

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED.

MINUTES of the FOURTH GENERAL MEETING held at 44, Brook Street, London, W.1., on Tuesday 5th January, 1954.

PRESENT: Members: Mr J. H. Lawrie (Chairman).  
Mr Isador Caplan.  
Mr Anthony Gishford.  
Mr David Higham.  
Mr Erwin Stein.  
Mr Derek Young.  
Mr Basil Douglas (General Manager).

In attendance: Mr John Denison (Arts Council Assessor).  
Mr Leslie Periton.  
Mr Harold Wallis.

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

2. THE MINUTES of the last meeting were approved and signed.

3. On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mr Anthony Gishford, the Directors' Report, Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Accounts for the year ending 31st December, 1952, which had been duly circulated to the members of the Company, were adopted unanimously.

4. (a). The following Directors were severally re-elected.

Sir Arthur Jarratt.  
Mr Nicholas Sekers.  
Mr Derek Young.

(b). The following Directors, who retired by rotation, were severally re-elected.

Mr Isador Caplan.  
Mr Anthony Gishford.  
The Hon. Mervyn Horder.

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

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS held at 44, Brook Street, London, W.1. at 11.0 a.m. on Tuesday, 5th January, 1954.

Present: Directors: Mr J. H. Lawrie (In the Chair).  
Mr Isador Caplan.  
Mr Anthony Gishford.  
Mr Erwin Stein.  
Mr Derek Young.

Assessor to Arts

Council: Mr John Denison.

In Attendance: Mr Basil Douglas.  
Mr Leslie Periton.  
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. THE ARTS COUNCIL:

Referring to No. 4 of the Minutes, the Chairman reported that he had re-opened the question of a special increase of the Arts Council's Grant in order to allow the financial year of the Group to run concurrently with that of the Arts Council, and hoped for a favourable reply in due course.

4. "THE TURN OF THE SCREW":

Referring to No. 5 (a) of the Minutes, Mr Caplan was still hopeful that the copyright difficulties would be cleared up satisfactorily, but feared that further delay was unavoidable. The General Manager pointed out that the Venice Festival were now anxious to announce the opera, and Mr Denis proposed that a notice of the performances in Venice and London should be sent to the possible claimants of royalties, declaring that a sum of £100. would be paid into a special fund to cover all royalties on the performances at Venice and Sadler's Wells this year, pending a final decision on which persons were entitled to them, and asking for their immediate agreement to these particular performances without prejudice to any subsequent performances. This proposal was adopted subject to Mr Caplan being satisfied that it was legally effective.

5. THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP ASSOCIATION:

Referring to No. 5 (b) of the Minutes, the Chairman reported that Mr Young had written to assure him that the Association's grant to the Group of £2,000. would be forthcoming.

6. ADVERTISEMENT REVENUE:

The General Manager asked for the Board's assistance in obtaining advertisement revenue for:-

- (a). The Programme of the Opera Ball, June 22nd, 1954.
- (b). The Programme of the Sadler's Wells Season, October 4th - 16th, 1954.

Sir Arthur Jarratt had already undertaken to find £500. by way of revenue for the Sadler's Wells Season, and the General Manager expressed the hope that Mr Sekers might be able to find a similar amount for the Opera Ball. Several other suggestions were made and the General Manager was instructed to proceed accordingly.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED

2.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS held at 44, Brook Street, London, W. 1, on 11.9.58 on Tuesday.

7. TJE KATHLEEN FERRIER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND:

Leaflets outlining the scope and purpose of this fund were laid on the table. It was agreed that the Group probably could not apply money granted out of public funds for a particular purpose to be used for another purpose such as a contribution to this Fund. Mr Gishford proposed nevertheless that every possible assistance should be given to the Fund in other ways, e.g.

1. Advertising the Fund in the Group's concert programmes.
2. Asking the Association to circulate leaflets of the Fund to its members.
3. Making collections whenever possible.
4. Buying advertising space in the programme of the concert at the Royal Festival Hall in May, to be given in aid of this Fund.

This proposal was carried unanimously, and the General Manager was instructed to put it into effect.

8. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:

To be arranged by the General Manager at a time most convenient to those primarily concerned with the business to be discussed.

"THE TURN OF THE SCREW"

THE - ENGLISH - OPERA - GROUP - LIMITED.

MINUTES of the MEETING of THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS held at 11, Mansfield Street., London, W.1. at 11.0 a.m. on Tuesday, 6th April, 1954.

PRESENT:-

President: The Earl of Harewood.

Directors: Mr J. H. Lawrie (In the Chair).  
Mr Isador Caplan.  
Mr Erwin Stein.  
The Hon. T. A. Horder.  
Mr Derek Young.

Artistic

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

Assessor to the

Arts Council: Mr John Denison.

In attendance:

Mr Basil Douglas.  
Mr Leslie Periton.  
Mr Harold Wallis.

1. APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Mr Anthony Gishford, Sir Arthur Jarratt and Mr Nicholas Sekers.

2. MINUTES: The MINUTES of the previous Meeting were approved and signed.

3. ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

(a). KATHLEEN FERRIER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND: It was reported that the Group had made considerable propaganda on behalf of the Fund and had bought advertising space in the programme of the concert at the Royal Festival Hall on May 7th, to be given in aid of this Fund.

(b). ADVERTISING REVENUE - OPERA BALL: It was reported that the response to the General Manager's appeal for assistance in obtaining advertising revenue for the Opera Ball on June 22nd, had so far been very small. He would welcome further suggestions.

(c). "THE TURN OF THE SCREW": Mr Caplan reported that the copyright situation was now clear as far as performances scheduled in 1954 were concerned. Dollars equivalent to about £100 were required to meet expenses in New York, and Mr Caplan was authorised to settle these expenses. It should then be possible to obtain the necessary rights to give further performances and make a gramophone recording.

4. COVENT GARDEN:

The Chairman gave an outline of recent discussions with representatives of the Group and the Arts Council: he had asked them to consider whether it was possible and desirable that financial responsibility for the Group should be taken over by Covent Garden. These talks had encouraged him to arrange a further meeting with Mr David Webster and representatives of The Arts Council, at which the idea was fully discussed although no proposal or resolution had been formulated. Mr Webster had seen certain objections, but had spoken warmly of the Group's achievements, and declared himself willing to consider the matter further and discuss it with Lord Harewood and Mr Britten at the next opportunity.

5. THE ARTS COUNCIL GRANT:

The Chairman reported that the £4,000 grant offered by The Arts Council was £1,500 less than the amount requested for the year 1954 and £1,450 less than the estimated cost of the 1954 programme. £250 could be found by cutting out the proposed commission for the new opera; this left an amount of £1,200 to be found some other way. The only prospect he could see of this amount being reduced lay in the possibility of the 50% of capacity estimate for the Sadler's Wells season being unduly pessimistic.

It seemed to him that the Board was driven to select one of three courses:-

- (a). to abandon the season at Sadler's Wells (estimated deficit £1,300);
- (b). to abandon the re-production of "The Beggar's Opera" (estimated cost £1,000);
- (c). to reduce the running cost at Venice and/or the production cost of "The Turn of the Screw".

Mr Britten asked that no reduction should be made in the costs of "The Turn of the Screw" which might result in the artists receiving less than their proper fees. Some of these artists had worked for the Group in the past for very low fees indeed, and as this was one of the rare occasions when the Group itself would be paid a substantial fee, it was only right that the artists should benefit accordingly.

Mr Coleman said that the Sadler's Wells programme was well balanced and would suffer greatly without "The Beggar's Opera".

The general opinion of the meeting was that it would be most undesirable to abandon the Sadler's Wells season especially as a contract had already been made with Sadler's Wells, and that it was vital not to present an inferior production at the Venice Festival.

The General Manager said that he expected to have full information during the next week or so on which he could base a revised estimate of the costs of "The Turn of the Screw", and he would then be in a position to say whether an appreciable saving could be made without reducing the artists' fees or endangering the quality of the production.

The Chairman then pointed out that it seemed to be the unanimous opinion of the Board, the Artistic Directors, and Mr Denison that the Sadler's Wells season must not be cancelled; that, though there might be some incidental savings as the result of the revised estimate, the quality of the Venice production must not be endangered; that the estimate of 50% of capacity for the Sadler's Wells season could perhaps be raised to 66 2/3rds, but that this would not be sound budgeting; and that therefore the cancellation of "The Beggar's Opera" must be seriously considered, even though it was the view of the Artistic Directors and of the Sadler's Wells management that from a box-office point of view this was an essential part of the season's programme.

The Chairman suggested to Mr Denison that, if The Arts Council agreed that the only big cut that could be made in the programme was one that would have a damaging effect not only on the Group but also on Sadler's Wells, they would doubtless wish to join the Group in seeking to avoid this. He therefore invited Mr Denison to ask his Council whether they would:-

- (a). make the Grant £4,750 instead of £4,000, thus filling half the gap and leaving the Group to fill the other half by omitting the commission for a new opera and effecting other small savings.
- or
- (b). invite the Group to alter the basis of the estimate for the Sadler's Wells season from 50% of capacity to 66 2/3% and guarantee the Group against any shortfall as a result of this revision (50% of capacity being estimated at £3,200, this would entail a maximum liability of £1,066).

The Chairman added that, if the Arts Council were unable to find any money required in this way during their current year, he had no doubt that some of the directors of the Group would guarantee a bank overdraft until the 1st April 1955.

6. THE DRAFT ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31st 1953 had been circulated to the Board. Mr Periton agreed that the whole of the Arts Council Grant could be brought into the year's Accounts provided that the Arts Council amended their letter of 19th March, 1953, to make clear that, although the grant related to the Arts Council year ended 31st March, 1954, it was given in respect of the English Opera Group's year ended 31st December 1953.

On the assumption that the full Arts Council grant would be brought into the accounts for the year ended 31st December, 1953, it was resolved that the Balance Sheet valuation of the scenery and properties, and of the costumes, be written down to £100 each.

Subject to that writing-down, and subject to audit, the draft accounts were approved.

7. THE DRAFT DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1953, which had also been circulated, was approved.

8. THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING was fixed for Wednesday, 9th June 1954 at 12.15 p.m. at 11, Mansfield Street, London, W.1. It would be preceded at 11.30 a.m. by a meeting of the Board of Directors.

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15th April, 1954.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED.

MINUTES of the MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
held at 11, Mansfield Street, London, W.1., at  
11.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 9th June, 1954.

PRESENT:

Directors: Mr. J.H. Lawrie (in the Chair)  
Mr. Isador Caplan  
Mr. Anthony Gishford  
Mr. Erwin Stein  
Mr. Derek Young

Artistic Directors: Mr. Basil Coleman

Assessor to the  
Arts Council: Mr. John Denison (part of time)

In attendance: Mr. Basil Douglas  
Mr. Peter Pears  
Mr. Leslie Periton  
Mrs. Myfanwy Piper  
Mr. Harold Wallis

1. APOLOGIES. Apologies were received from the President, Mr. Mervyn Horder, Sir Arthur Jarratt, Mr. Nicholas Sekers and Miss Wood. The Chairman had invited Mrs. Piper to represent Mr. Piper, and Mr. Peter Pears to represent Mr. Britten, as they were personally unable to attend the Meeting.

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

3. SEASON AT SADLER'S WELLS. Revised estimates based on the latest information available of the production costs of "The Turn of the Screw", "Love in a Village", "A Dinner Engagement" and "The Beggar's Opera" were presented, which were all higher than the previous estimates, and would result in an estimated deficit of £1,260 if "The Beggar's Opera" was dropped, and of rather more if "The Beggar's Opera" was retained in the Sadler's Wells programme.

The difficulty in the way of dropping "The Beggar's Opera" was that the Group were already committed to contracts to the extent of £1,000, so that the estimated deficit would not in effect be increased by its omission. On the other hand, its inclusion would increase the chances of larger receipts for all the operas. In addition, heavy expenditure and commitments had already been incurred on the remaining operas, so that an abandonment of the Group's programme was both impracticable and likely to involve even heavier losses. After considering all possible alternatives, it was unanimously decided to proceed with "The Beggar's Opera" and with the Sadler's Wells Season as planned, as also the Group's other performances, and to make any reductions in the estimated costs of the productions that might prove possible.

When Mr. Denison joined the Meeting, the Chairman outlined the difficulties facing the Board, and appealed to him to represent them to his Council as strongly as he felt able. The Group was proposing to present a programme at Sadler's Wells of which it had every reason to feel proud, and which would inevitably incur a deficit. The costs of presenting opera were continuing to rise, but the grant from the Arts Council remained the same. If the Council shared the Board's views as to the importance of the Group's work, he exhorted them to increase their grant to a sum

more commensurate with our needs, and he particularly asked Mr. Denison to discuss the Group's general problems with his Council in the early autumn, so that the Council's attitude could be known in advance of the preparation of the next season's programme. Mr. Denison promised to do as the Chairman asked, and felt sure that our problems would be given the most sympathetic consideration.

4. CUSTOMS BOND.

IT WAS RESOLVED:-

- (a) to seal a Customs' Bond in respect of the re-import of the scenery recently sent to Schwetzingen.
- (b) that the Company's Seal be affixed to any other Customs' Bonds required from time to time for the re-import of scenery sent abroad on the occasion of any future foreign presentations, the Board to be notified at its next ensuing Meeting.



Memorandum by the General Manager of the Meeting  
of the Artistic Directors, assisted by Peter  
Pears and Mrs. Piper, at Chester Gate on October  
7th 1954 at 10.30 a.m.

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PROGRAMME FOR NEXT SEASON.

Under consideration were:

1. A new production of "Dido & Aeneas". It was unanimously agreed by those present that if "Dido & Aeneas" was to be given again by the Group
  - a) the Fedorovitch scenery and costumes would have to be scrapped and an entirely new production undertaken. According to the General Manager's rough estimate this would cost approximately £4,500.
  - b) they considered that a new production should only be undertaken if it was likely to be something distinguished and characteristic of the Group's work, and that it should not be put into the repertoire simply because there were certain demands for it abroad. There was likely to be very little demand for it in England.
  - c) it was felt that "Dido" should only be remounted if we were sure of a distinguished cast, and unless a suitable Dido was found, this was at best doubtful.

The general opinion, therefore, was against a new production of this opera.

2. Re-production of "A Dinner Engagement" (estimated at £1,000). The Artistic Directors discussed the possibility of a double bill with this opera and "Dido & Aeneas", and decided against it on both artistic and economic grounds. They hoped that "A Dinner Engagement" might be revived next year but no suitable suggestion for an important work to go with it was forthcoming.

3. Re-production of "The Turn of the Screw" In view of the undoubted success of this opera, it was felt that it should be exploited to the utmost during 1955 and that in fact it should be the principal, if not the only offering, made to Festivals abroad. As we had had expressions of strong interest from both Schwetzingen and Wiesbaden for May 1955, it was possible that one of them would be prepared to have "The Turn of the Screw", if not both. The chances of a tour in Italy would be correspondingly weaker, as La Pigna, our Italian agent, considered "Dido" to be essential.

4. Re-production of "The Little Sweep" Negotiations were in progress with Decca for a recording of "The Little Sweep" after Easter 1955, and as the fees from this recording might reasonably pay for part of the re-production costs, a revival of "The Little Sweep" might well be possible.

5. New Production. With "The Little Sweep" Mr. Britten said that he would like to write a new children's opera for the same resources and that he hoped to obtain private

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backing for the re-production costs. This double-bill might be given at Aldeburgh and at other places in England if required, but probably not abroad. A Christmas season in London could be considered.

6. Sadler's Wells. Before the opening night of the current season at Sadler's Wells, a cordial invitation had been extended to the Group to pay another visit next June. It was reluctantly decided that it must be turned down, as the principal artists involved would not be available for any whole week in the month of June. If Sadler's Wells were prepared to offer a period in the late autumn, however, it should be seriously considered.

A provisional estimate for the 1955/56 season would have the following shape, assuming that all running-costs would be covered by fees:-

|  |                   |             |
|--|-------------------|-------------|
| Estimated Deficit as at 1st April 1955                                   |                   | 1500        |
| <u>Production Costs.</u>   |                   |             |
| Re-production: "Turn of the Screw"                                       | 1200              |             |
| New production of new children's opera                                   | 2000              |             |
| Re-production: "The Little Sweep"<br>(allowing for Decca's contribution) | <u>500</u>        | 3700        |
| Overhead Costs   |                   | 3000        |
|  |                   | <hr/>       |
|  |                   | 8200        |
| <u>Less</u> Arts Council Grant   |                   | 4000        |
|  |                   | <hr/>       |
|  | Estimated Deficit | <u>4200</u> |

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS held at 11, Mansfield Street, London, W.1. at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, 3rd November, 1954.

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. Erwin Stein

Artistic Directors: Mr. Benjamin Britten  
Miss Anne Wood

Assessor to the Arts Council: Mr. John Denison

In attendance: Mr. Basil Douglas  
Mr. Leslie Periton  
Mrs. Myfanwy Piper  
Mr. Harold Wallis

1. APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Mr. Nicholas Sekers and Mr. Derek Young.

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

3. BORROWING POWERS: It was resolved that the Company borrow from Barclays Bank Limited by way of Loan or Overdraft on their Current Account or Accounts such sums of money as the Company may require from time to time, and that the arrangements already made with the Bank for this purpose be confirmed.

4. COPYRIGHT - 'THE TURN OF THE SCREW!' Mr. Caplan reviewed the history of the negotiations to clear the copyright with Mr. Reynolds acting for the Henry James Estate, Mr. Skolkin acting for Mr. Archibald who claimed the dramatic rights, and with Twentieth Century-Fox Films who claimed the film rights. None of them would produce their documents of title, and there was some overlapping in their respective title claims.

The present situation was that performance on legitimate stage with living actors had been authorised by all parties, but no clear consent to any other exploitation had been given.

In these circumstances, it was decided to concentrate on obtaining consent to what was most needed, namely the publication of the vocal score, and, less important, the libretto, and consent to the opera being recorded.

5. SEASON, 1954: The General Manager's report on the financial aspects of the season were laid on the table and discussed. They showed the total production, re-production and running costs (approximately £28,350), and the total receipts (£23,500), representing a loss of nearly £5,000, or £8,000 including the overhead costs. Against this should be set the Arts Council grant of £4,000 and the English Opera Group Association donation of £2,000. A deficiency of £2,000 seemed probable for the year ending 31st March, 1955.

6. FINANCE, 1955: Methods of meeting the deficit and financing a programme in 1955 were discussed. The following proposals were made:-

a) to seek a contract with a gramophone company and/or with the B.B.C. for the recording and/or transmission of one or more operas, on terms which would contribute to their production costs.

b) to approach certain commercial firms or advertising agents with a view to their sponsoring individual productions, or alternatively an entire season, in return for advertising privileges.

Action: Chairman re W.S. Crawford Ltd.;  
Sir Arthur Jarratt re C.S. Lytle Ltd.;  
Mr. Caplan re Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd.

c) to seek further contracts with overseas managements, which would cover production costs. Action: General Manager.

d) to re-open with the Arts Council the question of an increased Annual Grant. In this connection, Mr. Denison invited the Board to nominate representatives for a meeting with the Arts Council's Opera Sub-Committee on Monday, 15th November at 11.30 a.m. The following were nominated:- the President, the Chairman, Mr. Britten, Mr. Piper and the General Manager.

e) to make a formal application to the British Council for financial assistance, enumerating the increasing number of enquiries and invitations from abroad. Many of these could not be accepted without a subsidy. Action: General Manager.

7. THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS' PROPOSALS FOR 1955. A list of enquiries and invitations already received was placed before the Board, and the Artistic Directors were asked to prepare a programme which they considered desirable, which, with the financial implications thereof, should be submitted to the Board after discussion with the Arts Council's Opera Sub-Committee. Mr. Britten said that he would like to write a one-act children's opera for the Aldeburgh Festival, and reported that three other composers wanted to write, or had already written, operas expressly for the Group

8. APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: On the recommendation of the Artistic Directors, the Board unanimously decided to invite Mr. Michael Northen to become an Artistic Director.

9. THE NEXT MEETING: The next Meeting of the Board was fixed for Monday, 6th December, 1954 at 11 a.m. at 11, Mansfield Street, W.1.

OPERA AND BALLET SUB-COMMITTEE.

Minute of meeting held on Monday, November 15th,  
1954 with representatives of the English Opera Group.

Opera and Ballet Sub-Committee: Dr. Wyn Griffith (Chairman)  
Clive Carey  
John Denison  
The Lady Fermoy  
Professor Anthony Lewis

In attendance: D.P. Lund  
Eric W. White

English Opera Group: The Earl of Harewood (President)  
J.H. Lawrie (Chairman)  
Benjamin Britten (Artistic  
Director)  
John Piper (Artistic Director)  
Basil Douglas (General Manager)

1. POLICY

Mr. Britten said that the policy of the English Opera Group remained unchanged. Its aim was to continue to present English opera, particularly new works that did not call for a large orchestra and chorus. His own original works written for the Group had been designed on chamber opera lines. Although doubts had been expressed at first about this type of opera, experience had shown that The Rape of Lucretia (the first chamber opera he wrote for the Group) had become his most popular opera, and the number of its productions abroad exceeded that of Peter Grimes. The experience of the Group was that these operas could be adequately presented in any moderate-sized opera house or theatre; and the interest that had been aroused by the Group's productions when toured abroad had led, particularly in the case of Germany and Denmark, to independent productions of these chamber operas in those countries.

2. PROJECTED ENGAGEMENTS FOR 1955.

A report by the General Manager was received on the prospects for 1955 as at November 10th, 1954. It was noted that the Group had received a large number of enquiries for performances abroad, whereas the engagements at home were confined to a fortnight's season at Sadler's Wells and two or three Festival appearances.

In reply to a question from the Chairman of the Opera Sub-Committee, Mr. Britten said that the Group would like to tour the main provincial towns in Great Britain, but was deterred by the risk of incurring a large financial loss.

The Chairman of the Opera Sub-Committee noted that, in the case of the enquiries received from abroad, it appeared as if many of the engagements were subject to the Group finding the costs of transport elsewhere. The Chairman of the Group explained that they had applied to the British Council for help in this respect but it seemed doubtful whether financial aid would be forthcoming.

3. REPERTORY.

The General Manager reported that many of the requests received from abroad were definitely for Dido and Aeneas. If this was to be revived it was considered essential that there should be a completely new production, as the 1951 production would not

not/

bear revival. In order to complete the bill, it was hoped that an English composer would write a new one-act opera, using roughly the same forces as in Dido (same number of singers, chorus, dancers, strings - and possibly harpsichord).

4. FINANCE.

(a) 1954. The Chairman of the Group reported that there was likely to be a deficit of about £2,000 at the end of the current season. He asked if the Arts Council would be prepared to consider a special application for a grant to wipe out this loss. The Chairman of the Opera Sub-Committee said that such an application would be considered on its merits and should be submitted before the end of the calendar year.

(b) The Chairman of the Opera Sub-Committee noted that the Group was budgetting for a loss of £13,000 on its next season's work, and enquired how it was proposed that this should be met.

In his reply, the Chairman of the Group first drew attention to one or two points affecting production and reproduction costs and overheads. With regard to overheads, the Directors had considered the question carefully but doubted whether it was possible to effect any considerable saving under this head, as in addition to the summer opera performances, the office was responsible for organising a number of concerts, broadcast performances and recordings in the other months of the year. Production and reproduction costs were inevitably high in proportion to similar costs incurred by a full-time opera company, since the cost of rehearsals had to be paid for specially and could not be merged in the general running of the company.

He said that, although the Directors would probably wish to ask the Arts Council for an increased grant, they realised that the Council would not be able to meet the whole of this estimated deficit. They therefore proposed to see if they could obtain industrial sponsorship for a specific opera production or a specific season in a town or towns in Western Europe or in the United Kingdom. He asked if such a course was likely to have the approval of the Arts Council. The Chairman of the Opera Sub-Committee replied that he thought it would; but on so important a matter it would be wise for the question to be raised and answered formally.

The Chairman of the Group said that their application for 1955/56 would be submitted to the Council in the near future

E. W. W.

16.11.54.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS held at 11, Mansfield Street, London, W.1. at 11 a.m. on Monday, 20th December, 1954.

PRESENT:

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| President:                    | The Earl of Harewood   |
| Directors:                    | Mr. J.H. Lawrie (in the chair)<br>Mr. Isador Caplan<br>Mr. Anthony Gishford<br>Mr. Nicholas Sekers<br>Mr. Erwin Stein<br>Mr. Derek Young |
| Artistic Directors:           | Mr. Michael Northen<br>Miss Anne Wood  |
| Assessor to the Arts Council: | Mr. John Denison   |
| In attendance:                | Mr. Basil Douglas<br>Mr. Leslie Periton<br>Mr. Harold Wallis   |

1. The Chairman welcomed Mr. Michael Northen, who was attending for the first time as an Artistic Director.
2. THE MINUTES were duly approved.
3. THE ARTS COUNCIL. The Chairman read to the Board a letter dated 18th December, stating that the Arts Council:
  - (a) approved the principle of sponsorship ;
  - (b) would make a special non-recurring grant of £2,000 for the current year ;
  - (c) were holding over the application for a £7,000 grant for 1955/56 until more information was available about the programme.

The Chairman undertook to write to the Arts Council, expressing the Board's gratitude and its acceptance of the £2,000 grant. The General Manager was instructed to submit as definite a programme as possible before the end of January.

4. THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS' PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR 1955 (as at 20th December, 1954) had been circulated. The General Manager reported that since it had been drawn up, Sadler's Wells had written to say that their plans did not make it practicable for the Group to have a season there during the period September 5th - October 16th. It was agreed that a London season, if possible at Sadler's Wells, was important. As August was impossible for the Group, the General Manager was instructed to enquire about the availability of Sadler's Wells during the last half of July.

The programme submitted was approved in principle, and it was agreed that the various possibilities of industrial sponsorship should be followed up immediately by the relevant people.

5. INDUSTRIAL SPONSORSHIP.

A. REPORTED:

1. Mr. Lytle. Sir Arthur Jarratt had obtained the promise of a donation of £250.
2. Great Universal Stores Ltd. Sir Arthur Jarratt had discussed with Mr. Harold Bowman the sponsoring of a new opera.
3. The Observer. The Chairman had discussed with Mr. Nigel Gosling the sponsoring of a children's opera and of a provincial tour; £2,000 had been mentioned for each project.
4. Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. Mr. Caplan had arranged a lunch with Mr. Bingham, a Director. Mr. Gishford could support this approach through I.C.I.'s chief representative in Argentina.
5. Unilever. Mr. Caplan had also planned a similar discussion with a director of Unilever.
6. North of England. Mr. Sekers knew of two people who might subscribe £500 each if a provincial tour included any two of Manchester, Liverpool, and Newcastle.

B. Approaches to be followed up before the next Board Meeting:

- (a) Great Universal Stores Ltd. : Sir Arthur Jarratt.
- (b) W.S. Crawford Ltd. : The Chairman.
- (c) The Observer : The Chairman.
- (d) Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. : Mr. Caplan;  
Mr. Gishford.
- (e) Unilever : Mr. Caplan.
- (f) Lord Chandos' group of companies: The Chairman.

C. Advertising Consultant.

The Chairman said that Mr. Ian Harvey, M.P., a Director of W.S. Crawford Ltd., had offered to give the Group honorary assistance on such matters as advertising, sponsorship, and public relations. It was agreed that such work could be valuable even though the most important contacts would probably have to be made by the directors personally, and the Chairman was authorised to invite Mr. Harvey to become honorary advertising consultant to the Group.

6. NEW OPERAS. Of the new operas under consideration by the Artistic Directors, it was unlikely that the Britten children's opera would be ready before the autumn of 1955, but Richard Arnell had intimated that given the promise of performances, he could finish his one-act opera by the spring. The Board recommended that both projects should be given every encouragement.
7. COPYRIGHT: "THE TURN OF THE SCREW". Mr. Caplan reported on the progress made since the last meeting. A precise

precise/

proposal had been made to the owner of the dramatic rights in New York for the payment of a proportion of the librettist's royalties, but so far no reply had been received. In view of the urgent need for a decision, Mr. Caplan undertook to send a cable to his agent in New York, instructing him to offer a guarantee of say £250 in respect of such royalties until the end of 1956.

8. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS. Mr. Wallis undertook to prepare for audit before March 1st, 1955, the accounts for the year ending December 31st, 1954.
9. THE NEXT MEETING was provisionally fixed for Thursday, January 27th, 1955 at 11, Mansfield Street, W.1. at 11 a.m.