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**Minutes of  
The Leicester Amateur Operatic Society  
Annual General Meeting  
Tuesday 5th December 2017**

Present: Jackie Oddy, Leeann Rana, David Bartram, Nick Cox, Vaughan Ashcroft, Lisa Heath, Pip Iliffe, Shelley Henry, Mia Dobney, Steve Duguid, Mike Batho, Liz Backes, Christine Hall, Grahame Harvison, Jade Afflick, Josh Harding, Eleanor Mattley, Nade Franklin, Hollie Carrington, Russell Carrington, Kate Goodall, Kat Rooke, Scott Tomkins, Callie Barter, Sarah Jane Wales, Becky Valentine, Liz Valentine, Gill Kitchener, Richard Wiles, Andy Gundelach.

Apologies: Alex Singh, Debbie Longley, Eleanor Charman, Nicole Webb, Tom Mottram, Nisha Patel, Debbie Neath, Terry Woolley, Julie Woolley, Louisa Landon, Angela Hill, Helen-Mary Boyce, Matt Barton, James Beck, Len Kendall, Christine Tarry.

Agenda Item	Summary
	<p>The room was laid out in cabaret style with small tables with three or four chairs around them and the Committee not having any tables in front of them. This was to set the tone for a different style of AGM meeting and to create a relaxed environment for really open discussions.</p> <p>Jackie welcomed all members to the AGM, pleased to see so many attendees this year, particularly the brand new members: Kellie Lucken, Nikki , Samantha, Natalie Mee, Kat and Jessica.</p> <p>The Committee have decided to recognize the contributions of Christine Hall over many decades, both on and off stage, by bestowing on her Life Membership.</p>
<b>Previous Minutes</b>	The minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting were proposed by Liz Kavanagh and seconded by Gill Kitchener.



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<p><b>Chairman's Report</b></p>	<p>It's been a very difficult year – yet again – with lots of things feeling really out of kilter. Negotiations with Curve have continued to be challenging and never as speedy as we'd like them to be. We've also recognized how much it impacted on the cast with the changes in the production team during the rehearsal period which couldn't be helped. I'll leave talking about Parade itself to the production team and I won't steal Vaughan's thunder by talking about the finances too much.</p> <p>We recognize the need to try to reinvigorate the Society and re-engage with the members, many of whom decided not to be involved with Parade. We always try to make the right artistic and commercial decisions, on behalf of the Society, and we're constantly learning and making changes to make things better. I've always thought of LAOS as being a family and we'd like to get some stability back.</p> <p>We'll go through all of the formalities of the agenda and then come back to talking about the future.</p> <p>Lee Samuels can't be with us tonight but he's sent in his report which Jackie read out.</p>
<p><b>Director's Report</b></p>	<p>Firstly allow me to extend my apologies for not being able to make tonight's meeting. It was in my diary but then a large number of children asked me to come and support them in a Christmas concert. So unfortunately the kids have got me this evening.</p> <p>Parade was a challenging experience for everyone involved. I was initially handed an idea that Russell had put a lot of thought and passion into, with a group of some of the most talented vocalists I have ever heard, all of which had stuck with the project through a difficult time. The pressure would have been high for anyone.</p> <p>I was tasked with creating a show I could proud of that was fundamentally someone else's vision, with a cast that didn't know from the next guy, and slowly over the time working on the project, everything we thought we had settled, like the set for instance, also fell away. At times it really did feel like the project was doomed.</p> <p>In my fun filled motivational pre show speeches I always shifted the credit for the performers. And this still stands in retrospect. The real driving force behind the show were Hollie, Steve and all of the cast who were so determined to make this happen even in the face of it all looking like it was heading south.....and that passion gave me something to get my teeth into and really focus on, making sure it didn't go to waste.</p> <p>Word on the street is that a LAOS cast have never quite come together like they did on Parade. I say "word on the street" because I don't really have a benchmark to go from, but that was what feedback told me. This was a winning combination of hard, but powerful subject matter, combined with all of the challenges life kept throwing at the show, and a real drive to not allow hard work to go to waste. People kept suggesting I had something to do with it...but I still genuinely don't believe that was true. The support systems the cast all built with each other were truly beautiful to watch. Relationships like Lisa and Tom constantly coaching each other through their scenes. People like Josh, Eleanor, Rich, Lewis, Jaq, all coming to the show late and working with all of the original cast members to ensure they were up to par. Groups of cast members holding hands and supporting each other in the wings whilst Leo was out there being hoarse. When you rehearse with subject matter for 9 months and it still</p>



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<p><b>Treasurers Report</b></p>	<p>Vaughan started by saying how difficult Curve have been with sorting out the accounts and that we've only just received the final account this week – and don't actually have the money yet.</p> <p>Points of note from the accounts: Costumes all much cheaper than usual as many were provided by the cast themselves or sourced cheaply by Hollie. Many thanks to Hollie for all of her effort on this.</p> <p>Scenery was minimalistic so cheaper than usual (even though Curve charged us to dismantle the stairs and rebuild them!)</p> <p>Props were also cheaper than usual – thank you to Shelley for all her hard work.</p> <p>Microphone hire was expensive @ £3,659.</p> <p>Thanks to Lisa and Pip for all of their hard work on social media, the website, advertising and publicity.</p> <p>Programmes were a good source of income with lots of adverts and all of them sold – profit of £624.</p> <p>Rehearsal costs have been lower as the venue was cheaper even though we've had a longer rehearsal period. We haven't spent any money on a rehearsal pianist.</p> <p>Ticket sales totaled £18,264 (net) over 50% in the end.</p> <p>Total show income was £16,160.</p> <p>There was an increase in the theatre hire to £7000 from £3200 the previous year. Charges were also made for lighting and sound of £600 and £1500.</p> <p>Show expenses totaled £27,053 meaning a loss of £10,893.</p> <p>The Society's assets @ 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 total £20,877.</p> <p>Jackie thanked Vaughan for all his hard work on this; it's not easy when the theatre are so last minute and often surprise us with add ons. Vaughan is very cautious with the Society's finances and often spots things the theatre miss or don't get right.</p>



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<p><b>Election of Officers</b></p>	<p><b>All of the people in the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary roles are available for re-election and they were collectively proposed by Steve Duguid and seconded by Becky Valentine.</b></p>
<p><b>General Committee</b></p>	<p>David and Shelley have one year remaining.</p> <p>Leeann and Liz are both coming off the Committee having given many years' service between them. Jackie thanked them for all they have done to support the Society and presented them with gifts.</p> <p>Two members would like to join the Committee; Josh Harding was nominated by Shelley and seconded by Nade Franklin; Nade Franklin was nominated by Pip Illiffe and seconded by Kat Rooke.</p>
<p><b>Auditor</b></p>	<p>Mike Walker is happy to continue as auditor of the accounts.</p>



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**Any Other Business**

Jackie said that the Committee are aware that members are itching for news of next year and recognize that it's been frustrating for members to feel in the dark. Unfortunately, there won't be a big reveal tonight.

Increasingly over recent years we've felt a distancing from Curve towards LAOS; there's been a lack of support and a significant increase in costs – you've seen that they've doubled the hire fee for the studio.

We've been in negotiations with the Directors of the Haymarket Consortium to get back into the Haymarket for several months now, whilst they've been busy managing the refurbishment.

So here's what we know;

They're hoping to have control of the building back from the contractors at the end of Jan/early Feb.

They want to do some test events in the first weekend of March and they want us to be part of that.

We've indicated that we'd like to be the first musical to take place once they've re-opened.

There's no financial deal yet but we're penciled in for a week in Sept 2018.

They may not have box office facilities by then and they definitely won't have a working lift.

There's a risk that they won't have their infrastructure in place to support us – for example they won't have a customer database for mailing and marketing.

They definitely want to have LAOS at Haymarket but we're also hearing that apparently Curve also want LAOS.

(Steve Duguid interjected that he's heard from creative people high up in Curve that they want to keep us there).

Curve have made things increasingly challenging and we get inconsistent service from them due to their constantly changing people in roles. It's proving less and less financially viable to remain in the Studio.

Liz Kavanagh interjected that Curve also get to veto our show choices.

So with it in mind that we'd like to do some small scale events in the Haymarket's showcase in March and then aim to do a full scale show in September we'll need to rethink the make-up of the production team.

Jackie acknowledged that people are disappointed with the lack of plans for the future – other Societies are able to plan and book the next two shows well in advance. They have the benefit of a fixed venue and fixed performance dates where LAOS are having to negotiate year on year.

We've also had to take into consideration that many LAOS members are involved with other Societies so our rehearsal period may overlap with that of another show. We don't want to put our members in an awkward position of having to choose or feeling overcommitted so we'll review our rehearsal nights to enable people to do both shows. Our aim isn't to be in September every year, we'd rather be in June but realistically Haymarket won't be ready in June to do a large scale show. We could also review whether we actually need a 6 month rehearsal period.

So, what we'd like to do now is get you all involved in shaping the future. Every table has post-its and pens.



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