

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 Tuesday, 1st February, 1955.

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 Director: Miss Anne Wood

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

1. APOLOGIES were received from Mr. John Denison, Mr. Leslie Periton, Mr. Derek Young and Mr. Nicholas Sekers.
2. THE MINUTES of the last meeting were approved and signed.
3. BOOSEY & HAWKES LTD. The General Manager reported that Boosey & Hawkes had informed him of their willingness to renew their Bank Guarantee of £1,500.
4. COPYRIGHT: "THE TURN OF THE SCREW". Mr. Caplan reported that Mr. Leslie Boosey was about to visit New York and was proposing to visit the gentlemen who may or may not control the operatic rights, and according to the result of his investigations, either come to a financial arrangement or inform that in his opinion they had no such control. He and Mr. Caplan had taken counsel's opinion (Mr. F.E. Skone-James), and it was now probable that the matter would be cleared up very quickly. Mr. Caplan was authorised to withdraw his financial offer to the owners of the dramatic rights.
5. INDUSTRIAL SPONSORSHIP. The Chairman reported that the result of his approach to "The Observer" was negative. Sir Arthur Jarratt had made progress with Great Universal Stores, and wanted guidance from the Board before proceeding further. Mr. Gishford had taken the first step with I.C.I. but wanted a definite proposal before proceeding further. The Board agreed that although they could not proceed with sponsorship for certain cities, e.g. Hull and Carlisle, it was desirable to obtain sponsorship for a London season as well as any general financial assistance that could be found. Sir Arthur Jarratt offered to approach Marks & Spencer Ltd. through Sir Simon Marks, and he was encouraged to do so.
6. PROGRAMME FOR 1955/56. A statement was laid on the table of the Artistic Directors' recommendations for 1955/56 as at January 31st., 1955, with an estimate of their financial implications. The General Manager had experienced the usual difficulties in booking theatres for the provincial tour and London season, and of the pencillings so far made, only the week in Cambridge was at all secure. With this in mind, the programme was approved by the Board, and the Chairman undertook to write an explanatory note to the Arts Council, who would

shortly be considering the Annual Grant.

7. NEW OPERAS. The General Manager reported that the possibility of three new operas was being considered by the Artistic Directors.

 8. REORGANISATION. The Chairman reported on Mr. Ian Harvey's reaction to the invitation to him to become honorary advertising consultant. He then opened a discussion on the relationship of the Board, the Artistic Directors and the General Manager. It was agreed that it was advisable to explore the possibility of obtaining the services of a suitable assistant for the General Manager. On the motion of Sir Arthur Jarratt, seconded by Mr. Horder, it was agreed that a sub-committee consisting of the President, the Chairman, Mr. Gishford, Miss Wood and the General Manager should examine this matter further.
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THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED.

Memorandum by the General Manager of a meeting at
5, Chester Gate, N.W.1., on Saturday 23rd April, 1955,
at 2.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Artistic Directors: Anne Wood
Benjamin Britten
Basil Coleman

Director: Erwin Stein

General Manager: Basil Douglas

1. FINANCE. The General Manager reported that the Arts Council had declined to increase their Annual Grant beyond last year's figure (£4,000). A revenue of £7,000 was necessary to make the programme effective as recommended to the Board of Directors on January 31st, and as efforts to procure subsidies from industry had so far been unsuccessful, it was agreed that this programme must be considerably curtailed.

The aggregate running costs of our present engagements would probably be covered, and there would be sufficient funds to revive both "The Turn of the Screw" and "Let's Make an Opera!", and also to meet the overhead costs for the current year. Surplus revenue would be derived (a) from the film première on April 18th (the exact amount not yet known but estimated at between £1,500 and £2,000), and (b) from Association subscriptions (possibly £500).

2. REVISED PROGRAMME. It was agreed to make the following recommendations:-

- a. to proceed with the engagements, already accepted, to present "The Turn of the Screw" in Schwetzingen, Munich, Florence, Aldeburgh, Llangollen, Rotterdam, the Hague, Amsterdam, Arnhem and Knokke; ✓
- b. to abandon the plan to present "The Turn of the Screw" and "Albert Herring" in an autumn tour of the provinces. Finance apart, it was proving very difficult to obtain theatre bookings, and the company could not be expected to keep themselves free indefinitely; *Cambridge*
- c. to ~~postpone~~ **reduce** the booking of the Scala Theatre from two weeks to one (September 26th to October 1st), and present four or possibly five performances of "The Turn of the Screw" only; X
- d. to postpone the revival of "Albert Herring" until the spring of 1956;
- e. to revive "Let's Make an Opera!" in September, and exploit it as follows:-

1. by a short provincial tour. It is possible that nervous theatre managers may be more

easily persuaded to book it than e.g. "The Turn of the Screw",

2. by endeavouring to secure engagements to televise and record it,
3. by a London season, possibly at the Kingsway Theatre, and by a further provincial tour;
- f. for the week at Cambridge (October 10th - 15th), to offer four performances of "The Turn of the Screw" and four performances of "Let's Make an Opera!";
- g. to devote the proceeds of the film première and any additional revenue:-
 1. to revivals in 1956 of "Albert Herring", "The Turn of the Screw", and "Dido & Aeneas"; and
 2. to commissioning and producing a new one-act opera by Lennox Berkeley (libretto by Eric Crozier), as a companion piece to "Dido & Aeneas".

3. SWITZERLAND AND BELGIUM. Invitations from Ansermet to present "The Turn of the Screw" in Geneva and from Huisman to present it in Luxembourg, Brussels, Anvers and Ghent, between September 9th and 21st, showed no signs of proving practical financially, and it was agreed that the company could not be expected to hold this period any longer.

4. "LET'S MAKE AN OPERA!" It was agreed to invite Peter Potter to produce, using the existing scenery, and that singing actors should be considered as well as acting singers.

5. WIESBADEN, MILAN, ROME. It was agreed to offer these cities, all disposed to engage the Group in May 1956, the choice of:-

- (a) "The Turn of the Screw",
- (b) "Albert Herring"
- (c) "Dido & Aeneas", with the new Berkeley opera.

Benjamin Britten said that he would like to conduct (a) or (b), and it was agreed to approach Rudolf Schwarz for (c). Other possibilities:- Paul Sacher and Norman Del Mar.

6. AMERICAN TOUR, JULY - SEPTEMBER 1956. Sol Hurok had declared his interest in presenting the Group for a ten-week tour of Canada and the U.S.A. during this period, and had been given a provisional estimate of probable costs. He had expressed the opinion that a repertory of three operas was desirable, and thought that "The Beggar's Opera" should be one of them. The latter proposal did not meet with the approval of those present, but it was agreed that the General Manager should see Hurok again and discover his real intentions.

7. THE DEVON FESTIVAL, 1954. Rather more than £300 was still owing, and repeated applications had produced unsatisfactory answers. It was agreed that the General Manager should write again to the Vice-Chairman.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED

MINUTES of the MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS
held at 3, Soho Square, London, W.1. at 11 a.m.
on Wednesday, 18th May, 1955.

PRESENT:

President: The Earl of Harewood

Directors: Mr. J.H. Lawrie (in the chair)
Mr. Isador Caplan
Mr. Anthony Gishford
Hon. Mervyn Horder
Mr. Denis Rickett
Mr. Erwin Stein
Mr. Derek Young

Artistic Directors: Mr. Basil Coleman
Mr. Michael Northen
Mr. John Piper
Miss Anne Wood

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

1. APOLOGIES were received from Mr. Benjamin Britten, Mr. John Denison, Sir Arthur Jarratt, and Mr. Nicholas Sekers.
2. THE MINUTES of the last meeting were approved and signed.
3. THE ARTS COUNCIL. The Chairman reported that the Arts Council had rejected the Group's application for a Grant of £7,000 for the year ending March 31st, 1956: their offer of £4,000 had been accepted.
4. FILM PREMIERE, APRIL 18TH, 1955: The Chairman reported that as far as he was able to ascertain at the moment, there would probably be a net profit for the Group of approximately £1,500. He was very dissatisfied with some of the expenses submitted by Harmony Films Ltd., and Mr. Caplan agreed to take the matter up with Mr. I.R. Maxwell, and negotiate whatever settlement was practicable.

Mr. Gishford proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman and to his secretary for their hard work in organising the première. It was agreed that the Board's appreciation should be recorded in the Minutes.

5. PROGRAMME FOR 1955/56: The Artistic Directors' recommendations had been circulated to the Board, and were considered in conjunction with the General Manager's memorandum, outlining their financial aspects. They were approved, subject to the recommendation that the Artistic Directors should consider two performances of "Façade" and "A Dinner Engagement" during the season at the Scala Theatre, September 19th - October 1st, 1955.

The General Manager pointed out that approximately £8,000 would be needed for productions next spring, and that financial support, beyond what the Arts Council could give, would be essential.

6. INDUSTRIAL SPONSORSHIP. The Chairman reported that he had written to the Chairman of Schweppes Ltd.; the reply had been sympathetic but for the present, negative.

Mr. Gishford reported conversations with directors of I.C.I. He

had grounds for hoping that I.C.I. might eventually agree to sponsor the Group in some way - possibly in 1956.

Sir Arthur Jarratt had written to Sir Simon Marks and the General Manager had also spoken with him; so far with no result.

7. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS. The accounts for the year ending 31st December, 1954 had been circulated to the Board and were approved, subject to audit, and with the recommendation that the value of the Fixed Assets should be further written down by approximately £2,500.
8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. This was provisionally arranged for Tuesday, 26th July, at 11.0 a.m. It would be preceded by a Meeting of the Board of Directors.
9. COPYRIGHT: "THE TURN OF THE SCREW". Mr. Caplan reported that a solution to the copyright difficulties was now in sight.
10. DEFAULT BY THE DEVON FESTIVAL, 1954 The General Manager reported that since the Agenda had been circulated, he had received a cheque from the Devon Festival, and that only £35.6.2. was now owing. This sum was in dispute.
11. REORGANISATION. The Chairman reported that the sub-committee appointed to discuss the question of reorganisation had not yet met, but would do so before the next Board Meeting.
12. SCENERY STORE. The General Manager's proposal to take a tenancy lease of Railway Arch No.168 at Midland Road, Leyton, E.10 had been circulated to the Board and was approved.
13. AMERICAN TOUR, 1956. The General Manager reported discussions with Mr. Sol Hurok, who was disposed to present the Group in Canada and the U.S.A. for a tour of three months in the autumn of 1956. A definite proposal was expected from him shortly.

The Board expressed themselves enthusiastically in favour of such a tour and congratulated the Artistic Directors and the General Manager on their enterprise.

It was pointed out that it might be possible to obtain some form of industrial sponsorship in respect of an American tour; Schweppes, for example, might be interested, and the motor industry.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED.

MINUTES of the SIXTH GENERAL MEETING held at
11 Mansfield Street, London, W.1. on Tuesday,
26th July, 1955.

PRESENT:

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

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

1. THE MINUTES of the last meeting were approved and signed.
2. On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Isador Caplan, the Directors' Report, Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1954, and Profit and Loss Account for the year ended 31st December 1954, which had been duly circulated to the members of the Company, were adopted unanimously.
3. The following Directors, who retired by rotation, were severally re-elected:-
 - Sir Arthur Jarratt
(Proposed: Mr. Caplan, Seconded: Mr. Young)
 - Mr. Nicholas Sekers
(Proposed: Mr. Stein, Seconded: Mr. Gishford)
 - Mr. Derek Young
(Proposed: Mr. Lawrie, Seconded: Mr. Caplan)
4. The continuance in office of the Auditors, Messrs. A.T. Chenhalls & Co., and the payment of their fees, were confirmed. The Chairman expressed the members' gratitude to Mr. Leslie Periton for his generous assistance and advice.

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 Tuesday, 26th July, 1955.

PRESENT:

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

Assessor to the Arts Council: Mr. John Denison

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

1. APOLOGIES were received from the President, Mr. Mervyn Horder, Sir Arthur Jarratt, Mr. Nicholas Sekers, Mr. Benjamin Britten, Mr. Michael Northen and Mr. John Piper.
2. THE MINUTES of the last meeting were approved and signed.
3. FILM PREMIERE, APRIL 18th, 1955: The Chairman had written to the Directors, informing them that the première had yielded a net profit of approximately £1,670.
4. AMERICAN TOUR: The General Manager reported that Sol Hurok was extremely interested in presenting an American tour with the Group, but that it was unlikely that Benjamin Britten's commitments would allow him to go until the autumn of 1957.
5. INDUSTRIAL SPONSORSHIP: The Chairman reported that he had written to Mr. Ogilvy, an advertising agent in New York, about the idea of an advertiser sponsoring a tour, and that he had asked for more information. The General Manager was instructed to prepare this.
6. THE SCALA THEATRE, SEPTEMBER 20 - OCTOBER 1, 1955: The Artistic Directors' recommendations for the programme had been circulated to the Board and were approved.
7. THE HOLLAND FESTIVAL: Commenting on the General Manager's report, which had been circulated to the Board, Mr. Stein emphasised that the Group's success in Holland had been triumphant.
8. SCENERY STORE: On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Young, it was resolved that the Seal of the Company be affixed to the Agreement submitted to the Meeting, and expressed to be made between The British Transport Commission of the one part and the Company of the other part, for the Company's tenancy of Railway Arch No. 168, Midland Road, Leyton.
9. THE GROUP'S OFFICES: The General Manager asked for permission to move into a larger office at 25 Wigmore Place, W.1. which had recently become vacant. This was approved, provided that the present rental was not exceeded by more than £25 per annum.
10. THE GENERAL MANAGER: It was resolved to increase the General Manager's salary from £800 to £1,050 a year, the increase to date from April 1st, 1955.
11. THE NEXT MEETING: The General Manager was instructed to arrange the next meeting at a convenient date after the season at the Scala Theatre.

THE ENGLISH OPERA GROUP LIMITED

MINUTES of the MEETING of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS
held at 3 Soho Square, London, W.1, at 11 a.m.
on Wednesday, October 19th, 1955.

PRESENT:

President: The Earl of Harewood

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

Artistic Director: Mr. Michael Northen

Assessor to the
Arts Council: Mr. John Denison

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

1. APOLOGIES were received from Mr. Nicholas Sekers, Mr. Denis Rickett, Mr. Benjamin Britten, Mr. John Piper, and Miss Anne Wood.

2. THE MINUTES of the last meeting were approved and signed, subject to the insertion of the following paragraph at the end of item 5 - INDUSTRIAL SPONSORSHIP:-

"Mr. Gishford reported that he had received a letter from Mr. B. W. Galvin Wright, Publicity Controller of Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd., regretting that it did not appear possible for that Company to help the Group by any form of sponsorship."

3. AMERICAN TOUR

The General Manager reported that Benjamin Britten's commitments would not allow him to go to America until the autumn of 1957, and Sol Hurok was agreeable to postponing the tour accordingly.

4. THE GROUP'S OFFICES

The General Manager reported that the landlord of 25 Wigmore Place, London, W.1, was unwilling to let him have the larger office, and a scheme to alter the present offices was now being considered.

5. SEASON AT THE SCALA THEATRE

A preliminary report on the financial results of the season at the Scala Theatre, London, September 20th-October 1st, 1955, was laid on the table. It indicated that the expenses of the season would be within £50 of the estimate, while receipts were less than the estimate by £105. The advertisement revenue was less than the estimate by £370. The total receipts were 61% of capacity.

The detailed expenses were discussed and the following suggestions were made for consideration when planning the next London season:-

- (1) that it should be three weeks instead of two;
- (2) that assistance should be sought from commercial television companies;

- (3) that the Royal Festival Hall's mailing list (70,000) be considered for the next season in addition to Covent Garden's mailing list. (It was considered that preliminary advertising through mailing lists was more effective than newspaper advertising.)
- (4) Lord Harewood suggested that further preliminary publicity could be obtained by arranging a concert, in the theatre chosen, on a Sunday shortly before the season, which might include "Façade" and, if possible, an important première of a new work.

6. A PRELIMINARY REPORT BY THE GENERAL MANAGER ON THE ARTISTIC POSSIBILITIES FOR 1956 AND THE FINANCIAL ASPECTS THEREOF was also laid on the table.

The proposal to combine a new short opera by Lennox Berkeley with "Venus and Adonis" was criticised, on the grounds that it might prove a doubtful box office attraction in view of past experience of double bills, and also because of the heavier production costs entailed by two separate operas than by one full-length opera. The combination of these two particular operas was also questioned, although opinion on this point was by no means unanimous. The Board agreed to be guided by the Artistic Directors on this point, but requested the General Manager to communicate these criticisms to them.

Subject to these criticisms, and provided that the necessary funds could be obtained, the Board approved the Artistic Directors' proposals.

Finance. The approximate cost of the activities in 1956 was £14,100, to which the Group would probably be able to contribute £3,250. It was hoped that the deficit of £10,850 could be met by an increased grant from the Arts Council and donations from other sources.

7. COPYRIGHT OF "THE TURN OF THE SCREW"

Mr. Caplan reported that all forms of exploitation of "The Turn of the Screw", except for films and broadcasting, would be fully covered by the agreement now in America for signature. The film rights had been granted to Twentieth Century Fox, and it was possible that they were entitled to put an embargo on broadcasting until two years after a film had been made and distributed. The London office of Twentieth Century Fox were no doubt aware of the English broadcasts, and as no objection had been raised it was unlikely that there would be any objection in the future. It should be remembered that in any case the copyright had already expired in the U.S.A.

8. INDUSTRIAL SPONSORSHIP

It was suggested that the firm of Huntley & Palmer might be willing to sponsor the Group in some way. Mrs. Piper undertook to discover the best approach to Lord Palmer.

Mr. Denison kindly offered to arrange a luncheon for the Chairman to meet Mr. F. C. Hooper, Managing Director of Schweppes Ltd.

Mr. Gishford suggested that in connection with the Group's proposed visit to Italy next spring it might be possible to obtain financial assistance from an Italian firm. He promised to consider what firms might be approached, and the General Manager offered to consult Marks & Spencer Ltd., who had considerable business connections in Italy.

9. ARTS COUNCIL

Mr. Denison advised an early application to the Arts Council on the basis of the proposed programme for 1956.