicity and that suggestions should be invited at the
next Directors' meeting.
- 99: Changes of Cast. Agreed that although changes of cast were sometimes
necessary and desirable during a run of a single opera,
they should be kept to a minimum during Festival seasons.
- 100: Children. Agreed to hold auditions in Lowestoft as soon as possible
for a new set of Children for "Let's Make" and "Herring",
in the hope that they will last at least until February
1952. Messrs. Britten and Del Mar to pursue.
- 101: Israel. Peter Gradenwitz has written to Mr Britten suggesting
that the Group should give performances in Israel in
1952 on its way to or from Australia, sponsored by the
British Council, the Israel Government's Ministry of
Culture, and the Israel Contemporary Music Centre.
Agreed that the possibilities should certainly be
explored.
- 102: Auditions. Mr E. Aiken (tenor)..... No.
5.2.51. Miss C. Cardoza (soprano)..... ? Rowan or Juliet).
(Minute 78). Mr C. Hardman (baritone)..... No.
Miss A. Leigh (soprano)..... 1st choice for Lucia.
Miss L. Mason (soprano)..... No.
Miss R. Naylor (soprano)..... No.
Mr S. Pope (baritone)..... Yes. Junius.
Mr E. Riley (tenor)..... Chorus. (
Miss V. Terry (soprano)..... Good Material - but no
suitable part.

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THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LTD.

MINUTES of meeting of Board of Directors held at 27, Soho Square, London, W.1., on THURSDAY, 15th February, 1951, at 2.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Directors: Mr J. H. Lawrie (in the Chair).
Mr Isador Caplan.
Mr Anthony Gishford.
The Hon. T. M. Horder.
The Hon. James Smith.
Mr Erwin Stein.
Artistic Directors: Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Basil Coleman.
Arts Council Assessor: Mr Eric Walter White.
In attendance: Mr Basil Douglas (General Manager).
Mr Harold Wallis.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were approved and signed.

A financial statement was circulated, showing a loss of £437. on the four weeks' tour of "Let's Make an Opera", and a profit of £329. on the eight weeks' season at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith.

The Chairman reported that Sir Arthur Jarratt, Managing Director of the British Lion Film Corporation Ltd., had offered the proceeds of the film premiere of "The Tales of Hoffmann" to the Group - the provisional date was April 19th. The offer was accepted with enthusiasm.

Mr Douglas reported that the managements of the various Festivals were disposed to accept his estimates but had indicated that the Group is now too expensive and that further engagements are unlikely. Mr White supported the principle of including in the estimates a proportion of production costs, and forecast that a rise in the price of tickets is inevitable.

A Memorandum from the English Opera Group Association was circulated. It summarised their activities during 1949 and 1950, and recommended closer cooperation with the Directors. The Chairman undertook to reply suitably.

The Chairman's proposal, seconded by Mr Stein, that Mr Caplan be appointed Secretary of the Company, was carried unanimously.

It was agreed that Mr Caplan should issue a Writ on Mr Foy for the sum he owes the Group, and investigate whether any money is recoverable from Mr Gorlinsky.

Mr Caplan reported that a lease is being negotiated, on behalf of Lord Harewood as Tenant, of a suite of offices in Fielding House, Haymarket, which would be shared by Opera and Ballet Publications Ltd., and the English Opera Group Ltd; the Group's share of the rent would be £250., inclusive of rates and heating.

Mr Douglas asked for suggestions for regular and energetic publicity. In general, it was considered desirable to keep in closer touch with the Press, and Mr Gishford kindly undertook to edit a leaflet, in time for the "Tales of Hoffmann" premiere, listing briefly the Group's aims, achievements, and future engagements.

Minutes of the Executive Committee, held at 22a Melbury Road on Saturday 12th May 1951.

Present: The Earl of Harewood (in the Chair)
Mr. Benjamin Britten
Mr. Basil Coleman
Mr. Norman Del Mar
Mr. Basil Douglas
Mr. Peter Pears
Mr. John Piper
Mr. Erwin Stein
Mr. Harold Wallis
Miss Anne Wood

- 103 Minutes Read and approved.
- 104 Storage
(Minute 82) We are still in urgent need of a permanent store.
- 105 Copenhagen
(Minute 61) Negotiations with both Mr. Dietrichson and Mr. Blicher-Hansen had failed largely owing to the lack of financial help from the British Council.
- 106 The Sleeping Children.
(Minute 89) (a) Mr. Michael Powell had promised to give the English Opera Group £250, to pay for the material. No cheque yet forthcoming.
(b) Mr. Tyrone Guthrie had not yet made it clear whether he would forego his share of the performing fees.
(c) In view of Miss Nancy Evans' poor state of health it was agreed to ask Miss Marjorie Thomas to take over the part - failing her, to consult Mr. David Webster whether Miss Constance Shacklock, Miss Monica Sinclair and Miss Jean Watson might be released - failing all these Miss Gloria Lane or Miss Catherine Lawson.
- 107 Australia. Mr. Daniel O'Connor was still interested in presenting the English Opera Group in Australia next summer, despite the rise in the cost of living there. It was agreed to warn him that Mr. Britten could not go and that the tour could not begin before July 21st.
- 108 Film. Mr. Britten reported that he had been asked to lunch with Sir Michael Balcon, Mr. James Lawrie, and Mr. John Baxter in order to discuss a possible collaboration in a film which might involve the English Opera Group. He was encouraged to follow any inclinations he might have in the matter.
- 109 "Tales of Hoffmann"
Premiere
(Minute 97) The proceeds were estimated by Mrs. Madge Clarke at £2,000, by Sir Arther Jarratt at over £3,000. It was reported that a clear financial statement would be available for the Directors' Meeting on June 5th.
- 110 Publicity
(Minute 98) Agreed to offer our grateful thanks to Mr. Anthony Gishford for his services in editing the leaflet, which was being widely circulated at home and abroad.
- 111 Israel. Further letter from official bodies in Israel showed that a visit by the English Opera Group would be greatly appreciated there. It was however dependent on the Australian tour.

112. Financial Statement. Mr. Wallis reported that owing to substantial savings in our production costs we were about £4,000 better off at this moment than we anticipated. When the proceeds were taken into account of

- (a) the Film Premiere ? £3,000
- (b) the winter tour of "Let's make an Opera" ? £1,000
- (c) the concert tours sponsored by English Opera Group next season ? £1,000
- (d) the reduction of royalties payable for the season June 1950 - January 27th 1951 £300
- (e) recoupment of production costs during 1951 ? £1,000

and provided that the Arts Council grant of £3,000 was maintained, he considered it safe to assume that £5,000 - £3,500 would be available for a new production next year.

113. New Production Mr. Britten had two ideas in mind for new operas, one a children's opera based on "The Tale of Mr. Tod" by Beatrix Potter (soprano, tenor, baritone and bass soli and possibly six children); the other a large scale opera based on Henry James' "The Turn of the Screw". Of the two he would find "The Tale of Mr. Tod" more congenial after the strain of finishing "Billy Budd" and the committee is very happy to leave it to him.

114. Rehearsals Agreed (a) that a five-week rehearsal period was essential for any new production, (b) that rehearsals should be held as much as possible out of London (c) that if possible an opening in London should be avoided.

115. Programme Policy for 1952 Dependant on the continuing support of the Arts Council to the extent of £5,000 a year, it was agreed that the following arrangement might be possible:-

- Reproduction rehearsals: April 14 - May 3.
- Operas: Lucretia, Herring, Beggars Opera (baritone version, if no suitable cover for Peter Pears can be found, and a new production).
- May 5 - 31 approx: Holland and Germany.
- June 20 - 29: Aldeburgh.
Operas: Lucretia, The Tale of Mr. Tod.
Rehearsals from May 18th.
- July 7 - 12: Cheltenham.
- July 21 - November 30: (a) Australia and Israel, or (b) Spain, Scandinavia, Ireland and/or a tour in England, with a season at Sadlers Wells.

The Tale of Mr. Tod, Herring Lucretia and Beggars Opera could go to Australia and Ireland and on tour in England. There was also the possibility of further performances of "The Wandering Scholar" and "The Sleeping Children."

116. Basil
Coleman

In his absence it was resolved that a sufficient income might be granted him by the Group to enable him to take the decision to leave Coventry. Mr. Douglas was asked to propose a retaining fee of £10 a week, to start at a time agreed between us. For this we would have the constant benefit of his advice as Artistic Director, and of his services as resident producer, e.g., for re-productions; this salary would not exclude payment for new productions, or the possibility of his being engaged by other managements; in the latter case the question of foregoing the retaining fee could be discussed ad hoc. Mr. Douglas should also ask Mr. Lawrie whether it is necessary to obtain the Directors' approval.

MINUTES of the meeting of the Board of Directors held at
27, Soho Square, London, W.1., on Tuesday 5th June, 1951, at
2.30 p.m.

PRESENT: President: The Earl of Harewood.
Directors: Mr J. H. Lawrie (in the chair).
Mr Isador Caplan.
Mr Anthony Gishford.
The Hon. James Smith, O.B.E.
Mr Erwin Stein.

Artistic Director: Mr Benjamin Britten.

In Attendance: Mr Basil Douglas (General Manager)
Mr H. P. Wallis.
Mr Peter Pears.
Mr Leslie Periton.

1. The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed.
2. A financial statement was circulated showing a total credit of £3,477. 17s. 10d., on May 31st, 1951. After adding the proceeds of the "Tales of Hoffmann" Premiere, approximately £2,700. The Group would thus be over £7,000. better off than expected at this time, largely due to strict economies in production and running costs, which had been estimated very conservatively. A discussion on the advisability of offering repayment of the loans followed, and the Chairman undertook to draft letters to the lenders which would offer repayment but at the same time suggest that good use could be made of the money if they were left intact.
3. It was considered that after making provision for repayment or part repayment of loans there would be about £3,000. available for a new production next year if the present Arts Council grant were maintained.
4. The employment of Mr Basil Coleman as Productions Director, proposed by the Executive Committee, was confirmed.
5. It was recommended that the Arts Council should be invited to underwrite an extended tour of the provinces next year and that the running costs should be clearly understood to include management and a proportion of production costs. A visit to the Dominions should be postponed until the work of the English Opera Group had had a wider showing in England.
6. It was agreed that the high prices at the Lyric Theatre and the wide gap between the high prices and the low prices, although understandable from the point of view of the Company of Four, had damaged the English Opera Group's reputation considerably. In reply to a question, the General Manager said that the Group had not been consulted by the Company of Four in this matter.
7. Mr Caplan reported that legal action had been taken against Mr Foy, but as the latter had no assets at the moment, the prospect of recovering the whole amount £379. was slight. He further reported that the sum

of £175., (which was more than had been expected) had been recovered from Mr Gorlinsky, in respect of the Tunbridge Wells and Eastbourne engagements.

8. Mr Caplan also reported that the negotiations for the lease of a suite of offices in Fielding House, Haymarket, had fallen through, and that a lease had been negotiated for the premises at 25, Wigmore Place, London, W.1., formerly occupied by Henry Foy, Ltd., the rental being £200. a year, inclusive of rates, plus £40. a year for lighting and heating.
9. The Board expressed their appreciation of Mr Gishford's work in connection with the leaflet, which had been printed and widely circulated.

There being no further business the meeting then terminated.

Minutes of the Executive Committee, held at the Queen's Hotel, Cheltenham, on Saturday 14th July, at 11.0 a.m.

Present:- Mr Peter Pears (In the Chair).
Miss Joan Cross.
Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Basil Coleman.
Mr Norman Del Mar.
Mr Basil Douglas.

117. The Minutes were read and approved.

118. Storage:
(Minute 104). No store has yet been found.

119. The Sleeping Children:
(Minutes 106 & 111). No cheque yet forthcoming from Mr Powell. The General Manager undertook to write to him.

120. Australia and Israel:
(Minute 107). Nothing further.

121. Film:
(Minute 108). Mr Britten reported that his discussion with Sir Michael Balcon and Mr James Lawrie had not yielded the possibility of a collaboration with the English Opera Group.

122. Programme Policy for 1952:
(Minute 115). (a). The Aldeburgh Festival was now scheduled for June 14th - 22nd.

(b). The Cheltenham Festival Organiser had stated that it was most unlikely that there would be any opera in next year's Festival. He estimated the loss on this year's visit at £2,000.

(c). The Arts Council had been informed of our desire for a provincial tour next year, and a season at Sadler's Wells.

123. Casting Meeting:
Fixed for 10.0 a.m. in the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool on Saturday, August 4th.

124. Cancelled performances in Holland and Belgium:
The chorus were insisting on being paid for the performances on June 21st, (notice of cancellation issued on 17th April) and for August 8th and 9th, (notice of cancellation issued on June 1st) and were supported by Equity.

In both these cases the engaging management had cancelled the performances after holding up the contract. The General Manager pointed out that if the inclusive contracts for the season had not been issued early this year, it was unlikely that we would have been able to retain the identical company for so many scattered and isolated performances; it was agreed that the risk was worth taking, and that an "escape clause" in the contract had disadvantages as well as advantages.

It was decided to offer payment to the whole company.

**125. Renewal of
Contract to
Stage Director:**

Mr Peter Banks' work for the current season was strongly criticised. His preliminary planning was excellent, his technical competence was considerable, and his hard work and single mindedness were unquestioned, but he seemed unable to realise the paramount importance of the music, he was apt to be overwhelmed by circumstances; he found it difficult to delegate, and his personal relations with both his staff and the company did little to bolster their morale. It was agreed in his defence, that it had been an unusually complicated season for the stage staff.

It was pointed out that it would be difficult to find a better man, but it was agreed that we should look out for one, and that Peter Banks should be warned at once that his contract might not be renewed at the end of August; it was also agreed that if necessary he was quite adequate for a run of "Let's Make An Opera!"

**126. Stage
Manager:**

It was agreed that Miss Rita Burr should be told of the criticisms also levelled against her before renewing her contract.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP, LTD.

Minutes of the Executive Meeting held at the Hotel Victoria, New Brighton, on Saturday 4th August, at 10.30 a.m.

Present:- Mr Peter Pears, (In the Chair).
Miss Joan Cross.
Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Basil Coleman.
Mr Harold Wallis.
Mr Basil Douglas.

- 127: The Minutes of the previous meeting were read, approved and signed.
- 128: Storage. Bill Blakeley to be asked to make the
(Minute 118). finding of a store and workroom a first priority. (Mr Wallis to pursue).
- 129: The No reply to the General Manager's reminder
Sleeping to Mr Powell.
Children.
(Minute 119).
- 130: Programme Enquiries from York and Cheltenham had
for 1952. been received.
(Minute 122).
131. Holland The orchestra and principals had been
and Belgium offered payment and had refused, with the
Cancellations. exception of one 'cellist and the two
(Minute 124). dancers.
- 132: Stage Mr Coleman and Mr Douglas had interviewed
Director. Mr Banks. He had admitted his short-
(Minute 125). comings, but urged in his defence the unusual difficulties of the season and the advantage to himself and the Group in the experience gained. Individual disasters had been investigated and had been traced to failures by subordinates. The Committee felt that he should be given another chance, and it was agreed that his contract should be renewed for next season, subject to a month's notice.
In the event of their being no work until December, he should be asked to find another job as from September 3rd, and be paid a maximum retaining fee of £5.0s.0d. a week, the precise sum to be dependant on his salary.
- 133: Stage Miss Burr had been told of the criticisms
Manager. of her work and had agreed that they were
(Minute 126). at least partly justified. She had pleaded the extenuating circumstance of the difficulty of her personal relations with Mr Banks. They had now achieved an amiable understanding, however, and there was reason to hope that they would work well together in the future.

(Minute 133),
Continued.

It was agreed to renew her contract when it expired on October 27th and that she should be given the opportunity to decline the tour of "Let's Make an Opera!" if she wished, and rejoin the company in April.

134: "Let's
Make an Opera!"

It was decided to postpone the tour until after the Christmas run. This would give us the chance of securing suitable theatres and an adequate cast, and of organising publicity well in advance.

135: Sadler's
Wells.

Norman Tucker had offered us the theatre for three weeks in March, but it was agreed that casting difficulties made it impossible to accept. Unluckily it was not available in the summer.

THE _ ENGLISH _ OPERA _ GROUP, _ LTD.

Minutes of the Executive Committee held at 25, Wigmore Place, W, 1., on Wednesday 24th October, 1951.

Present:- The Earl of Harewood (in the chair).
Miss Anne Wood.
Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Basil Coleman.
Mr Peter Pears.
Mr John Piper.
Mr Erwin Stein.
Mr Harold Wallis.
Mr Basil Douglas.

136. The Minutes were approved and signed.

137. Storage. A store and workroom had been found at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith - rental, £10. a week, with the power to sublet; the agreement subject to two months notice on either side.
(Minute 128).

138. Mr Michael Powell. Further reminders had elicited no response from Mr Powell. Mr Douglas to persist.
(Minute 129).

139. Stage Staff. Agreed that the Directors should be informed (Minutes 132 & 133.) of the cost of the staff the Group continues to carry during non-performing periods.

140. "Let's Make an Opera". (a) Negotiations with Tennent Productions were pending for a run at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, from December 24th to January 26th 1952, and for a tour thereafter until Easter. A contract had been signed with the New Theatre, Hull, and there were pencillings with theatres in Bath, Blackpool, Norwich and Keighley. The education authorities in Manchester and the B.B.C. were also interested, but on the whole theatre managements were reluctant to commit themselves so far in advance.
(Minute 134).

(b) Conductor: Agreed to appoint Renton principal conductor if he returned from Australia in time to start rehearsals on December 3rd. Second choice Pritchard. Guest conductor, Boyd Neel. Agreed that for the sake of the performance there should be no other guest conductors.

(c) Scenery and Costumes: Mr Piper offered to discuss alterations with John Lewis.

141. Sadler's Wells. Agreed that at present a visit to Sadler's Wells was impracticable as it would involve the Group in a loss of up to £800. - £1,000. a week.
(Minute 35).

142. Mozart in English, Bath Festival. The Bath Festival had enquired if we could provide them with a Mozart Opera during the week beginning May 27th, 1952. Considerable discussion followed, involving the extent and direction of the Group's future development. Until our policy had been clarified and referred to the Directors, it was agreed to give a non-committal answer to Bath; it should be pointed out, however, that the Group, with its commitment to "The Tale of Mr Tod" and its possible commitment to "The Beggar's Opera", would be unable to pay for the production.

143. Visit To Germany. Negotiations were pending with Mr Fineman for a visit to various German theatres in May, 1952, and the British Council were willing in principle to provide some subsidy, although repeated

requests to Fineman for a comprehensive estimate had elicited unsatisfactory replies. The committee attached such importance to this visit, and possible commitments in May made a settlement so urgent, that Mr Douglas was empowered to go to Cologne and discuss it further, and, if necessary, also to go to Copenhagen to see Blicher-Hansen, who was willing to negotiate a visit there in conjunction with the German tour.

144. "Love in a Village". The B.B.C. had asked for a Ballad Opera and had been offered "Love in a Village", (libretto by Bickerstaffe, edited Basil Coleman - tunes by Arne and others, realised Arthur Oldham). Oldham had provided a sample of the scoring and had promised to complete the score by December 1st. Mr Britten undertook to examine the score before it was submitted to the B.B.C.
145. "Christopher Sly". (Libretto, Ronald Duncan; music, Arthur Oldham). Agreed that Mr Britten should write to Oldham, insisting on the following datelines:-
1. The Vocal Score of Act I to be in our hands not later than July 15th, 1952; this would be sufficient for us to decide whether or not to produce the opera.
 2. The whole vocal score to be completed by Christmas, 1952.
 3. The scoring to be completed by April 1st, 1953.
146. "The Tale of Mr Tod". (Music, Benjamin Britten; libretto William Plomer). Three performances were scheduled for the Aldeburgh Festival, 1952, (June 16th, 18th and 21st). Agreed that the scenery and costumes should be designed "after" Beatrix Potter, i.e. by a sensitive executant rather than by a creative artist, with a strong personality of his own. Mr Piper undertook to consult Mr Plomer and suggest names for a designer at the next meeting.
147. Glyndebourne. Mr Eric Walter White had thrown out a tentative enquiry whether the Group would be interested in a collaboration of any kind with Glyndebourne. Lengthy discussion revealed many doubts and anxieties whether this was either desirable or practicable, but it was agreed that there could be no harm in Mr White sounding Glyndebourne, if he would like to pursue the idea further.
148. Operatic Concerts at Southend, (January 6th). and Leeds (February 20th). In addition to Joan Cross and Peter Pears, it was agreed to invite Otakar Kraus, (Or Owen Brannigan) to sing at Southend, and Nancy Evans and Otakar Kraus to sing at Leeds.
149. Major Young. Major Young, the new Chairman of the E.O.G. Association, had asked for closer cooperation between the Association and the Group. Agreed that this was desirable, and that his name should be suggested to the Directors for co-option to the Board.
150. Next Meeting. Monday 19th November at 6.0 p.m. at 22a, Melbury Road, Kensington, W. 14.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP, LTD:

Minutes of the Executive Committee held at 22a, Melbury Road, London, W.14, on Monday 19th November, 1951.

Present:- The Earl of Harewood (in the chair).
Miss Anne Wood.
Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Basil Coleman.
Mr Norman Del Mar.
Mr Peter Pears.
Mr Erwin Stein.
Mr Basil Douglas.

151. The Minutes were approved.

152. "Let's Make an Opera!".
(Minute 140).

Still very few bookings for the tour after Christmas. Negotiations in progress for a week in Manchester sponsored by the Education authorities.

153. Bath Assembly.
(Minute 142).

The non-committal answer to Bath had resulted in renewed requests for proposals and estimates. Agreed that unless Krips conducted, a Mozart opera was out of the question; this seemed unlikely, but there was no harm in proposing it to Bath, and also "Love in a Village". It should be made clear that we would be unable to pay for the productions of either.

154. Visit to Germany and Copenhagen.
(Minute 143).

Mr Douglas reported on his visit and laid on the table proposals and estimates for a week in Copenhagen, starting on May 5th; and a fortnight in Germany starting on May 12th. Agreed that Copenhagen should be offered "Herring", "Lucretia", and "Let's Make an Opera", (with Danish children). "Herring" and "Lucretia" would also be acceptable in Germany.

The German tour depended on a subsidy of £870 a week from the British Council; if this was forthcoming the Copenhagen visit could just be managed without the Council's assistance - if not, the whole tour was impracticable.

Mr Douglas' proposals and estimates were approved.

155. "Love in a Village".
(Minute 144).

The score was now with the B.B.C.

156. "The Tale of Mr Tod".
(Minute 146).

Agreed that Charles Bravery should be asked to execute the designs, under Mr Piper's instructions. Pointed out that if Bill Blakeley was to build the set, the design should be ready before Christmas, as he would be free until January 26th, but not while "Let's Make" was on tour.

157. Glyndebourne.
(Minute 147).

Mr White had not taken the matter any further as he did not think the time was ripe.

158. Concerts at the
Victoria & Albert
Museum.

Agreed to proceed with these concerts as planned, despite the fact that the expenses were heavy and the audiences for the first two concerts smaller than expected.

159. Concert in
Manchester,
January 24th.

The Hallé Concerts Society had not yet agreed to sponsor the concert and were being pressed for a decision. Agreed that the concerts in Nottingham, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, and Bristol, should be used to canvass potential support for a tour.

160. Cheltenham
Festival, 1952.

Mr Wilkinson had replied enthusiastically to Mr Douglas' tentative suggestion that the Group might bring "Mr Tod" to Cheltenham next July under its own steam. Agreed that the maintenance of good relations with Cheltenham was very desirable, and that the idea should be explored further.

161. Rehearsals for
Spring Season.

Agreed that if they could take place in Aldeburgh, three weeks were sufficient in which to re-produce "Herring" and "Lucretia" and a further three weeks in which to produce "Mr Tod", (i.e. from May 25th). Music rehearsals should be called in London on May 19th to 24th.

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THE - ENGLISH - OPERA - GROUP, - LTD.

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Board of Directors held at 27, Soho Square, London, W.1., on Monday, 26th November, 1951, at 2.30 p.m.

PRESENT:-

President: The Earl of Harewood.

Directors: Mr J. H. Lawrie, (in the Chair).
Mr Isador Caplan.
Mr Anthony Gishford.
The Hon. T. M. Horder.
Mr Erwin Stein.

Artistic
Director: Miss Anne Wood.

Assessor to
Arts Council: Mr Eric Walter White.

In attendance: Mr Basil Douglas.
Mr Harold F. Wallis.

1. The Minutes of the previous Meeting were approved and signed.

2. Arising from the Minutes:- (a). Mr Wallis reported on the position of the Loans. Repayment had been offered, with the following results:-

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|----------------------------|---|
| Mrs Spring-Rice: (£1,000). | £250 already repaid, the rest to be repaid in yearly instalments of £250. |
| Mrs Robertson: (£500). | Repaid in full. |
| Mr Lawrie: (£1,000). | To remain. |
| Mr Ehrman: (£1,000). | £500 repaid, £500 donated to the Group. |
| Mrs Lancaster: (£100). | To remain. |
| Mr Basil Wright: (£100). | No reply. |
| Mrs Wright: (£50). | No reply. |
| Mr Piper: (£50). | To remain. |

(b). Mr Caplan reported that the sum of £379. owing to the Group by Mr Foy was **still unrecovered**. Judgement had been obtained, but no payments made. Mr Caplan was authorised to take whatever steps were practicable to recover payment, including **Bankruptcy** proceedings if necessary.

3. On the recommendation of the General Manager it was resolved to invite Mr Derek Young, the present Chairman of the English Opera Group Association to join the Board of Directors. It was also resolved that the Chairman should approach Sir Arthur Jarratt with a view to his being invited to join the Board.

4. Mr Eric Walter White reported on the present position of the Arts Council's application to the Treasury for a Grant for 1952/53 and succeeding years. He hoped that a definite answer would be forthcoming in the near future. He noted the suggestion that the Arts Council might be asked to underwrite a provincial tour, but could hold out no hope of a subsidy over and above the Group's normal grant, whatever that might be.

5. It was agreed that it would be desirable to spend money on exploiting the visits of the Group to cities such as Manchester and Hull, rather than on filling the gap between running costs and receipts abroad.
6. The General Manager was asked to compile a Report for the years 1949 and 1950 and circulate it for approval before the next Meeting, when the date of the Annual General Meeting would be fixed.
7. The General Manager reported that after the end of the Christmas run on January 26th of "Let's Make an Opera!" at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, it was planned to take it on tour, but that so far theatre managements were reluctant to book it. He had also been to Germany and Copenhagen to arrange a tour there in May; this would require the support of the British Council, which was in some doubt. Mr Britten's next opera "The Tale of Mr Tod" had been scheduled for the Aldeburgh Festival in June. Proposals and estimates had also been asked for by the Bath Assembly.
A series of concerts, (in addition to the monthly series at the Victoria and Albert Museum) was being arranged during January and February in Southend, Nottingham, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Bristol; these would be used to canvass potential support for future visits by the Group. On the whole, however, money was very tight and without private backing he thought it unlikely that a provincial tour could be arranged.
9. The next meeting was arranged for Monday 17th December at 27, Soho Square, London, W.1., at 11.30 a.m.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP, LTD.

Minutes of the Executive Committee held at 2, Orme Square, London, W.2., at 3.0 p.m. on Sunday 16th December, 1951.

Present: The Earl of Harewood (in the chair).
Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Basil Coleman.
Mr Norman Del Mar.
Mr Peter Pears.
Mr Erwin Stein.
Mr Harold Wallis.
Mr Basil Douglas.

162. The Minutes were approved and signed.
163. "Let's Make an Opera!"
(Minute 152). The week in Manchester had been cancelled owing to the poor response of the schools. Apart from Hull, (February 25th) and a firm pencilling in Bath, (March 24th) there were no bookings
164. Bath Assembly.
(Minute 153). Our proposals and estimates had been rejected.
165. "Love in a Village".
(Minute 155). The B.B.C. had offered to commission the first performance; the suggested dates were May 9th and 12th. Agreed to accept. Rehearsals to begin on April 14th. Casting to be settled on December 28th, with Messrs. Britten, Coleman, Oldham, Del Mar and Douglas.
166. "The Tale of Mr Tod".
(Minute 156). (a). Agreed on the importance of Mr Piper's direct supervision of the designs for scenery and costumes. Mr Coleman to discuss with Mr Piper.
(b). Agreed also that the cast and conductor must be available for the subsequent run in the West End.
(c). Provisional Cast:- Soprano, tenor, bass-baritone, bass, 6 children. Orchestra: Flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, viola, 'cello, piano, percussion.
167. Concert in Manchester, 24th January.
(Minute 159). Still no decision from the Hallé.
168. Cheltenham Festival.
(Minute 160). Agreed that Mr Douglas' estimate showed that a visit to Cheltenham was inadvisable.
169. Sadlers' Wells. Their offer to reduce their weekly fee to £350 brought a season at Sadlers' Wells within the bounds of financial possibility, but there was still a risk of substantial loss, and it was agreed that money should preferably be risked on a provincial tour rather than in London. Sadlers' Wells to be informed accordingly, with suitable thanks for their generosity.

170. Programme for 1952.
(Minute 122).

(a). Aldeburgh Festival. Mr Britten would be able to tell us by the end of January if "The Tale of Mr Tod" could be ready in time for Aldeburgh. Second choice, "Love in a Village".

(b). Florence Festival, 1952. Signor Siciliani had sent an enquiry, (through the British Council) whether the Group could present "Albert Herring". Agreed that the last week of May was a possibility, and that "Lucretia" should also be offered.

(c). Scandinavia. Mr Blicher-Hansen had reported that if the Berlinske Tidende were to back our visit to Copenhagen they would insist on a new opera. Agreed to offer "The Tale of Mr Tod" and to postpone the tour to the Autumn. Mr Blicher-Hansen also hoped to interest Gøtenborg, Stockholm, Helsinki, and Oslo.

(d). Germany. Mr Fineman also approved the idea of the autumn rather than the spring, and would endeavour to finance our visit with private backers in Germany if the British Council could not provide the necessary subsidy. Agreed that it might be planned in conjunction with the Scandinavian tour, if the conditions seemed possible.

171. Bass Clarinet.

Agreed that it would be a reasonable investment to buy the bass clarinet available in Boosey & Hawkes' showroom. The possibility should also be investigated (a) of hiring it and (b) of reducing the price (£140).

172. Mrs Piper.

Agreed that Mr Piper should be encouraged to send Mrs Piper to speak for him whenever it was not possible for him to be present. The Committee had every confidence in Mrs Piper.