

## Notes from Post Production Meeting 16 Nov 2008

Present: Caroline Slater, Laurence Slater, Tom Beaton, Janet Oates, Helena Brown, Margaret Begley, Alison Sands, Tony Wilson, Stan Streater, Len Marchant, Katherine Morrison, Anthony Agius, Sylvia Bisset, Malcolm MacLachlan, Alan Champion, Bernard Stevenson, Chris Hobson, Philip Johnson

Some of the key points captured from the meeting are as follows:

- **Serving refreshments.** In future, we need to make sure we have enough equipment of our own for bar/refreshments, eg tea towels, corkscrew, teaspoons etc, if we aren't sure what will be available
- **Wine at IPH** – if we continue to perform here, the conclusion was that however unhappy we are about the licence fee, we should pay it and offer people wine. Anthony will raise it with IPH management to see if there is any way to reduce this cost.
- **Three different venues.** Performers enjoyed the variety of performing in three different venues, but those involved in the organisation and logistics were less keen. It was good to get away from IPH, but probably won't be very practical in future for fully-staged productions.
- **Raffle.** Jeanette did a great job and made sure we sold a large number of raffle tickets. Good to have one person responsible for selling tickets. We should do this in future.
- **Invitations to dignitaries.** We should review the list of invitees in future. Particularly, we should consider who may write reviews in local papers. It is good to have reviews to quote in future publicity.
- **End of run party.** We should consider a function room in a pub in future. It didn't quite work being in the main bar of the Swan. Also, we weren't sure the food was up to snuff. If we are at IPH, we should consider the London Apprentice. Most important that it is near to the venue.
- **Publicity.** Bernard is keen that we plan publicity well in advance. We should consider having a publicity sub-committee as this is a lot for one person to manage. Think about advertising in W4 site and Sounds Great magazine. We should get members to be more involved in generating ideas for publicity.
- **Rehearsals.** The number of rehearsals was 'just right' for Purcell. However, we should adjust this to what is being performed – the Cavalli was much more difficult last year – and we did a lot more 'acting' – so needed more rehearsals.
- **Narration.** This was considered to be very successful. We should consider having some sort of narration for all our productions in future – even fully staged productions. People thought that the pre-production talks for the Cavalli were very helpful. Also, we should have someone explaining what is going on and when to clap etc for anyone in the audience who feels a bit alien to the whole experience. Anything to help the audience understand better.

- **Chorus conductor.** Whoever conducts in the performance should also be involved in the rehearsals so that he/she brings out dynamics and emphasis that has been rehearsed. It worked well to have a separate conductor for chorus pieces.
- **Orchestra.** It worked well to have a baroque music specialist to tutor the orchestra and to lead in the performances. Even if expensive, was considered worthwhile.
- **Set-up.** It was better to have the singers visible above the orchestra at Heston and IPH. Didn't work so well at Richmond where there was only a slight difference in height.
- **Tickets.** The online booking facility was not used very much this year. Not sure why. This was a success last year, so we should continue to use it. The special email address was hardly used. We need to find a better way of working out ticket revenue as money tends to get mixed up with raffle and programme money on the night. Suggestion to collect tickets as people enter auditorium, count the audience, have ticket stubs etc. Needs some thought before next production. It is useful to be able to tell advertisers how many people attend. Ticket prices – much debate about whether tickets too cheap – we need to encourage people to come whilst still making enough money to cover costs. Perhaps make difference between full price and concessions smaller?
- **Free tickets for charitable purpose.** Very good to give free tickets to alms houses etc. This worked well and is good for our image.
- **Publicity to people who attend.** We should have leaflets available for people to take with them – with a form they can fill in or details on how to get onto our mailing list. We had a few this year, but not enough. Also, the clipboard was a good idea to allow people to register an interest in being put on the mailing list.
- **Timing of future productions.** Seems to work well having them in the Autumn. This means we can rehearse during the week through the summer.
- **Choice of repertoire.** Some people are nervous about singing in a foreign language. If we do, we should try to rig up surtitles. Also, we should 'pair' foreign language operas with English operas in a performance so people can choose to only participate in half the performance. If we do dancing in future, we should either just have the children or approach a baroque dance group so the standard of dancing matches the singing (!).
- **Members concert and other concerts.** Popular events – we should consider organising members concert for this year. Also, we should consider other concerts through the year for raising funds. The Twickenham Festival concert last year could be repeated elsewhere.

Caroline Slater  
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