

LAOS AGM 2019 Minutes

Monday 25th November 2019, 7:30pm

St Andrews Methodist Church, Glenfield Road, LE3 5QW



Leicester Amateur Operatic Society | Chairman: Nick Cox | Treasurer: Vaughan Ashcroft

Attended – Sammi Bale, Ellen French, Pip Illfe, Jodie Blowfield, Kellie Lucken, Jackie Oddy, Liz Valentine, Becky Valentine, Sophie Kandola, MilleWrzyszc, Boo Cooper, George Pavey, Megan Berridge, Bronte Heller, Edward Turner, Dan Brewer, James Daw, Beth Sly, Viky Brady, Katie Wilson, Billy Joyce, Bethany Horton, Nade Franklin, Leeann Rana, Liz Knott, Matt Barton, Vaughan Ashcroft, Nick Cox, David Bartram, Graham Harvison

Discussion Point	Detail/Description
Apologies	James Beck, Jade Afflick-Goodall, Lisa Heath, Eleanor Matly, Aaliyah Towers, Bethan Myers, Jacqueline Ardron, Josh Williams, Rhea Berry, Callie Barter, Sarah-Jayne Barton-Wales, Gill Kitchener, Kate Goodall, Mia, Charlotte Beaver, Angela Hill, Chris Hall, Shelley Henry, Nicole Collins, Joe Middleton, Mike Batho, Christine Tarry, Helen-Mary Boyce, Eloise Ross, Debbie Longley, Imogen Nicholls, Craig Saunders, Andy Gundelach.
Special Guest	Graham Harvison (long time LAOS member) introduced himself to the meeting with song from 'My Fair Lady' which he performed in 50 years ago! He is very glad to see the society is still thriving.'
AGM Minute Approval	Jackie approves, James Daw seconded the minutes from last year's AGM (2018)
Notes from the Chairman	<p><u>Chairman's Report - 2019</u></p> <p>Well, what a year! So much to celebrate and so much more to look forward to! After taking over as Chairman this time year, I can honestly say I was somewhat apprehensive; it's a tough job. In fact, being on the LAOS committee in general is not easy; the stakes are high, the finances give you nightmares, nothing is ever plain sailing, the goal posts are always moving and there's a million jobs to do. Luckily however, with a dose of hard work, a generous supply of teamwork and a pinch of luck, we did it. Shrek was a hugely successful show and I remain immensely proud of everyone involved, both on stage and behind the scenes. The thing about that week that I remember so fondly was the positivity felt backstage. People supported one another, whether it was a quick change, locating a prop, or pressing ice cold water bottles onto Matt's bare donkey-hair ridden chest. It felt like real community spirit, no job was too much for anyone and we all chipped in. A special mention to Gill and Kate who helped me out when my waistcoat wouldn't fasten...it must have been the design because it was nothing to do with my belly, so they said. One of the main reasons why the week was so successful, is because everything on stage was going so well. Tom Davis designed some fantastic lighting, Adam and Aiden took full control over our sound and Nikki and her team did a sterling job with our mammoth set! Other than a small fire, it was a great week.</p> <p>Shrek is also the first time since 2015's Sister Act that the finances haven't given us quite as much of a headache, largely thanks to Becky Valentine's militant approach to selling a whole array of merchandise, much of which was ridiculously over-priced thanks to Vaughan's typical 'accountant' mind. I won't spoil Vaughan's moment, I will let him reveal our overall financial affairs.</p> <p>I would once again like to thank the committee for their resilience and commitment to producing a great show, each one played their part in making the week a huge success, whether it was behind the scenes, onstage or front of house. Special thanks as well to Liz Valentine; an unsung hero of LAOS, who spent the entire week sat in the green room with our child performers, amongst other responsibilities. Callie Barter is also an incredible source of support and has been instrumental in making our shows work at Haymarket, without her we couldn't do what we do. Thanks must also go to Nikki Strickland who we invited on board as our Company Stage Manager last year, a role that has provided crucial in putting the show onstage and keeping it running efficiently. We are delighted that Nikki has agreed to make the role a permanent one.</p>

	<p>The production team more than rose to the challenge; Lianne's brilliant choreography perfectly captured the spirit and tone of the piece, Steve's attention to detail and creativity with the score ensured we sounded fantastic and Sally's meticulous casting vision ensured we all had a much valued role to play in what could have been predominantly a show about 3 people.</p> <p>As you will be aware, we had to make the difficult decision to rethink our show choice for next year. We are very excited to secure the brand new version of Half A Sixpence; Kipps, but were dismayed to later discover Killworth House planned to perform it just one month after us. After much deliberation it became clear that we just could not compete with their potential audience and the most sensible course of action was to delay our production. Kipps was going to be a difficult show to sell and trying to compete with Kilworth House seemed futile. However, we are still committed to performing Kipps in a few years time, so watch this space!</p> <p>So why RENT? We had a number of meetings and conducted a wide range of research around what other shows might be available, and the result? Barely anything is out there! With such a hive of activity from other local groups and a number of restrictions currently placed on some big shows, we were struggling. We then came across RENT, a popular show that no amateur group has performed in Leicester before. The prospect of staging such a seminal and ground-breaking show got us quite excited and the response via social media has further fuelled this optimism. We recognise people have strong feelings towards this show on both sides of the spectrum, but we are confident that we have chosen a high-quality piece that has the potential to impress audiences and sell tickets.</p> <p>As always, we continue to attract talented new members to our society. This year nearly 50 people showed an interest, with us auditioning over 30 potential members. 13 were successful and they are: Chris Hiam, George Pavey, Charlie Harris, Edward Turner, Jack Cooling, Eloise Rose, Katie Wilson, Boo Cooper, Millie Wrzyszc, Bronte Heller, Megan Berridge, Bethany Horton and Vicky Brady. Welcome to LAOS!</p> <p>As we look towards the future, we are pleased to confirm that for the first time in 6 years, we have an annual June slot at the Haymarket. This means we can now start to plan in advance and secure future shows.</p> <p>We are delighted to confirm that Lianne O'Connor will be returning to choreograph RENT and Steve Duguid will be staying on as our MD. Auditions are likely to take place around the second week in January and rehearsals will begin straight after. Rehearsal evenings will more than likely centre around Mondays and Wednesdays, but with the addition of some Tuesday evenings for a certain period. As soon as the production team have met and agreed the details, we will communicate all the relevant information regarding parts.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Notes from the production team</p> <p>Musical Director – Steve Duguid</p>	<p>After Chitty, I was thrilled to be told LAOS were doing Shrek The Musical and was grateful to be offered the opportunity to MD the show; a modern musical that would play to my abilities more than some old English show about a flying car!</p> <p>I remember the first rehearsal; it was superb; starting Freak Flag with amazing gusto and even better results. After that, my excitement for the rehearsal period was high and it remained high. I looked forward to rehearsals because of everyone in the show. We saw a brand-new intake of talent to join the fabulous performers that already existed in LAOS and this meant we could achieve awesome results together!</p> <p>The casting of the leads was an extremely difficult decision that was not made lightly. However, I can say with confidence that I was genuinely happy with the performances given. All were consistent throughout the rehearsal period and even more so in setting the high standards we have come to expect from LAOS during the week of the show.</p> <p>And it would be very easy to wax lyrical all day about the performances of James's warm, dulcet tones and Matt's comedy and Nade's Super E and Vaughan's legs(!) but I wanted to say that I was so, so impressed with how the company sounded in those big chorus numbers – these were the ones that I looked forward to the most! And so, to <u>everyone</u> in the cast (leads and chorus) I thank you for your hard work in making the show sound brilliant!</p> <p>The band were incredible. Not only were they superb players but they really responded to realising the artistic intentions of the music that I placed upon them. I have to say that this show was a much more pleasurable experience: being in the pit and being able to communicate and have control of the show was such a massive improvement over Chitty.</p> <p>The sound on this show was great! I think it was a wise decision for the Committee to work with professionals on this production. It was very stressful to have the desire for click tracks with recorded vocals on so late in the rehearsal process. I couldn't do it for all the tracks as specified - just not enough time. So, we recorded them for the ones that were most necessary. And whilst this was kinda fun (recording tap dancing on a wooden tile was a first for me) it was an added and unexpected pressure. That said, when I listened back to the results on stage, the click tracks sound awesome. Noticeably so. And with more time in the future, would encourage this for every track – and time in the rehearsal schedule should be made available for this. <i>Your singing is excellent and it deserves to be heard at the very best sound it can.</i></p> <p>From my perspective, the music in our production of Shrek was wonderful. We were great. We were professional. And I had so many comments about the standards you set from both band and audience members alike. I hope you feel as proud of what we achieved musically as I do. Thank you. And I can't wait for RENT.</p>

<p>Notes from the production team</p> <p>Choreographer – Lianne O’Connor</p>	<p>Hi all, a big hello to all the company and a welcome to any new members. Sorry, I can’t be there tonight.</p> <p>I have been asked to give a quick update on Shrek by Nick. It seems like years ago that I was first asked to choreograph it. I knew from the start that this was going to be something special. We had such a strong cast for Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and along with our new members it really was strength in depth.</p> <p>The auditions were just insane. Time and time again people stepped up and performed out of their skins. I remember being quite bewildered that we were saying no to people who in any other company would have walked in to the part. This really does show how wonderful this company is.</p> <p>The rehearsals were just a dream. We had limited absences (thank you, thank you, thank you!!), amazing team work and plenty of laughs along the way. It was great to be able to choreograph so many different styles in one show. From the stiffness of Duloc to the Broadway sass of the rat tap and then the street vibe of the skeletons. Each number was performed with gusto and passion. A huge thank you to all the cast who went away after each rehearsal and practiced at home. It didn’t go unnoticed.</p> <p>I would like to personally thank Shelley for all she did in Shrek. Not only did she smash the role of Dragon but she also put in so much time and effort into the costumes, props and makeup. Many of you won’t realise how big the list of props was that Sally and I handed to her. Most people would have refused to do it, but Shelley never complained and constantly came up with new ideas. You did an amazing job Shelley, well done. Thanks to you, I can now add ‘Shrek facepainter’ on to my CV!</p> <p>Thank you to Nikki and the team. After the craziness of Chitty, it was a delight to work at the Haymarket this year. The sound and lighting were fantastic and it felt like a Saturday night every night. I think you even handled the small fire on stage pretty well!! I still smile at the fact we got away with lighting Steve’s head green for the whole run without him noticing! Sorry Steve!</p> <p>To all the committee, thank you for inviting me back. It really was a very special show to be part of. Nick, I know you had huge shoes to fill after Jackie (because let’s face it she was a rather good chairman!) but your support along with the other committee members throughout the rehearsal period was wonderful. It was fantastic to know we were all working towards the same goal - a brilliant show.</p> <p>Finally a big thank you to my partners in crime Sally and Steve. Without either of them the show wouldn’t have been so special.</p> <p>Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year and I’ll see you all very soon. Lianne xx</p>
<p>Notes from the production team</p> <p>Director – Sally Bruton</p>	<p>Thank you for having me back to work on Shrek, hopefully it won’t be the last time I get to work with the company again. Apologies I can’t be there tonight, but it’s all very hectic with new house, work, family and Brief Encounter to juggle - miss you lots!</p> <p>Last year, I felt like Shrek allowed the company to really showcase its talents. Whilst there was still the odd tech issue, there was no flying car, guest appearance by crew onstage and band of children to distract. All the PT were at rehearsals as needed, meaning we could iron out issues as they occurred rather than in the latter stages of running the show which was great. A tight group of principals who learnt their lines early on also supported us in finessing rather than resetting too.</p> <p>The production values were high and so were the standards of performance I felt. Unfortunately, not always the behaviour of the audience as they talked, got rounds in, rested drinks onstage and put their feet up too. In spite of all that, the focus onstage was great. And Shrek remains the biggest selling show since the Haymarket reopened, I believe!</p> <p>I had a great time working with Lianne and Steve, who are both incredibly talented and had a great vision for the show as well.</p> <p>Thanks once again to the committee for having me, but mostly to the fabulous cast who made the whole process a blast</p>
<p>Treasurer Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show Accounts for the last 2 years • Two shows side by side – Chitty vs Shrek • £68,000 ticket sales for Shrek • Compared to £59,600 for Chitty. • Increase of 16% royalties to perform Shrek <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show Fees helped with the budget so thank you to everyone • Profit of £1,913 of merchandise sales • £3,000 of income for programmes/merchandise • FYI - There was a small commission for sales to the theatre

	<p><u>Quick Breakdown of Costs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net of £58,000 of the show • Theatre £19k to hire • £600 for lighting • £2,444 for sound – money well spent. Sound was brilliant, worth it. • £4,500 for costumes/makeup. • Scenery was £5,500 (8k less than chitty) • £494 of props. Shelley was a big help so thank you as always • £5,000 for Microphone hire. • Haymarket has no equipment to help show. Had to hire music stands and drum shield. Overall staging cost £17k. <p>An extra Sunday performance meant MD/Director/Band – cost a little more than last year.</p> <p>£1,700 spent on advertisements – such as Boost Trampoline Park/Primary Times</p>	
<p>Propose the accounts</p>	<p>Becky Valentine approved the accounts & Seconded by, Dan Brewer</p>	
<p>Election of Committee, leavers and Approvals</p>	<p>Nick Cox available for re-election as Chairman Approved by: Jackie Oddy Seconded: Liz Valentine</p> <p>Vaughan Ashcroft available for re-election as Treasurer Approved by Jodie Blowfield Seconded: Beth Sly</p> <p>Matt Barton available for re-election as Secretary Approved by Ellen French Seconded: Sophie Kandola</p> <p>We are saying farewell to David Bartram from the committee and offer him many thanks for his support and commitment over the years. He always had the right thing to say. Provided lots of wisdom and helped LAOS a lot over the years.</p> <p>New vacancies available to be on the committee: We are allowing more people on the committee than before</p> <p>Ellen French proposed herself to join to the committee Approved by: Sammi Bale Seconded: Nade Franklin</p> <p>Sammi Bale proposed herself to join the committee Approved by Pip Illife Seconded: Kelly Lucken</p> <p>Becky Valentine proposed herself to join the committee Approved by Leeann Rana Seconded by: Ellen</p> <p>The current LAOS Auditor will continue to audit LAOS' accounts.</p>	

<p>RENT Details</p>	<p>Initially had the rights to do Half a Sixpence but discovered Kilworth house was performing at the same time as us so had to change show – last minute decisions. See Chairman Notes for further details.</p> <p>Steve Duguid (MD) is coming back Lianne O Connor is choreographer After accepting new director applications, Sarah Varnum was selected to director RENT due to her experience</p> <p>Production team now in place, meaning dates and rehearsals will be due imminently. News will be out very soon. They have not met yet.</p> <p>Rehearsals on Tuesday and Wednesday. Auditions to be second week of January if production team agree.</p> <p>7:30pm – 9:30pm Tuesday 8pm – 10pm Wednesday</p>	
<p>Any Other Business</p>	<p>Next Year's Show confirmed as 'Our House'</p> <p>If anyone has any holiday booked that may affect the rehearsal schedule please inform Leeann Rana</p> <p>See printed booklet for details of LAOS Subscription, show fee's and other details.</p>	