

Minutes from Showstoppers' Committee Meeting

2nd March 2016, 2pm in 29/2075

Expected

SK – Sevan Keoshgerian (President)
BW – Ben Willcocks (Vice-President)
AB – Andy Banks (Secretary)
PJ – Phoebe Judd (Social Secretary)
JH – Jess Hector (Development Officer)
JM – Jamie Martin (Development Officer)
CL – Cat Lewis (Tours Officer)
CH – Charlie House (Webmaster & Promotions Officer)
DM – Danny McNamee (Ordinary Member)

Apologies & Absences

AM – Angry Morgan (Treasurer) – Apologies (H2S Rehearsal)
JH – Jess Hector (Development Officer) – Apologies (Meeting)
LE – Lydia Edge (Ordinary Member) – Apologies (H2S Rehearsal)

Non-Committee Present

AS – Andy Sugden
CHY- Catherine Hyde

Agenda

I. SMALL UPDATE

Company Feedback

The feedback here is almost entirely in full quotes as it was submitted. No submission was omitted. Where quotes have been edited, lines have been removed to improve how the submissions read and some lines have been removed which spoke about specific details and thus are not helpful to the society going forward.

Green indicates responses to “What did you like about...” questions.

Red indicates responses to “What could be improved about...” questions.

Rehearsal Process

“Really good fun! We didn't really have any issues throughout the rehearsal process which I think was down to our pretty laid back cast and the fact that we organised things fairly well. The cast were occasionally a little difficult to keep quiet but they all said that they had lots of fun which is the main thing.”

“The best show I have been fortunate enough to be a part of.”

“The rehearsal were so well organised and almost always felt highly productive. Lydia is the dream and the whole team should be commended for their forward thinking and making the process as stress free as possible.”

Direction

“Andy was a fantastic AD, always contributing ideas and tweaks and picking up on character subtleties. I have no doubt that he could direct a cast beautifully in future should he wish to.”

“Lydia was amazing as always! She had a very clear vision for the show, and her blocking was so brilliantly thought through. The directing team did a very good job of teaching this to the cast as well- even difficult scenes like Another Hundred People were pretty much exactly the same every night! The use of the benches as different set pieces was really imaginative, and I loved it!”

“Our directors were organised and clear in their ideas for blocking and character/what they wanted from us as actors. They were patient with us always.”

“Lydia was the best director ever. Her organisation levels were crazily precise but she also tailored rehearsals to people's specific needs and managed to get everything blocked so quickly and efficiently. There wasn't any time where I felt overlooked, as even when background acting she offered helpful feedback, and she was so encouraging and helpful in bringing my character to life and importantly let me do my own thing with the character. I love her!”

“I would say that maybe some of the characters did not come off as being particularly 'old'. Obviously none of us are that age, so it was difficult, but I didn't really believe that any of them were old enough to have children. I'd also suggest that maybe there wasn't enough of a distinction for the audience in what was real and what wasn't, although I think that probably is a fault of the show itself. Classic Sondheim.”

“This is perhaps a fault of the limited time we have, but it would have been awesome to work on the characters a bit more intensively - that said, as a cast we were slow on the learning of the show and we could have left ourselves with more time for character development if we had learnt our stuff sooner.”

Production

“Jess and Georgia were both wonderful and did everything that we asked of them. Georgia organised one of the best cast meals I think we've all ever had and Jess was fab for sourcing props, especially all the consumables in show week. They were both also absolute gems for sitting backstage during show week to help with lighting candles. Charlie and Catriona were also wonderful - Charlie as always did so much to help out with the design and ordering flyers and helping us to film trailers and really went above and beyond - and should accept credit as a full producer more often! Catriona was also a star for helping us hunt down costumes in the PA house and lending us her rug and bed sheets for the show.”

“I really loved the costumes- I liked the subtlety of the characters wearing the same colour, it wasn't over the top but just noticeable enough! The candle effect was great, considering how difficult that felt like it was going to be to pull off.”

“Our costumes were awesome, and the design for the posters and fliers for the show plus the trailers and the Facebook advertising were all brilliantly executed ideas.”

“I (Lydia) should have given Jess and Georgia and Catriona more to do in terms of ordering particularly costumes as I ended up doing that myself but only because I am useless at delegating. They would have done a fantastic job and I should have delegated the responsibility to them!”

“Was not the world's biggest fan of the design- it felt a little bit outdated. I think it would have helped if Cat (and maybe Jamie?) had worn some kind of subtle old makeup? I think a lot of jokes about her age were missed because she looked a lot younger than Brendan!”

“Generally I guess we just didn't push publicity as much as we could have done (might have benefited from having a bigger push in terms of flyering on campus/roads etc.)”

Musical Direction

“Andy and Joe are great! They taught the cast magnificently what is a very difficult score. They both worked super hard and were wonderful to work with. They had the band sourced ridiculously early which was wonderful.”

“The band were the best band I have ever heard in the Annex! Singing was also fab, although I think both were supported by incredible individual performers.”

“I cannot fault the talent, patience and perseverance of our MDing team. Andy and Joe were so good to us, and helped us conquer an incredibly challenging show as well as mastering it themselves. They are a fantastic team.”

“When teaching us they were both so patient and Amazingly encouraging and I never felt embarrassed or under pressure when singing in front of them. Especially coming down to the tedious process of learning harmonies they were both so patient. Overall I think the sound of the whole cast was great and this is all down to their precise teaching and high levels of effort they put in.”

“Literally nothing?? Andy and Joe are gods of music”

“I cannot fault the talent, patience and perseverance of our MDing team. Andy and Joe were so good to us, and helped us conquer an incredibly challenging show as well as mastering it themselves. They are a fantastic team.”

Choreography

“Ruthie is fantastic! She put some absolutely cracking choreography into this show and worked extremely hard! She says that Sondheim isn't written for her but I call bullshit because she did it so so well!”

“SIDE BY SIDE!!!!!!!!!!!!!! So exciting, best ever, everyone was great. I also loved some of the small subtle coordinated movements (head snapping to side in Little Things for example)”

“The dance really came together in the last week, and I think Ruthie did a very good job with a cast of such mixed dance ability.”

“The choreography was hard work to get looking good, but we were all so proud when we finally pulled it off, and we hope Ruthie is too. It was stressful for all involved at times, particularly in more challenging numbers for those in the cast who are by and large not 'dancers' such as Side by Side, but the reason it was stressful was because we cared about making it the best it could be and ultimately I think it was worth it. “

“Although I got stressed with it at times, the overall result of the work of the choreography was well worth it for the end result. I felt my dancing has been improved by the show and I loved performing the amazing choreography and wanted to make Ruthie proud!”

“Tick Tock was very random and felt out of place. I think there is a good reason for it being cut from many productions! It would have made slightly more sense had it only been Kathy dancing, but I think the inclusion of the other girlfriends took away from her moment in the spotlight. I would also suggest that the choreography for the number itself was potentially too ambitious for the dancers- if they had been able to execute everything perfectly it would possibly not have felt quite so awkward, but as it was some of them got lost and it was hard to tell if they were out of time or supposed to be working in canon.”

“At one point or another the stress of mastering the dances made all in the process behave in a way that I think they wouldn't be proud of, but as explained above, on balance it was well-meaning stress that came from endeavoring to get the choreography right.”

“I felt sometimes that because I'm not trained in dance to as high a standard as others, I sometimes felt some moves where slightly rushed she taught and went over my head. But this was raised and I learnt them eventually I just took a bit longer than others”

Tech

“Catherine and Patrick are wonderful and we could never do shows without them!

Catherine created beautiful lights, tech run was an absolute breeze. Patrick went out of his way to go to PA house to get different treads which were wider - they were just great! As were the rest of the crew during show week. Everything was tip top!”

“Headsets are bae, thank you for buying them Showstoppers, they make such a big difference especially when it comes to mic changes! Thank you to Gem and Ellie for putting up with mics taped to their face the whole show! Although the bed set change was clunky to start with, I think we got into the swing of things eventually. Tech run was also pretty short, which is always good!”

“Maybe not being kicked out by security???”

“Band were too loud often (but what can you really do, it's the Annex). Mics sometimes dropped out or kicked in halfway through people speaking, or were noticeably on for some characters and off for others which was a bit weird.”

Final Comments

“I had so much fun doing this show and will miss it dearly. I am so sad that this is one of the last shows I will do with many of the people in the cast. :(“

“Literally loved doing this show and crying that it's over”

“I don't really have any detailed feedback but essentially it was an *outstanding* execution of an *ok* show.”

Comments that, in my opinion, are worth committee taking note of for future shows:

Edited comment about a member of the prod team. I have spoken to this member individually: “if they see that the stage is empty they want to make the most of it, and make decisions without checking with us. Often it is empty for a reason- we are running backwards and forwards putting the band in, we need to hear something without a loud cast getting in the way or something isn't safe yet. I appreciate that it might be frustrating, but they were just very rude about the whole thing.”

“Something related to the dance side of the show which I felt less than positive about (though this is NOT in relation to the choreographer/choreography) is that at one point in intensive week, a cast member spoke in an impolite way to those trying to work through a dance based on their feeling that they deserved to practice a dance they were involved in, and they implied we had taken more than enough time to try and improve the dance we were working on. Whilst obviously sitting about and waiting in a show process is nobody's favourite thing, it is an inevitable part of every show process that everyone has to deal with at some point, and it felt unfair to belittle the hard work of people currently practicing something just because they were frustrated that they had not been involved for a period of time in the rehearsal. This was the only point in the show process that I felt we didn't really rise to something or not as a team. The other thing we could have done better as a cast was learn our music, choreography and script sooner, but I would allocate that to collective responsibility.”

“Not really a criticism of the show itself, which was amazing, but it was 1) too big for the small slot 2) irresponsible for (almost) all the chorus line prod team to be involved.”

II. MAIN UPDATE

BW: We had a dress run and tech run, it was very good.

PJ: It looks amazing.

AM (By Facebook message): I popped into rehearsal on Saturday and had a lot of very positive things said. The prod team had been very good at adapting rehearsals to suit what the cast felt needed practice and the cast were generally very happy with how well the show has come together during intensive week.

CL: We need tuck shop rota, I can do tonight.

Prod team members have to help Bradley on front desk because Andy is in the show and Natasha's not there.

DM: I can do Saturday evening.

SK: I'll do it on Thursday.

AM: I'll do it on Friday?

Big, long, circular debate on how to solve problems with the Main Show slot.

Main points and arguments raised were:

- Small, at 14 cast members, was too big and should in future have a definitive cap on the cast size.
- There used to be a number cap and that was removed for a reason; at a time when we're being questioned about our inclusivity, why would do that
- The reason there were some rehearsals lost during Small was because the majority of the Main prod team were in the cast for Small, which was cast before Main pitches. In future when people pitch for Main, committee should take this into account.
- Even though they weren't very available, there was still 1 Director, 1 (at the time) MD and 1 Assistant Choreographer available for both weeks.
- The small team did give a day off to the Choreographers to do Chorus Line dancing, as well as the whole cast a day off on the Friday, which was a Main rehearsal day.
- There have been a plethora of organisational and timescale problems with Main Show for the past 3 years, and in the past 2 there was very little crossover between Small and Main, so whilst Small may have been a factor, it wasn't and isn't the major defining factor in the Main Slot's problems.
- If the problem with main is that they don't have enough time, we could try pitching Main before summer, around the same time as Freshers and Small, with the bare bones/structural leads of a production team (Director(s), MD(s), Choreographer(s) & Producer(s). We would then be able to advertise the show, and the chance to be both in the show and on the prod team, at the Bunfight. The Assistants would be freshers who are taken on in the 3-4 weeks after Freshers casting, perhaps with an audition-esque interview. Auditions would then be held where we currently usually hold Main pitches, giving the team 2 or 3 more weeks of rehearsal time, as well as a whole summer and months to plan their schedule.
- As Summer tends to have the longest time to rehearse asides from Small, we could switch the criteria for the current Spring/Main and Summer slots, giving Main show the Summer slot, so it has the longest time to rehearse. This might lead to Summer/New Spring and Small having exclusive casts, but that would make more people want to do Main, meaning people would want to do Main more, rather than another slot.
- Due to Freshers, Small, and Main, the current Summer show still hasn't had a full cast rehearsal, 3 weeks before Easter; so it's debatable how much more time switching slots would actually give. Also, Small and Freshers are already exclusive from each other; making Summer/New Spring and Small exclusive as well would not be very inclusive, and we might not have enough people to fill out production teams and casts for both without crossover.

No conclusion or definitive answer was reached; the topic will probably be revisited at the constitution review.

III. SUMMER UPDATE

CHY: We've made Emily a full producer, and have got Mango sponsorship again. We've done loads of recaps because everyone has been in every show, so we're having to teach most things twice. Danny hasn't been in yet, as he's been very busy, so he's coming in on Sunday.

IV. EDINBURGH UPDATE

CHY: It's going alright, we've got a cast now. We got the rights deposit paid. We're sorting out preview dates now, and venues. We're still waiting to hear from C Venues, but got a call from the Space.

CL: It would be nice to get accommodation and stuff in the works as early as possible. It would also be nice for me to come along to the next group thing as you guys have a cast, I'd like to get their ideas of what they want for accommodation. During the day in Spring Awakening week maybe? Auditions for TG shows start this week.

CHY: Ollie sent me link to the funding things they used last year.

CL: Ruthie's planning things like a cake sale before the Easter holiday, and secret cinema this Sunday, which is Sunflowers. Edinburgh assassins is going well.

BW: I might introduce contract kills. Basically if someone doesn't know their target, they can put an extra £1 in, to choose someone from the dead to kill their target for them.

CHY: Make that a £3 charge. After assassins is finished, people could pay to have you as a target, then try to kill you.

JM: So it wouldn't be who can kill Ben, it would be who can kill Ben first?

V. INDEPENDENT UPDATE

DM: Auditions are happening right now. A lot of people are auditioning from across TG, Comedy and Showstoppers.

VI. TREASURER UPDATE

AM (by Facebook message): Company made a profit of £116.52 and I've started to pay back show deposits/transferred them to Chorus Line deposits. I've also paid the Ordinary Days rights deposit and the Showstopper Workshop, so there is now no money left for workshops!

Hubbub, I asked Catherine whether she's had it written down in any way about getting 100% of pledges and unfortunately she doesn't, so I don't think there's anything we can do except maybe consider not using the Hubbub again.

Funding opened on Monday and closes Sunday. Things that have been suggested so far are: Edinburgh Van hire, ticket printing software (maybe to share with TG so we don't have the problems that we had with the Company

tickets again), money for the Independent pot, and the keyboard(!!!). We're unlikely to get some of this stuff but it's worth a shot.

I'm going to the bank Saturday as I still haven't put the Company money into the bank, and yet the bank account is still functioning well! Yay! But then I can also put some of the Chorus Line money in and then the account will have lots of dolla!

We will apply for the ticket-printing software, keyboard, Edinburgh travel and Independent pot. Cat will write the application for Edinburgh van hire, and Sev will write the application for the Independent pot. We will apply for half of the keyboard money; the reasoning as to why we have money now, is that we are not on a loan from SUSU anymore and Footloose made a larger profit than expected at the time of the last round of funding.

VII. SOCIAL UPDATE

PJ: Like my post on the event, if you want a white t-shirt.

VIII. DEVELOPMENT & WORKSHOPS UPDATE

JM: It's a Dusk now, one more workshop left, there's none this or next week. Everyone get in your songs today, and your backing tracks by Saturday.

Jamie will post asking for backing tracks by Saturday.

IX. WEB, PROMOTIONS & TECH UPDATE

CH: I had an idea, could we have a society-wide calendar for show rehearsals?

Mid-length discussion on this. Whilst it would be very useful, it would require the production teams to constantly upload, re-upload, change and alter their rehearsal schedule on the website, as well as Facebook. Also, if set on the website, it would give less leeway in shifting around rehearsals, or calling impromptu ones. It would work, if the website was used instead of Facebook. For now, it's decided that it would probably be more trouble than it's worth.

CHY: Tech-wise, you can now do 5 foot deck in the Annex without handrails.

X. ORDINARY UPDATE

Danny checked the email account

XI. A.O.B.

CH: Can everyone read the constitution before next week please.

CHY: You know that irritating flashing light in the annex? Well we've "fixed" that now!

CL: If you saw Show in a Week, fill in the feedback for it please.

CHY: How to Succeed band scores have also arrived like 3 weeks early.