

THE - ENGLISH - OPERA - GROUP - LIMITED.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS held at 27, Soho Square, London, W.1., at 11.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 28th April, 1953.

Present: President: 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 Nicholas Sekers.
Mr Derek Young.
Artistic Director: Mr Basil Coleman.
Assessor to Arts Council: Mr John Denison.
In attendance: Mr Basil Douglas.
Mr Leslie Periton.
Mr Harold Wallis.

1. The Chairman welcomed to the Board Mr Nicholas Sekers, and also Mr John Denison, who would in future act as Arts Council Assessor in place of Mr Eric Walter White.

2. MINUTES:

The MINUTES of the previous meeting were approved and agreed.

3. DIRECTORS:

(a). The Board accepted with regret the resignation of Sir Kenneth Clark, because of his appointment as Chairman of The Arts Council of Great Britain. Sir Kenneth was one of the original Directors of the Group and was indeed the first Chairman of the Board. His services to the Group had been of the greatest value.

(b). The appointment to the Board of Mr Nicholas Sekers was confirmed, and the Secretary reported that he had received an application for membership of the Company from Mr Sekers as a "B" member, and it was resolved to accept him as a "B" member of the Company.

(c). The Secretary further reported that Sir Arthur Jarratt and Mr Derek Young who had been appointed by the Board last year, together with Mr Nicholas Sekers would retire from the Board at the next Annual General Meeting. As they were all prepared to offer themselves for re-election it was decided not to make any other nomination.

With regard to the remainder of the Board, it was necessary for a system of retirement by rotation to be re-introduced.

It was resolved that the following order of retirement should be put into effect:-

For 1953 - Mr Isador Caplan, Mr Anthony Gishford and
The Hon. Mervyn Horder.
For 1954 - Mr J. H. Lawrie, Mr Denis Rickett and
Mr Erwin Stein.
For 1955 - Sir Arthur Jarratt, Mr Derek Young and
Mr Nicholas Sekers.

As Mr Caplan, Mr Gishford and Mr Horder were all willing to offer themselves for re-election, it was decided not to make any other nomination.

4. ACCOUNTS:

The Draft Accounts for the year 1952 had been circulated and it was agreed:-

- (a). That the Scenery and Costumes be written down to £100. each.
- (b). That the musical instruments be subject to 20% depreciation.
- (c). That the amount of £ in respect of the cost of the Musical Material of "The Sleeping Children" be written off.

With these amendments the Accounts were approved, subject to audit.

5. DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR 1952:

A draft of the report had been circulated and the Chairman invited comments. Mr Caplan agreed to re-word the paragraphs relating (a) to the resignation and election of Directors, and (b) to the Accounts, and Sir Arthur Jarratt proposed that at the end of paragraph 4 relating to Concerts, thanks should be expressed to the advertisers who had supported the Group by taking space in programmes. This proposal was agreed, and the draft report was then approved.

6. THE ARTS COUNCIL:

The Chairman reported that the Arts Council's offer of £4,000. for the year ending 31st March 1954 had been accepted. He asked Mr Denison if the Arts Council would consider a special increase of this grant in order to allow the financial year of the Group to run concurrently with that of the Arts Council. Mr Denison agreed that this would be a convenient arrangement and promised to enquire whether it was practicable.

7. PUBLICITY:

The General Manager asked for authority to issue a new leaflet giving up-to-date information about the Group's aims and achievements. Authority was given, subject to a maximum cost of £200. It was agreed that copies of this leaflet should be sent to the Managing Directors of the firms who had taken advertising space during the year, with a personal letter of thanks.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP, LTD.

MEMORANDUM by the General Manager of a Meeting at Southcorner Cottage, Instow, North Devon on Saturday, 18th July.

Present:- Mr Benjamin Britten.
Mr Basil Coleman.
Mr Basil Douglas.
Mr Peter Pears.
Miss Anne Wood.

"POLLY":-

1. Stage Production:- The Artistic Directors had recently re-examined the libretto, and it was their opinion that the stageworthiness of "Polly" was doubtful, and that before incurring the cost of its production we should proceed with the broadcasts in January, and then reconsider.

2. Producer for Broadcast:- In consideration of the B.B.C's request for a production "conceived in terms of sound", it was resolved to propose Martyn C. Webster. If this was agreed by those concerned, John Addison to be put in touch with Martyn Webster and Norman Del Mar at once, and requested to proceed with his new musical version.

1954 SEASON:-

SCHWETZINGEN: "The Rape of Lucretia" (mid-May) Conductor Krips, if possible.

TAW & TORRIDGE: We could offer the following dates:-

May 22nd - 30th.
July 10th - 18th.
October 16th - 24th.

We could offer the following repertoire:-

"Love in a Village".
"Combattimento" & "Acis and Galatea", (Handel-Gay).
"Turn of the Screw" (October only).
Concerts.

Note by B. Douglas. The rehearsal problems should be thoroughly examined before any final decision is taken about repertoire.

ALDEBURGH: "The Rape of Lucretia" (2 performances).
New one-act Opera by Lennox Berkeley, plus another piece, ?"Savitri" and/or "Acis & Galatea"

N.B. "Savitri" would be paid for by The Friends of Aldeburgh.

YORK:- June "The Rape of Lucretia" (2 performances).
27th - July "Love in a Village" or "The Beggar's Opera"
3rd. (2 performances) (choice dependent on cost).
Opera Concert and/or "Façade".
Recital by Peter and Ben.

VENICE:- "The Turn of the Screw". (Rehearsals begin
September 12th August 9th in Aldeburgh.
and 14th.

SADLER'S WELLS:- Negotiations are pending for a season of either two or three weeks ending Saturday 11th October. Subject to a satisfactory contract, it was decided to propose the following repertoire:-

(a). Two weeks: (12 evenings).

"The Turn of the Screw" (4).
"Berkeley one-act Opera plus "Acis & Galatea" (2).
"The Beggar's Opera" (4).
"Love in a Village" (2).

(b). Three weeks: (18 evening - 3 matinees).

"The Turn of the Screw" (5).

"The Rape of Lucretia" (2/3 depending on Conductor).

"The Beggar's Opera" (3/4 depending on number of

"Lucretia" performances) & Galatea" (2).

Berkeley Opera plus "Acis & Galatea" (6).

N.B. A three-week season will probably depend on the cooperation of Krips (for "Lucretia") and Cranko. Other conductors proposed - Brittsn, Del Mar, Sacher or Markievitch.

LOWESTOFT:- Only possible dates now October 16th - 24th.

Repertoire:- "The Turn of the Screw".
"Love in a Village" and/or
"Acis & Galatea".
Concerts.

PROVINCIAL CONCERTS, 1954:-

It is unlikely that either Ben or Peter would be free for Provincial Concerts in 1954, but we should try and arrange some if possible, with other artists.

N.B.:- Peter will probably not be available:-

April 18th - May 1st.

June 5th - 12th (St. Ives).

July 19th - August 7th (holiday).

Ben will probably be available for 1/2 concerts in The Taw and Torridge and York Festivals.

"THE TURN OF THE SCREW": The General Manager was instructed to contract the following for the period August 9th to October 16th, 1954.

Jennifer Vyvyan (Governess).
Joan Cross (Housekeeper).
Arda Mandikian (Miss Jessel).
Peter Pears (Quint).
Doreen Orme (Flora).

"THE RAPE OF LUCRETIA": Arda Mandikian and Alexander Young were suggested as possibles for the parts of Female Chorus and Male Chorus respectively.

TAW & TORRIDGE FESTIVAL: It was the opinion of those present that if the Festival Council wishes, the Group would approve the idea (a) of an Artistic Direction consisting of Ronald Duncan plus one other of their choice, and the Group; and (b) of a different Chairman, preferably not an artist. The Group was in no position to insist, however, nor did it desire to do so.

"ACIS AND GALATEA": To be done with a simple set, three soloists, (not Peter) a child, (Damon) and a local choral society.

23rd July, 1953.

DRAFT:

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS held at 44, Brook Street, London, W.1., at 11.30 a.m. on Friday, 27th November, 1953.

PRESENT:- Directors: Mr J. H. Lawrie (In the Chair).
Mr Isador Caplan.
Mr Anthony Gishford.
The Hon. Mervyn Horder.
Mr Erwin Stein.
Mr Derek Young.

Artistic Directors: Miss Anne Wood.
Mr Basil Coleman.

Assessor to Arts Council: Mr John Denison.

In Attendance: Mr Basil Douglas.
Mr Harold Wallis.

1. APOLOGIES were received from the President, Sir Arthur Jarratt, and Mr Nicholas Sekers.

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

3. ACCOUNTS:

The Chairman reported that the Accounts for the year ending December 31st, 1952, were now with the Auditors, and that it would be possible to hold the Annual General Meeting at the end of December 1953, or at the beginning of January, 1954.

4. THE ARTS COUNCIL:

Referring to Number 6 of the Minutes, the Chairman reported that he had been informed by the Arts Council that it would not be practicable to make a special increase of their Grant in order to allow the financial year of the Group to run concurrently with that of the Arts Council.

5. THE GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT:

A Report by the General Manager was laid on the table, enumerating the activities of the Group during the current year, and showing the financial aspects of the proposed programme for 1954. Arising from the Report:-

(a). Concerts at the Victoria & Albert Museum: In view of Benjamin Britten's persistent bursitis, the General Manager was instructed to approach another artist who could take his place in the concerts on January 24th and March 7th, in case he should be unable to appear. The possibility of cancellation should also be considered.

(b). "The Turn of the Screw": Mr Caplan reported that there were difficulties in the way of securing the operatic rights in Henry James' story, and described the steps taken to discover the person or persons who were in a position to give the Group permission to perform Benjamin Britten's opera. The Board expressed confidence in Mr Caplan's ability to clear up the matter satisfactorily, although it was realised that there might be some delay.

(c). The English Opera Group Association: Referring to the Group's expectation of a grant from the Association of £2,000. in 1954, Mr Young undertook to ask his committee to make a definite promise of this amount, so that the General Manager could proceed with the Group's programme as outlined in the Report.

6. PROPOSAL THAT THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE KATHLEEN FERRIER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

It was agreed to postpone discussion of this proposal until the next meeting.

7. THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

Three days were convenient to those present for the Annual General Meeting:-

Thursday, 31st December, 1953.

Tuesday, 5th January, 1954.

Wednesday, 6th January, 1954.

The General Manager was instructed to arrange the Meeting at 11.0 a.m. on the day which best suited the President and the other Directors. It would be followed by a Meeting of the Board.

1st December, 1953.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP, LIMITED.

MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS on Friday,
27th November, 1953, at 44, Brook Street,
London, W.1. at 11.30 a.m.

REPORT by the General Manager.

I propose to divide my report into two halves, as follows:-

- A. Activities during 1953.
- B. Plans for future activities, until mid-October 1954.

A. ACTIVITIES DURING 1953:-

1. CONCERTS AT THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM. Five Concerts were given during the season 1952/1953, which were successful artistically and made valuable publicity both for the Group and for the Association, whose membership they undoubtedly succeeded in stimulating. Financially the result was somewhat disappointing - there was a net loss of £215.

2. CONCERT READING OF THE OPERA "NELSON" by LENNOX BERKELEY. This was organised by the Group for the Association and given on February 14th in the Wigmore Hall before a very crowded and enthusiastic audience. Great interest was aroused in the London musical world, and it may be said that it is directly due to the Group's efforts that the Directors of Sadler's Wells have decided to stage it next season. I understand that there was a loss of £32. 10s. Od.

3. CONCERTS IN THE PROVINCES. Opera Concerts were given in Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle, and Nottingham on April 15th, 17th, 20th and 22nd. Audiences were on the whole less numerous than for the 1952 concerts, but they were all enthusiastic and provided useful propaganda for the Group and also for the Association. They showed a net profit of nearly £850.

4. WIESBADEN MAIFESTSPIELE. On May 9th and 10th the Group gave two performances of "Albert Herring" in the Wiesbaden Festival, with the composer conducting. The reception by both audiences and critics was all that could be desired. The actual running costs at Wiesbaden showed a profit of over £900, which more than covered the reproduction costs of "Albert Herring" (£840).

5. ALDEBURGH FESTIVAL. A performance of "Albert Herring" was given on June 20th. The Group's contribution to the Festival this year was considerably curtailed, as Aldeburgh's sufferings in the period of the floods had led to a serious reduction in the funds available for this Festival. The running costs, excluding any charge for management or reproduction costs, were covered.

6. TAW AND TORRIDGE FESTIVAL, July 11th - 20th. Stimulated and artistically directed by the Group, the first Taw and Torridge Festival was considered a genuine success by the Devonians and a valuable contribution to their artistic life. Perhaps the best evidence of this reaction is that they are already well ahead with their plans for next year's Festival (July 31st - August 8th).

The Group provided several concerts, three performances of "Let's Make an Opera!" with local children, and three performances of "The Beggar's Opera" in an entirely new production by Michael Langham. This production will be seen at Sadler's Wells in 1954.

Re-production costs for both operas:	£2,476.
Running costs at Barnstaple:	£2,166.
Fee received from the Festival:	£2,634.

7. CONCERT IN THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, NOVEMBER 17th. On this occasion the Group presented "Façade", with our own curtain designed by John Piper, and the first English performance of Stravinsky's Cantata (1952). The audience was disappointingly small, (threats of fog in the press during the day did not help the takings at the doors) but with the help of the advertisements procured through the kind efforts of Sir Arthur Jarratt, the Group managed to show a profit. This concert was relayed by the B.B.C. and there was a studio broadcast of the same programme three days later.

The total receipts, including £592 for advertisements amounted to..... £1,176.
The expenses were..... £934.
Net profit..... £242.

B. FUTURE ACTIVITIES:-

1. CONCERTS IN THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM. The Group has decided to limit the number of concerts to four this season; they will be given on December 6th, January 24th, March 7th and April 25th, and details have already been circulated to the Board.

2. "POLLY". On December 28th 1953 and January 1st 1954 the Group will be presented by the B.B.C. in two performances of the Ballad Opera "Polly", in a new musical version commissioned from John Addison.

3. CONCERT READING OF THE OPERA "CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE" BY WILFRID MELLERS.

On Thursday, February 4th the Group is organising for the Association a concert reading of another new opera, again in the hope of stimulating public interest in a stage production. The singers will include April Cantelo, Barbara Howitt, Peter Pears and Norman Lumsden, and the performance will be repeated next day in Birmingham.

4. SCHWETZINGEN FESTIVAL. On May 8th and 9th the Group has accepted an invitation to present "The Rape of Lucretia" at Schwetzingen.

5. ALDEBURGH FESTIVAL, June 12th - 20th. During this Festival the Group has agreed to give two performances of "The Rape of Lucretia", two performances of "Love in a Village" and two of a new one-act opera by Lennox Berkeley, commissioned by the Group.

6. THE OPERA BALL, June 22nd. The Opera Ball will take place in the Royal Festival Hall and will this year be organised for the Association by the Opera Group.

7. YORK FESTIVAL, June 28th - July 3rd. The Group has agreed to give three performances each of "The Rape of Lucretia", "Love in a Village" and the new opera by Lennox Berkeley; an opera concert; and a concert including "Façade".

8. TAW AND TORRIDGE FESTIVAL, July 31st - August 8th. The Group has been invited to give performances of "The Rape of Lucretia" and several concerts.

9. VENICE FESTIVAL, September 13th and 15th. These are the dates now agreed for the first two performances of "The Turn of the Screw" by Benjamin Britten.

10. SADLER'S WELLS SEASON, October 4th - 16th. It is planned to present:-

- "The Turn of the Screw;" 4 performances.
- "The Beggar's Opera;" 4 performances.
- "The Rape of Lucretia;" 3 performances.
- Berkeley Opera: 3 performances.
- "Love in a Village:" 3 performances.

11. THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP ASSOCIATION. In addition to the Concert Reading and Opera Ball, the Association has arranged other activities which include illustrated lectures in the Drawing-Room of The Arts Council, and are again arranging an entertainment by the students of the Opera School at their Annual General Meeting in March, 1954.

PROPOSED PROGRAMME for the year ending December 31st, 1954.

This programme is placed before the Directors to enable them to review the financial aspects of the Group's position during 1954.

	<u>Financial Prospects.</u>	<u>Profit.</u>	<u>Loss.</u>
1. Concerts in the Victoria & Albert Museum.	Small profit.	£50.	-
2. Schwetzingen Festival, (May 8th & 9th).	Reproduction & running costs covered by fee.	£200.	-
3. Aldeburgh Festival, (June 12th - 20th). "Love in a Village". Lennox Berkeley Opera.	Loss on running costs. Re-production costs. Production costs.		£100. £750. £1,500.
4. York Festival, (June 28th - July 3rd).	Running costs covered.	-	-
5. Taw & Torridge Festival. (July 31st - August 8th).	Loss on running costs.		£100.
6. Venice Festival, (September 13th & 15th). "The Turn of the Screw".	Production costs & running costs more than covered by fee.	£500.	
7. Sadler's Wells, (October 4th - 16th).	Reproduction costs. Estimated loss. Running costs - approx. £4,000. Estimated takings on 50% capacity - £3,168. Estimated takings on 66 2/3% capacity - £4,160.		£1,000. £500.

It will be seen from the above that our estimated expenses for 1954 may be said to be:-

	£.
Production Costs of the new Berkeley opera.	1,500.
Reproduction costs: "The Beggar's Opera".	1,000.
"Love in a Village".	750.
Loss at Sadler's Wells.	500.
Overhead costs.	3,000.
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	£6,750.
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At the moment we are anticipating the following income:-

Arts Council.	4,000.
English Opera Group Association.	2,000.
Venice Festival.	500.
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	£6,500.
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There remains an estimated excess of expenditure over income of £250.

25th November, 1953:

Basil Douglas - General Manager.