

MEMORANDUM:-

of a Meeting of the Artistic Directors of the English Opera Group, Ltd., at Fawley Bottom Farmhouse, Henley-on-Thames on Saturday and Sunday, January 19th and 20th 1952.

In attendance:- Mrs Mifanwy Piper,
Mr Peter Pears,
Mr Basil Douglas.

A statement of the approximate financial position prepared beforehand by two of the Artistic Directors with Mr Wallis, made it clear that the production costs of "Love in a Village", (estimated at £3,000) would leave insufficient funds to pay the rehearsal costs for any production of old operas in 1952, or to meet the overheads after July or August. The statement demonstrated once again that the Group must have an increased income in order to remain artistically active, since the annual Arts Council Grant of £3,000. does no more than meet the annual cost of overheads, (which are found to approximate to £3,000).

The following alternatives were discussed:-

1. To cancel the production of "Love in a Village", (scheduled for the Aldeburgh Festival, June 1952) and give no performances during the year ending April 1st 1953, (when presumably the next Arts Council grant would be forthcoming) unless fees could be guaranteed by engaging theatre managements which would cover both production and running costs.

2. To proceed with "Love in a Village" and invite the Board of Directors to suggest further sources of income.

It was agreed:-

(a). That the public's goodwill and awareness of the Group's activities had been greatly increased by their performances in 1951, and by the Concerts and various forms of publicity.

(b). That a year without activity would dissipate this goodwill, dim the public's awareness of our activities, interrupt dangerously the continuity of the Group's work, and bring no financial advantage, (by March 31st, 1953, we would be in no better financial position than we are now).

(c). That a year without activity would risk the displeasure of the Arts Council, and the possible discontinuance of the Annual Grant.

(d). That if we decide to continue to perform we might possibly attract money with which to produce "Love in a Village", but with no production to offer it would be difficult to ask anyone for additional revenue.

(e). That, generally speaking, our expenses cannot be further reduced without lowering our standard of performance; that Chamber Operas are extremely difficult to perform and require great distinction from both singers and orchestra; and that the Artistic Directors are convinced that our policy should continue

to attempt to be one of maintaining the highest possible standard of production and performance.

(f). That in order to live we need to expand our activities, raise our standards, create new opportunities for composers, librettists and performers; and generally to face the fact that opera loses money both on production and running costs and that we cannot hope always to recoup our expenditure by means of takings or fees, (though admittedly we did achieve this once or twice during the 1951 Festival Season) and that we must, therefore, make every effort to increase our income to a minimum of £7,000 - £8,000 a year.

(g). That we should therefore ask the Directors for their advice, with a recommendation that we should be allowed to continue.

It was further agreed:-

1. That with regard to the production of "Love in a Village", (a) Mr Britten should ask Arthur Oldham to reduce the orchestration to the minimum, i.e. string quintet and harpsichord or piano. (b) That John Piper and Basil Coleman should discuss the designs with Osbert Lancaster with a view to keeping the expenditure on scenery to a minimum. (c). That John Piper should discuss the question of an appropriate fee with Osbert Lancaster. (d). That we could, by means of the above arrangements, reduce the production costs of "Love in a Village" by approximately £400.

2. That we could not afford reproduction costs for a tour in Scandinavia this autumn, and that this should accordingly be postponed until 1953, when it was hoped that a new opera by Mr Britten could be offered as the major attraction.

3. That we should immediately approach composers and librettists with a view to their writing for the Group, and that we should make an offer of token commissions, and a promise of a public reading of any work accepted, making it clear that production could not be guaranteed.

A further point discussed was that Mr Britten was engaged with Mr William Plomer in writing a new opera for the Group, to be ready some time in 1953, and that he offered to underwrite the costs of production.

+ + + + +

(d).

That if we decide to continue to perform we might possibly attract money with which to produce "Love in a Village".

THE - ENGLISH - OPERA - GROUP, - LTD.

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, held at 27, Soho Square, London, W.1., on Monday 18th February, 1952, at 3.30 p.m.

Present:-

Directors:- Mr J. H. Lawrie, (In the Chair).
Mr Isador Caplan.
Mr Anthony Gishford.
Sir Arthur Jarratt.
Mr Erwin Stein.
Mr Derek Young.

Artistic Directors:- Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Basil Coleman.
Mr John Piper.

Arts Council Assessor:- Mr Eric Walter White.

In attendance:- Mr Basil Douglas.
Mr Peter Pears.
Mr Leslie Periton.
Mr Harold Wallis.

Apologies were received from The Earl of Harewood, Sir Kenneth Clark, The Hon. James Smith, and Miss Anne Wood.

1. The MINUTES of the previous meeting were approved and signed.

2. Election of Directors:

The Election to the Board of Sir Arthur Jarratt and Mr Derek Young was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Mr Stein and Mr Gishford respectively, and carried unanimously. In welcoming them to the Board, the Chairman referred to the valuable assistance they had already given to the Group.

3. Arising from the Minutes:

(a). Mr Eric Walter White reported that the Arts Council had not yet come to a definite decision regarding their Grant for 1952/53, although it would be communicated to the Group during the next few days; it would not be more, but in all probability it would not be less than £3,000. The Arts Council had good reason to hope that the Treasury would not take so long next year in reaching a decision on the Council's 1953/54 Grant.

(b). Draft Reports for the years 1949 and 1950 had been circulated, with an interim Report for the year 1951. These were considered by the Board and approved.

4. Election of Members:

(a). The Secretary reported that he had received applications for membership of the Company from Sir Arthur Jarratt, (as an "A" member) and from Mr Derek Young, (as an Ordinary Member) and it was accordingly resolved that their applications should be accepted and that Sir Arthur Jarratt and Mr Derek Young should be confirmed as Members of the Company.

(b). The Secretary also reported that his inspection of the Minute Book of Directors' Meetings did not reveal any Resolutions confirming the election of members, although it was likely that each member had been elected at the time.

It was accordingly resolved that for the purpose of removing any doubts the following persons were confirmed as members of the Company:-

George Ansley.	"B" Member.
Isador Caplan.	Ordinary Member.
Clemence Dane (Miss).	Ordinary Member.
Basil Douglas.	Ordinary Member.
English Electric Co., Ltd.	"A" Member.
General Electric Co., Ltd.,	"A" Member.
Anthony Gishford.	Ordinary Member.
David Higham.	Ordinary Member.
Hotpoint Electric Appliance Co., Ltd.	"B" Member.
E. C. Holroyde.	"B" Member.
Richard Lynex.	Ordinary Member.
James Lawrie.	"A" Member.
The Marquess of Queensberry.	"B" Member.
H. M. Rothschild & Sons.	"A" Member.
Denis Rickett.	"B" Member.

It was also recorded that the following members did not require election as they had been signatories to the Memorandum of Association:-

Sir Kenneth Mackenzie Clark.	Ordinary Member.
The Hon. Mervyn Horder.	Ordinary Member.
The Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttelton.	Ordinary Member.
Richard Royle Powell.	Ordinary Member.
Erwin Stein.	Ordinary Member.
The Hon. James F. A. Smith.	Ordinary Member.

The Secretary further reported that in April 1949 Associated Electrical Industries Ltd., and Lazard Bros. and Co., Ltd., each paid to the Company the sum of £1,000. in settlement of their contingent liability as "A" Members of the Company, and that in June 1950, Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd., also paid to the Company £1,000. in settlement of their contingent liability as an "A" Member. Consequently more than three months having elapsed since these payments, these three firms have ceased to be members of the Company, and it was accordingly resolved that their names be removed from the Register of Members.

5. Accounts:

(a). For the year 1950. The Board authorised the writing-off of an item of £10. paid to Miss Elizabeth Sweeting, and an item of £413.7s.1d. in respect of Mr Henry Foy. The Accounts were then recommended for adoption by the Company, subject to audit.

(b). For the year 1951. It was agreed that the Fixed Assets should be revalued, and the difference between the old and the new valuations written off, subject to the approval of the Chairman. With this modification, the Accounts were recommended for adoption by the Company, subject to audit.

In both cases the Chairman was authorised to deal with any queries that might be raised by the Auditors, and to make any necessary adjustments.

6. Annual General Meeting:

It was agreed that this should be postponed to the middle of May, in order to give time for the auditing of the Accounts for both 1950 and 1951.

7. Activities in 1951:

The Chairman said that it was clear from the Interim Report

and from the Draft Accounts that the English Opera Group had experienced a most successful year, both artistically and financially. He thought it fair to say that the Group had made a very substantial contribution to the Festival of Britain.

It seemed also that the Board of Directors would wish to express their thanks to all those who had been responsible for the Artistic side and especially to Mr Basil Douglas, General Manager, who had so successfully organised the work in this difficult year.

8. General Managers' Expenses:

The Chairman said that the General Manager had necessarily incurred expenses in the performance of his duties during the Festival year 1951 for which he had not been re-imbursed, owing to the financial position of the Company. In view of the present improved position it was resolved that a sum of £100. be paid in partial re-imburement. The General Manager thanked the Board and agreed to accept this sum in complete settlement.

9. Recommendations of the Executive Committee:

(a). "Love in a Village", (the music by Arne and others, realised by Arthur Oldham). The first performances were being commissioned by the B.B.C. (May 9th and 12th) and it was proposed to stage it for the Aldeburgh Festival.

(b). Promotion of New Festivals. It was considered that the idea of the Aldeburgh Festival, i.e. with local management and support and the Group's artistic advice, might usefully be extended to other centres. There would be the advantage to the Group of further guaranteed engagements, and the artistic life of the community concerned would be correspondingly enriched.

(c). Concert Performances of Operas. In the absence of capital with which to risk a loss on a provincial tour, it was proposed to arrange concert performances of e.g. "The Beggars' Opera" in cities, (a) where there is an assurance of an adequate response and (b) where a theatre suitable for a stage performance is not available.

(d). Concerts. The series of concerts in the Victoria and Albert Museum and in the provinces were proving most valuable propaganda, and although the profit on the London concerts was likely to be small, the provincial concerts would probably yield a profit of approximately £1,500. It was therefore proposed to arrange another series of concerts next winter.

The Board gave their approval to these proposals, and recommended in particular that immediate steps should be taken to promote new festivals.

10. Additional Revenue:

(a). The General Manager pointed out that without additional revenue the Group was in danger of running out of funds in the autumn of 1952. The Board was confident that this danger could be overcome.

(b). Sir Arthur Jarratt suggested that in order to make progress, the Executive Committee should formulate their policy as far in advance as possible, (preferably for the next two years); at the same time estimating the sum of money that would be required to carry out such a policy after making allowances for those items that will either make money or break even. On receipt of this budget the Board should consider ways

and means of financing this programme, and then inform the Executive Committee of the sum of money that is available, in order that the Executive Committee could revise their policy if necessary.

It was agreed that this was a very good suggestion, and the General Manager was asked to ascertain the Executive Committee's proposals for the next meeting.

11. Leave of Absence:

The Chairman reported that Mr Denis Rickett would be unable to attend Board Meetings for some time to come, owing to his Ministerial appointment in Washington, and accordingly it was resolved that pursuant to Article 36 (2) Mr Rickett be granted a special leave of absence until otherwise further resolved by the Board.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LTD.

Minutes of the Executive Committee held at 27, Soho Square, London, W.1., at 2.30 p.m. on Monday, 18th February, 1952.

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

The Minutes were approved and signed.

173. "Let's Make an Opera!" (Minute 163).

In addition to Hull, there is now a contract for the Wimbledon Theatre for the week beginning Monday, March 17th.

174. "Love in a Village" (Minute 165).

In addition to the broadcasts on May 9th and 12th, this opera is now scheduled for the Aldeburgh Festival on June 16th, 18th and 21st.

175. "The Tale of Mr Tod" (Minute 166).

This opera has had to be abandoned owing to copyright difficulties.

176. Programme for 1952 (Minute 170).

Nothing further from Scandinavia or Germany. The Florence Festival enquiry has resulted in a vague proposal for 1953, and an offer from Wiesbaden for May 1952 had been withdrawn owing to the curtailment of their Festival plans.

177. Bass Clarinet (Minute 171). Drapes.

Agreed to recommend to the Association that their annual donation (£224.16s.7d. - proceeds from the Ball) should be spent on the bass clarinet and a pair of drapes for "Let's Make an Opera!".

178. Concerts (Minute 158).

Agreed that the concerts had proved valuable, not only artistically but also as propaganda. Financially the Victoria & Albert Museum Concerts would probably make no loss, and the profit on the provincial concerts was estimated at £1,500. Agreed that a further series should be given next year.

179. Concert Performances of Operas.

Agreed that concert performances of e.g., "The Beggars' Opera" should be arranged in cities where we were unlikely to find theatres, and where there were indications of adequate response, e.g. in Bristol, Manchester, Leeds.

180. Expansion of Activities.

Agreed to recommend to the Directors that the idea of the Aldeburgh Festival, i.e. with local management and support and the Group's artistic advice, might advantageously be extended to other places in England. Lowestoft Henley-on-Thames, Barnstaple, Whitby, and Bridgnorth were mentioned. There would be the obvious advantage to the Group of further guaranteed engagements, and to the community concerned of an enrichment of its artistic life. Agreed that as a beginning the Lowestoft authorities should be approached at once with a view to a festival on a small scale in 1952.

/

181. Mr Britten's next
Opera.

Mr Britten reported that he and Mr Plomer were at work on another idea for an opera, (with children in the cast) which he hoped would be ready before Christmas 1952.

THE - ENGLISH - OPERA - GROUP, - LTD.

Meeting at Fawley Bottom Farmhouse, Henley-on-Thames,
on Sunday, 4th May, 1952.

Present: Mr and Mrs John Piper.
Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Peter Pears.
Mr Basil Coleman.
Mr Basil Douglas.

1. PLANS FOR 1952/53:-

Mr Britten said that the Queen had approved the idea of his opera on the subject of Elizabeth and Essex for the first week of June 1953. It would be decided very soon whether money would be forthcoming for the production, and if he undertook to write the opera it would mean that "Tyco the Vegan" would have to be postponed and that he would be able to take part in fewer concerts than he would like. On the other hand, he expected, in favourable circumstances, to have finished scoring "Elizabeth and Essex" by the end of March, 1953, and saw no reason why he should not also write "The Turn of the Screw" for the autumn, 'i.e. for the Edinburgh or Venice Festivals). With two such contrasting themes, it would be possible to think about "The Turn of the Screw" while engaged on "Elizabeth and Essex".

It was agreed to postpone the idea of "Tyco the Vegan" for the time being and to discover Mr Ian Hunter's latest intentions with regard to the Group for the Edinburgh Festival, 1953.

2. FESTIVALS:-

After some discussion it was resolved to proceed with the idea of the following Festivals, in addition to Aldeburgh, (June 20th - 28th).

1. Henley-on-Thames: (July 4th - 12th).
2. Barnstaple: (July 18th - 26th).
3. Lowestoft: (August 22nd - 30th).

The resources in each centre, and sketch programmes were discussed.

Since the meeting, I have had a talk with Peter Cox. He is very enthusiastic about a Festival in the West Country, but advises extreme caution in choosing Barnstaple. In his opinion:-

(a). It is an unattractive town as a Festival Centre.

(b). There are too many second-rate people, (he instanced the inferior quality of the pottery works and the furniture factory).

(c). There are not enough people of our way of thinking to make a very active and intelligent contribution.

Incidentally, he thinks it is a pity that Ronnie is not a resident, although he agrees on his value as a focal point.

(d). Barnstaple and the nearby resorts, Ilfracombe, Lynton, Minehead, Appledore, and Bideford, attract a type of holiday-maker who would be unlikely to be interested in our Festival.

On the whole, Peter is in favour of Exeter itself, with its superior resources and position. He agrees that officialdom is sleepy there, but feels sure that there are enough lively, (and resident) supporters about, to wake it up and make a successful

Festival. He also thinks that the potential support there is much greater. Furthermore, Peter himself could give it regular and energetic help, whereas Barnstaple would be too far for him.

Swift comments please!

3. REPERTOIRE:-

As plans are at present, the following repertoire would appear possible:-

Aldeburgh: "Christopher Sly" and also possibly "The Rape of Lucretia".

Wiesbaden: (In May). "Albert Herring", and also possibly "The Rape of Lucretia".

Henley: "Albert Herring", and also possibly "Love in a Village".

Barnstaple or Exeter: "Christopher Sly" and either "Albert Herring" or "Love in a Village" or "Let's Make an Opera!".

Lowestoft: "Albert Herring" and possibly "Let's Make an Opera!".

4. COMMISSIONS FOR 1954:-

It was resolved that immediate steps should be taken to commission new operas for production in 1954 or later. Mr Douglas undertook to ask Mr Stein to approach Racine Fricker and ask him if he would like to work with any of the librettists on our list. Mr Pears and Mr Douglas undertook to make a similar approach to Lennox Berkeley for a one act opera, (this might be one of a triple bill with, for example, "Thomas and Sally", and "Savitri"). Mr Douglas undertook to ask Arthur Benjamin if he would like to write an operetta. A similar approach should also be made to Anthony Hopkins.

It was also agreed that experimental ideas should be encouraged and developed, possibly involving the mixture of singing and ballet. For example, John Cranko might like to devise choreography for a Tragic Ballad, (composers mentioned were Alan Rawsthorne, Elizabeth Lutyens, Humphrey Searle and Charles Mackerras). Mr Piper undertook to sound John Cranko.

5. CONCERTS:-

Schemes were being drawn up for concerts at the Royal Festival Hall and at the Victoria and Albert Museum for the winter 1952/53.

6. BROADCASTING:-

Suggestions were being made to the B.B.C. for the use of the Group's ensemble in studio operas and programmes of a specialist nature.

7. OPERA CLUB:-

Mrs Tillett had produced the idea of a Club, with the object of providing - (a) The Group with offices, rehearsal rooms, and a regular revenue, (from subscriptions and the bar) and the Association with a centre for its activities. The title of The English Opera Club was suggested. Agreed that the idea was worth investigating, but that nothing could be done until possible premises were found. The idea should be put to the Directors for their consideration, on May 15th.

THE - ENGLISH - OPERA - GROUP, - LTD.

MINUTES of the THIRD ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING held at 27, Soho Square, London, W.1., on Thursday, 15th May, 1952.

Present: President: The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Harewood.
Members: Mr J. H. Lawrie, (Chairman).
Mr Isador Caplan.
Mr Anthony Gishford.
Mr David Higham.
The Hon. Mervyn Horder.
Mr Erwin Stein.
Mr Derek Young.
Mr Basil Douglas, (General Manager).

In attendance: Mr Basil Coleman (Artistic Director).
Mr Eric Walter-White (Arts Council Assessor).
Mr Lewlie Periton.
Mr Harold Wallis.

1. The MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting held on October 5th, 1948 were agreed and signed; unfortunately it had not been possible to trace the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on March 1st, 1950.

2. On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mr David Higham, the Directors Reports and Balance Sheets, and Profit and Loss Accounts for each of the three years ending 31st December, 1949, 31st December, 1950 and 31st December 1951, which had been duly circulated to the members of the Company, were adopted unanimously.

3. The following members of the Board, who retired by rotation, were individually re-elected upon a separate motion in each case.

Mr Isador Caplan.
Sir Kenneth Clark, K.C.B.
Mr Anthony Gishford.
The Hon. Mervyn Horder.
Sir Arthur Jarratt.
Mr J. H. Lawrie.
Mr Denis Rickett.
Mr Derek Young.
Mr Erwin Stein.

4. The continuance in office of the Auditors, Messrs. A. T. Chenhalls, & Co., and the payment of their fees, was confirmed.

5. A report on the work of the English Opera Group Association was given by its Chairman, Mr Derek Young. He particularly commended the assistance of Miss Beatrice Musson, (Hon. Secretary), Mr Harold Wallis, (Hon. Treasurer) and the other members of the Committee.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP, LTD.

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, held at 27, Soho Square, London, W.1., on Thursday, 15th May, 1952, at 11.30 a.m.

Present: President: The Rt.Hon. The Earl of Harewood.

Directors: Mr J. H. Lawrie (in the Chair).
Mr Isador Caplan.
Mr Anthony Gishford.
The Hon. Mervyn Horder.
Sir Arthur Jarratt.
Mr Erwin Stein.
Mr Derek Young.

Artistic Director: Mr Basil Coleman.

Assessor to Arts Council: Mr Eric Walter White.

In attendance: Mr Basil Douglas.
Mr Leslie Periton.
Mr Harold Wallis.

1. The MINUTES of the previous meeting were approved and signed.

2. ACCOUNTS:

The Accounts for 1950 and 1951 having been duly audited were finally approved by the Board.

3. RESIGNATION OF THE HON. JAMES F. A. SMITH.

The Hon. James F. A. Smith's resignation from the Board was accepted with regret. The Chairman had written to Mr Smith, expressing the thanks of the Directors and Company for the assistance he had given.

4. FESTIVALS:

The General Manager reported that discussions were proceeding for the promotion of Festivals in Lowestoft and Henley-on-Thames, and also in either Barnstaple or Exeter.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

Estimates of the possible financial liabilities of these proposals had been circulated and were discussed by the Board. It was agreed that a sub-committee consisting of the Chairman, Sir Arthur Jarratt, and the General Manager should meet to consider ways and means of raising the necessary revenue to finance these proposals.

6. BORROWING FACILITIES:

The General Manager was authorised to seek bank overdraft facilities up to £2,000. for current expenditure.

7. CLUB PREMISES:

The General Manager reported a recommendation from the Artistic Directors that a search should be made for premises comprising if possible:-

- (a). A centre for the activities of the Group and the association.
- (b). Rehearsal rooms, workshops, and a store for the scenery.
- (c). A small theatre.

- (d). A club Room with facilities for a bar and light refreshments.
- (e). Offices.

The Board thought it unlikely that all these facilities could be found under the same roof in a suitable locality, but approved the proposal in principle.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP, LTD.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS held at 27, Soho Square, London, W.1., at 11.0 a.m. on Tuesday 24th June, 1952.

Present:-

President: The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Harewood.

Directors: Mr J. H. Lawrie, (In the Chair).

Mr Anthony Gishford.

The Hon. Mervyn Horder.

Mr Erwin Stein.

Mr Derek Young.

Mr Isador Caplan.

In attendance: Mr Basil Douglas.

Mr Leslie Periton.

Mr Harold Wallis.

Apologies were received from Mr Eric Walter White, Sir Arthur Jarratt, Sir Kenneth Clark, and the Artistic Directors.

1. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed.

2. SIR KENNETH CLARK:

The Board noted with warm satisfaction the appointment of Sir Kenneth Clark as Chairman of the Arts Council.

3. APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR:

The Chairman reported that he had discussed with Sir Arthur Jarratt at Aldeburgh the future financial position of the Group. They were both agreed that financial assistance might be forthcoming from Mr F. Sekers, who had already given considerable practical support to Glyndebourne. The General Manager was instructed to ask Sir Arthur Jarratt to discuss with Mr Sekers - (a) whether he approved of the aims and achievements of the English Opera Group, and (b) if this was the case whether he would consider an invitation to join the Board, with the special object of raising money for the Group.

4. CANONBURY TOWER:

The Chairman reported that the Artistic Directors were most enthusiastic about the premises at Canonbury Tower, which were available to let for a minimum period of five and a maximum period of seventeen years. There were facilities for offices, club rooms and rehearsal rooms, including a large hall which might eventually become a small theatre and could also be used for concerts and Association activities; it was also hoped that the Opera Studio would find a home there. There was a schoolroom available close at hand which would be suitable for a store and workshop. The Artistic Directors attached great importance to this scheme, which in their view would enable the Group to develop and expand in a way that was impossible at present.

The General Manager had drafted a proposition which showed that although the anticipated Income and Expenditure account should approximately balance, it would be necessary to find the sum of up to £2,000. in order to put the premises in working condition.

After considerable discussion, the Directors came reluctantly but firmly to the conclusion that the proposition could not be justified.

It would be imprudent to use the Company's funds for this purpose while there were competing and prior claims on our already slender resources. At this critical period of our history when we were seeking overdraft facilities from the bank and had no definite engagements, it would appear unwise to the Guarantors, not to mention the Arts Council and other supporters of the Group, if the Board were to sanction a large capital expenditure for purposes not directly concerned with the Group's activities. In addition, the Bank did not feel justified in sanctioning (a) a lease of at least five years and (b) asking for personal guarantees of the rent, both of which would be necessary.

The Board appreciated the strong desire of the Artistic Directors to acquire premises of this kind and regretted their inability to give them the necessary practical support. They would be very willing to reconsider the matter if more favourable proposals should be forthcoming, and the Secretary was instructed to keep the negotiations open if possible.

5. STORE:

The Secretary was instructed to open negotiations for the schoolroom close to Canonbury Tower to be used as a scenery store and workshop.

6. FESTIVALS, 1953:

The period July 4th to 12th was now suggested for a Festival at Exeter; September 5th to 12th for a Festival at Lowestoft. There was nothing further to report about Henley-on-Thames.