

Minutes of EGTG Committee Meeting – 14 September 2022 via Zoom

Present: Angela Harkness Robertson
Alma Forsyth
Wendy Brindle
Hannah Bradley Croall
James Scott
Alastair Smith

1. Apologies: Martin Foreman, Siobhan McGovern, Claire Wood.
2. The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved – proposed by Anji and seconded by Hannah.
3. **Fringe Report:** a) Artistic Achievement – both shows were well received and feedback was, for the most part, extremely positive.
b) Practical – Press Tickets: a lengthy discussion was held regarding the necessity and usefulness of issuing press tickets, particularly if no review is published. Anji felt strongly that a free press ticket should oblige the holder to write a timely review. Hannah was of the opposite opinion, stating that it would be counter-productive, especially for our shows staged outwith the Fringe. Alastair thought it was only a problem if we were almost sold out at the beginning of a run and a press ticket prevented a paying customer obtaining a seat. In the end it was noted that, during the Fringe, EGTG has virtually no control over who receives a free press ticket from the Fringe Box Office but that we can control this for productions at other times of the year.
- *Publicity*: Anji was frustrated with a lack of help on the technical side of publicity and felt her requests for help had been ignored. Luckily a member of cast from each show (Torya Winters for BW and Ailie Henderson for MOV) had technical skills and they were able to create the social media content. Alastair and Wendy apologised for not noticing Anji's email requests. Hannah said she had provided both productions with information and cut off dates and that we shouldn't rely on her for technical help, only publicity. Alma asked why a director and cast should be responsible for social media publicity. Hannah replied that they are best placed to take photos, video clips and make known specific items of interest about their show. As publicity officer, she is responsible for giving advice, creating content to send to other media outlets, posting information on our website and writing and distributing our Newsletter. Anji, receiving no concrete solution as to how technical help on publicity might be forthcoming, brought the discussion to a close by suggesting that we need someone on the Committee who has the appropriate technical skills since there is no guarantee that there will be someone suitably equipped in the cast of each future production, nor do all directors have the necessary know-how.
- *Front of House*: In spite of written instructions for FoH volunteers, not everything evolved as it ought to have done with forms detailing ticket and programme sales on the door not correctly filled in and the desk being left unmanned during one of the plays. It was reiterated, therefore, that at least one person has to remain FoH throughout the evening. Hannah suggested that at Committee level we should check beforehand who will be on duty. Anji agreed that we need a named person as duty officer each time. It was also noted that we now have a dedicated phone for digital sales 'on the door'.
c) Finances – Wendy reported a healthy profit, especially since it was our first live Fringe after the pandemic – last such appearance was in 2019. A breakdown of our Fringe finances can be found in the attached document along with these minutes. Our income from sales at the Fringe Box Office is pending. Unexpectedly we will also receive a rebate from the FBO. It seems that if they sold more than 40% of tickets, a rebate will be granted. The reason for this is not clear at present.
After a conversation with Hannah, Michael Mulligan (Royal Scot Club venue manager), proposed that Edinburgh companies group together to promote their productions in order to maximise audience attendance at any future Fringe. The reason behind this being that newspapers and other

media pay attention only to the big venues. Anji agreed to look at ticket sales for 2019 and compare them with this year.

4. **Post-Fringe Tours:** a) Dunbar Battery – two performances each of MOV and BW over the weekend of 20/21 August. Anji reported that it had been a worthwhile and enjoyable venture. The advice of her contact there that a non-ticketed event would bring in healthy donations, proved correct. The Dunbar people handled all local publicity and, because we had use of the venue at no cost, we donated 50% of our income.

b) The Dell, Stratford upon Avon – Four performances of MOV over the weekend of 27/28 August. Again Anji reported a joyful and worthwhile experience. Audiences were most appreciative, and a Jewish spectator praised us for our sensitive handling of the subject. Audience enthusiasm was reflected in generous bucket donations of over £1,000, subsequently shared (as already agreed by the Committee) among the cast as contribution towards their accommodation costs. The RSC indicated that a future application from us to participate once more in its summer community programme would be welcome.

5. **Satyricon update:** Martin sent the following report – “It is now three weeks until we open at the Roxy. This is a critical moment on various levels. Cast members appear to be - and several have commented - that they are very optimistic about the production; the director considers it is on a knife-edge.

Rehearsals: going slowly. Most cast members now present all the time. One cast member is often absent, is still off-book and appears disengaged; he may be replaced, by the director or a last-minute find. One other cast member is proving less talented than appeared at audition. The ensemble as a whole works well despite the occasional creative differences between director and assistant director.

Costumes: on track, thanks partly to cast members taking on responsibility for measuring and sewing.

Set: very simple, nearly built, to be painted at Home Street weekend of 24th/25th. Props: getting there. Still have to work on a knife that releases blood.

Lighting: will be complex: date of meeting with Gordon Hughes to be confirmed. Sound: also complex: a sound designer has not been found and the director is working on it.

Publicity: mostly social media. Posters (two versions) printed and beginning to be distributed, particularly in pubs in central Edinburgh. Media releases gone to the usual suspects, plus classics departments of university and gay media; no responses from them as yet. Paid advertising on WhatsOnNetwork and AllEdinburghTheatre, perhaps to appear elsewhere.

Sales: by 9 September only 9 seats had been sold for the whole run.

Front-of-House: looking for two EGTG reps for each performance (will require about 4 hours of time to include presence before, during and after performance but will allow free entry to the show).” Absence of a sound technician was noted with Wendy and Hannah offering to put Martin in touch those who might be able to assist. Alastair, as a member of *Satyricon* cast, said everyone was very tired but thought the show promised to come together before curtain up. Separately it had come to the attention of a member of the Committee that rehearsals were not always positive experiences for the cast and it was agreed that any concerns should be discussed at our meeting after the run. Hannah felt we were not supporting the production enough and said we needed to put out more enthusiasm. Given that publicity seemed well in hand, Alma asked what more could we do apart from helping Front of House? A discussion then ensued over Martin’s proposal to give free entry to volunteers for FoH. In the end it was decided not to support Martin in this (Wendy, Anji, James and Alma voting no, Alastair being neutral and Hannah having no problem). From the Committee, Wendy and Siobhan have volunteered for the matinée on 8 October and Alma for the evening of 6 October. The Committee also thought that sending individual emails to EGTG members (rather than via the Newsletter) might be the best approach to encourage volunteers to come forward.

6. **A Christmas Carol update:** Anji reported that most principal roles had been cast but that she was still looking for a Tiny Tim, Peter Cratchit and Scrooge 3 and 4. Actors/dancers to fill non-speaking parts and to help with scene changes were also required. Because of complicated licencing

requirements, child actors under ten will not be participating. The production team so far consists of Dug Campbell (music and sound effects), Gordon Hughes (lighting), Craig Robertson (sound), Chris Allan (set building), Gillian Burnett (props) and Elissa Webb (SM). Anji and some of the team will be making a visit to the Roxy to reacquaint themselves with the space.

7. **Home Street:** The clear out of costumes was confirmed for Saturday 17 September from 11h00 to 14h00. Alma, Anji, Hannah, Martin and Wendy agreed to be present.
8. **EGTG Banking:** Following the agreement to change to a 'one to sign' mandate, Wendy confirmed she has access to online banking which will also be open to Claire once she has submitted her ID. Unfortunately our type of account does not permit the following operations: making payments, setting up standing orders or direct debits. There seems to be at the bank some confusion as to our legal entity. Wendy will investigate what can be done to clarify this so as to permit all banking operations online. The Committee thanked Wendy for her work on this.
9. **Membership update:** No update was available but, at the last count, we had 34 members and one friend. More current figures will be given at the next meeting.
10. **SCDA Membership:** As agreed at our last meeting, we looked into other possible Community Theatre Associations (e.g. NODA and ACT UK). Their fees being less competitive than that for the SCDA, we rejoined the latter at a cost of £50. As its membership year runs from June to June, we missed the 'early bird' concession price of £35. The SCDA also has the advantage of a script library which can be used by our members. EGTG has been asked if it could take up a place on the SCDA committee but thus far none of us has accepted the invitation.
11. **Replacing Bev on Committee:** A maximum of ten members is permitted. After a fruitless discussion of possible candidates, it was agreed to review the matter at the next meeting.
12. **Programme 2023:** We received two submissions for the SCDA one-act play festival, one Fringe proposal and one for our autumn slot. Lacking a proposal for our spring slot, it was agreed to ask one of directors submitting for the SCDA festival if they would consider instead directing the complete play in the spring. We also received a new script but no one yet to direct it. Potential directors will be approached. The Committee will meet all prospective directors at BP on either Wednesday 28 September (19h00 to 22h00) or Sunday 9 October (15h00 to 18h00). Hannah will set up a Doodle Poll to ascertain which date is preferred by the majority of the Committee.
13. **StagEHd:** For the 2023 event, Hannah sought agreement to proceed under the EGTG banner as was done for 2022. The Committee agreed.
14. **Future meetings:** Siobhan had once again requested that the Committee discuss the resumption of meetings in person at BP rather than via zoom. As this question was voted on very recently (in May), it was decided not to proceed with yet another vote. Committee meetings will, therefore, continue via zoom. Some meetings will, however, take place in person: interviewing potential directors for the following year's programme; the AGM; on one other occasion in the year, to be decided.
15. **AOB:** none.

The next meeting will be held **at BP on either Wednesday 28 September at 19h00 or Sunday 9 October at 15h00.**

For breakdown of Fringe 2022 finances, see separate document here attached.