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**Minutes of
The Leicester Amateur Operatic Society
Annual General Meeting
Thursday 8th December 2016**

Present: Eleanor Mattley, Lisa Heath , Jade Afflick, Shelley Henry, Russell Carrington, Joe Mesvania, Hannah Willars, Tim Stokes, Kat Rooke, Sinead Franklin, Katy Scotcher, Chris Hall, Matt Pirie, Oli Murphy, Alex Singh, Liz Kavanagh, Vaughan Ashcroft, Jackie Oddy, Nick Cox, Leeann Rana, Sean Rafael, David Bartram.

Apologies: Gillian Kitchener, Matt Barton, Sarah-Jane Barton, Nisha Patel, Hollie Carrington, Steve Duguid, Jordan Handford, James Beck, Callie Barter, Christine Tarry, Mike Batho, Kate Goodall, Charlotte Bond, Liz Valentine, Mia Dobney, Debbie Neath, Scott Tompkins, Anna Smith, Debbie Longley, Philippa Iliffe, Julie Wooley, Louisa Landon, Angela Hill, Becky Valentine.

Agenda Item	Summary
Previous Minutes	Jackie welcomed all members to the AGM & our new members: Eleanor, Sinead, Oli, Tim, Joe, Hannah & Katy. The minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting were proposed by Chris Hall and seconded by Lisa Heath.



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Chairmans Report	<p>Last year was a year of firsts for LAOS with us moving to the Curve studio, having a new director, choreographer and having an assistant director as part of the production team.</p> <p>We were nominated for 2015's 'Sister Act' for best musical and best deluxe programme, Vaughan's amazing efforts on the programme achieved this.</p> <p>9to5 artistically, was brilliant, and having the Curve technical team onboard throughout really raised the game of the production for us, although we had a number of challenges with backstage space for cast & limited space for the band, but it was commendable to see how professionally everyone handled it.</p> <p>Commercially it was a lot less successful than Sister Act, and the run up to 9to5 support from Curve was extremely disappointing, we didn't get a contract from Curve until April and we had no presence at the high cross stand or in the brochure, this was not through lack of effort from our side.</p> <p>However we still remain buoyant as a society and this has helped negotiations with Curve this year.</p> <p>We want to reassure the society we (the committee) worked extremely hard in the background and understand the frustrations some of the society felt and wholeheartedly apologise for those feelings some people had.</p> <p>We stand by the decisions made this year in terms of changing our rehearsal venue and rehearsal nights as for the future of LAOS sometimes change is needed.</p> <p>Huge thanks go to Shelley for working absolute WONDERS with the 9to5 props, also to the production team for their hard efforts and it wasn't without it's challenges but we always aim to learn from these for the future.</p> <p>We always feel privileged to be able to perform at Curve and always aim to uphold professional standards. However there were a number of issues during show week including ticket reallocations and dressing room double bookings which led to me raising a formal complaint with Curve.</p> <p>Curve have already been through 4 producers this year which means we are constantly renegotiating and that is how they operate which is not within our control, they have turned away professional tours due to how popular they are in terms of their bookings over the next few years. We are pencilled in for 2018, however Curve treat amateurs and professionals alike and they ultimately have to decide on confirmed bookings based on financial viability for them.</p> <p>We have had 2 committee members resign, Sean & Rachel, thankyou to you both for all your efforts over the last couple of years. (Thankyou gifts were presented.)</p>
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<p>Musical Directors Report</p>	<p>I think 9-5 was a show that LAOS can be extremely proud of. It was presented with a wealth of opportunities of doing things different in LAOS and was also scuppered with lots of complications that hopefully you as a cast didn't feel the impact of too much.</p> <p>9-5 is a big show for a big cast with big set pieces. Like, I've seen it professionally and it took up the whole stage! And we did it in "The Studio" at the Curve. Before we even talk quality I think it's worth giving ourselves a high five for achieving that alone! I can tell you it didn't go down well with me when production meetings were trying to accommodate the band in all manner of spaces to ensure you had as much space as possible. I came across really badly – I know that much – because I was trying to protect the integrity and quality of my job and being in control of you all in the live situation. Knowing that we are returning to The Studio again next year does not worry me like it did before because of how we achieved 9-5 in there BUT I know that Russ and I are already talking about how we can ensure the band is comfortable/included in the show. Rather predictably as MD, I maintain the importance the music "should" take (over everything else) and I like to remind people it's the title after all! MUSIC-all! (and I'm going to point out now just how difficult the music is for the next show!! it's... well... Gulp!) (Jackie - open your eyes really big like your scared or something...)</p> <p>The band was difficult to put together for 9-5 for lots of reasons and my usual go-to-guys were not available. That said, I think the quality of the music turned out to be excellent and I hope you were proud of them and enjoyed singing on top of their superb accompaniment. The band were certainly very complimentary once again of the performers in LAOS. It was a shame they were concealed behind the backdrop and couldn't see any of what you were doing.</p> <p>The Curve's technical team were involved from the beginning of the get-in this year which meant the quality of the sound was great and thoroughly enjoyable and not compromised. It was a reminder for me why I like being in the Curve so much. And actually, places more pressure on us to be excellent because technical problems are not something we can (or should be able to) blame for a lack of quality in what we produce.</p> <p>In many ways, this has been one of the hardest shows to direct musically because of the sheer amount of work there is for the chorus. Pretty much every song had backing vocals on-stage and off-stage. And for the most part – the chorus singing was wonderful. And whilst we cut backing vocals, we did so in response to a lack of time rather than a lack of ability. Let's remember, we started rehearsing later than we normally and we were performing earlier in the year than we normally do. We'd trimmed time at both ends of our rehearsal schedule. And this was perhaps a frustrating element for me because this was the first show where I wasn't expected to be at every rehearsal! I'd never before had to check a rehearsal schedule to see if I was needed or not! And I don't think that's something I would let happen again. So... to the chorus I give you my praise for working so wonderfully. Stand out moment for the chorus for me every night was "I Just Might" – Shivers. Spine. Every time! Thank you for moving me!! :)</p>
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<p>ASSISTANT DIRECTORS REPORT</p>	<p>Principle performances were once again very strong. Generally, everyone responded to what I asked of them and I thank for them trusting my intentions for making them sound good! And whilst I want to remain relatively neutral about the high standard set by all of the principles, I think it's very difficult not to mention the three ladies who led the cast with their spirit, attitude and talent. Debbie, Mia and Lisa thank you, each of you, for giving moments of sheer inspiration and working so hard that this wasn't a story about one girl and her two sidekicks! It truly was a show with three equal stars that acted and belted their way through some really tough songs!! Well done.</p> <p>I am honoured to be invited back to MD for LAOS next year. I am also petrified of the choice of musical. PARADE is about as difficult as it gets guys. There will be moments of singing in different keys at the same time (on purpose!) and singing at different tempos at the same time (also on purpose!) which will make your minds swish and swirl and I dare say even I may be perplexed myself at times. The music itself is dark and deep and rich. It is complex and it tells a very sad and gutting story. This is not for the faint-hearted. Petrified I may be but boy, am I excited that we have bitten this morsel to chew on! It will be a great show week next September – there may not be much to laugh about in PARADE but you will undeniably be moved. Totes emosh.</p> <p>Can't wait to start working on this with you all. I hope to make it the very best thing I MD.</p> <p>When asked by the committee to be a part of the production team for 9 to 5, I was delighted to accept the challenge. I was sure that working on a production team alongside Leigh, Hollie and Steve would result in a high quality show and I'm pleased to say that I was right. Although there were difficulties, from my point of view, with decision making responsibilities in a 2-man directorial team, I believe that in the end these issues didn't take away from producing a Curve standard show. One thing that I believe was a little bit of an issue during 9 to 5 was the lack of rehearsal schedule from the beginning as it is my preference to have a full, clear rehearsal schedule from the commencement of rehearsals.</p> <p>Having an awareness of the musical and its usual production values, in the first instance, I wasn't entirely convinced that it was a show ideally suited to the studio space, but with a remit of producing the highest quality show that we could, I believe the alterations to the set that we made on show week along with, in particular, the depth of character and relationships between a number of roles developed during the rehearsal process, resulted in performances from a number of people that had significantly more depth than the characters on a face value scan of the script and therefore added the extra layers of intimacy needed for a studio show.</p> <p>The audiences that came to see the show gave consistently high praise; however, we perhaps didn't have the size of audiences we would have wished for. Although everyone tried hard to sell tickets to their families and friends, we without doubt missed the support of the Curve marketing team; an issue that I'm pleased to see has been resolved prior to this year's show.</p>
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**CHOREOGR
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REPORT**

It is an absolute pleasure to direct a group of talented people, but even more of a pleasure to direct a group of talented people, who are hungry for direction and character development. Throughout the rehearsal process of a show, it is my aim to create the characters together with the individual actor and not simply dictate. Directing and performing should, in my opinion, be an ongoing open dialogue, working together until both parties are satisfied that they are telling the best version of the story to the audience, in line with the overall vision of the show. I think we achieved this throughout the process, particularly with the depth of the three leading ladies: Violet, Judy and Dora-Lee.

Finally, I would like to say congratulations to everybody involved in 9 to 5; I believe we delivered a great show.

Firstly I'd like to say thank you to the committee for giving me the opportunity to choreograph for LAOS. I know LAOS hold a very high standard and I'm grateful you all had faith in my ability as a choreographer to help create something we were all proud of.

When we first had our production meeting with Jackie and Vaughan back in January this year, it became clear what a mammoth task we had on our hands. We had a huge show to put on in a small space, with a new production team, less rehearsal time, a set that barely fit the space and a theatre that was slightly unwilling to help us advertise!! However, as rehearsals started and we assembled a wonderful principle company I knew we had the opportunity to create something amazing.

I have to say, it's such a pleasure to work with you all, there is no weak link throughout the company and everybody works incredibly hard. I threw some difficult and stylised choreography at you and you all handled it brilliantly. It's really exciting when the vision in my head matches up to the dances that come to life in front of me. I want to mention the boys particularly, who had to take on that huge tap number, I've never felt so proud watching you all push yourselves to get that number perfect!

I really loved the dream sequences and I just want to say thanks for 'going with me' on those, particularly 'potion notion', it was very strange, I know, but worked brilliantly, and quickly became one of my favourite numbers to watch.

Well done to the whole company, you were amazing and I'd like to say thank you for all your hard work and commitment.

I need to mention Leigh and Russell, they really worked well together to make 9-5 work in an intimate space. They're approach was somewhat relaxed, which took some getting used to for all of us, but I don't think the relaxed approach meant we compromised on the standard of show we produced. I want to particularly mention Russell and how much work he did with individuals, and the value he puts on even the smallest role in the show.

Finally I'd like to thank Steve. I'm always in awe of the sound he gets from you all. It makes me a little bit sad that he never gets to hear it from the audiences perspective. My favourite was 'I just might'! It made me sob every night. what a beautiful sound from



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	<p>I know we had a few difficulties along the way, especially when it came to the technical issue of fitting a large set into a small space, however it's important to remember it was a new experience for us all and we can hopefully learn from the mistakes we made during 9-5. I don't want to dwell on the negatives because the feedback we received about the quality of show we produced was so good. All the things that didn't run smoothly for us last year, will hopefully be rectified this year due to us having a better understanding of the studio space and what we are dealing with.</p> <p>Well done all, I can't wait to start on the next show.</p>
<p>Treasurers Report</p>	<p>Vaughan handed out the accounts and talked through the main detail.</p> <p>£21791 ticket sales for 9 to 5 compared to £68363 for Sister Act, huge difference although there was a difference in ticket volumes to sell between the main house & studio.</p> <p>Total income for this year at £18433 compared with £57829 last year.</p> <p>We were saved by the type of deal we struck with Curve last year as even though we sold a lot less tickets for 9to5 it resulted in a much lower theatre hire cost which resulted in an overall loss this year of £3850.</p> <p>We are worth £31086 as a society.</p> <p>Next year the problem for us will be Curve will not be as cheap so we will be engaging with you all on ways to fundraise.</p> <p>Jackie reiterated all members of the society play a part in making LAOS a success and all members will be required to support and help sell tickets for Parade to make it a success.</p> <p>Accounts Proposed By: Kat Rooke Accounts Seconded By: Joe Mesvania</p>



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<p>Election of Officers</p>	<p>Alex read out the status of the committee detailing which officers were available/unavailable for re-election, who had been nominated to stand on the committee and the committees decision to reintroduce the Vice Chair role.</p> <p>Chairman Jackie Oddy was available for re-election. This was proposed by David Bartram & seconded by Chris Hall.</p> <p>Treasurer Vaughan Ashcroft was available for re-election. This was proposed by Lisa Heath & seconded by Jade Afflick.</p> <p>Secretary Alex Singh was available for re-election. This was proposed by Vaughan Ashcroft & seconded by Liz Kavanagh.</p> <p>Vice Chair Nick Cox was proposed by Jackie Oddy & seconded by Alex Singh.</p>
<p>General Committee</p>	<p>David Bartram has two years remaining.</p> <p>Leeann Rana & Liz Kavanagh's terms were up for renewal and they were both available for re-election. Leeann was proposed by Vaughan Ashcroft & seconded by Alex Singh. Liz was proposed by Nick Cox & seconded by David Bartram.</p> <p>We had 3 members nominated to join the committee and all 3 nominations were accepted. Philippa Iliffe was nominated by Liz Kavanagh & seconded by Leeann Rana. Shelley Henry was nominated by Alex Singh & seconded by Nick Cox. Lisa Heath was nominated by Nisha Patel & seconded by Jade Afflick.</p>
<p>Auditor</p>	<p>Mike Walker???</p>
<p>Any Other Business</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">None.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLOSE OF MEETING – 8:52PM.</p>