



Grove Theatre - Customer Forum Minutes Thursday 18th July 2019

SLL Staff Present;

Ellie Garrett – Head of Operations

Helen Rudderham – Theatre Administrator

(NB staff comments noted by initials)

EG (RY notes) –

EG thanked everyone for coming, thrilled to welcome you on the best national day of the year – get to know your customers day! RY sends her apologies but cannot attend this evening, has left some notes/info for EG to pass on.

Since we last met in April: Dunstable has opened, the gym has now moved from the lower foyer, library has opened and the drop off box has gone – have customers been? If not please go it is incredible.

Education & Outreach: Creative Network – offering the chance for school and cultural providers to work and meet, providing free CPD for teachers as to how you would deliver the arts in the classroom on a daily basis.

GD1 - annual dance show – KW heads up, over 2 days, growing in popularity, might go over more days in future years. Record number of groups this year – audition local groups, standard so high. Giving performers chance on the professional stage.

Well into prep for Whistle down the Wind now – is going to be fabulous. We have been lucky enough this year to secure funding for bursary places so we can extend our community reach further, enabling more young people to participate in this wonderful experience. One example of this is we have an assistant Musical Director joining us from the Music Service, she is a Grade 8 Pianist and will be working alongside our Panto Musical Director who also over sees the Grove Production Project. Josh – good news story for GPP, works on our box office, see full extent of his talent as he has the lead male role. 8th- 10th August, don't miss it.

We are now an Arts Mark Partner - Accreditation, work closely with schools to deliver education. More team members are Arts Awards trained so looking to increase our delivery within the local schools.

Films & LS: Mixed bag across last season. Red Joan – request last time, is on again on Saturday. Runaway success was Rocketman, very well across the box office. Aladdin – few more screenings of this. Summer period coming up, lots of children's films – lion king. Toy story 4. Few nice ones for the grown-ups – late night, with Emma Thompson and Yesterday. Autumn season – finalising dates. Exclusive – Downtown Abbey film will be coming – looks like November at the moment. Live screenings – Andre Rieu. Exclusive – another screening in January for his 70th birthday. Finalising ROH and more titles from NT. NT celebrating 10th anniversary of LS – pulling few things out of archive – one man two governs. Small island came – really good. Lehman trilogy next week – production had few years ago and been brought back, critically acclaimed. Few other things that have come through so trying to make dates work – watch this space. Shakespeare – measure for measure in august but none others announced as yet, as soon as have RSC dates will announce. Next brochure will have some updates. Re-evaluation of Marketing Strategies – just started.

Staffing:

- Head of Front of House – Shannon joins us from Portsmouth.
- Extending the team – babies all round (SG/RS/ARM)
- ARM will be leaving us to have her baby – we wish her well and hope to see her return in the future.

Theatre: Incredible sold out performances including Jimmy Carr x 2, Tina Turner, Fast love, Hormonal Housewives and Dreamboys. Avenue Q – Great week, number lower than hoped – had been booked into Aylesbury. 52% of all attendees had never been to the Grove before so this was an incredible result for us. Roof Works – Complete apart from a few last snagging works.

Hand driers – are on hold as there are other maintenance issues around the building unfortunately.

Panto Press Launch was incredible! Fab cast and amazing costume updates this year. We can't wait!

Coming up: Jasper Carrot, Henning When, Ruby Wax, BBC 3 Counties Peoples Awards – public can attend this year – don't miss out and vote Rhea Yeung is a judge this year, Three Degrees, Cat's – DMTC, Shawaddywaddy, Buddy Holly Story, Peppa Pig, Rhod Gilbert to name but a few. Then Panto, very exciting full of tricks, magical sets and timeless comedy for all the family.

Comments:

Customer asked was Grove Theatre going to be advertising at the library now? EG explained Dunstable centre now run by SLL, so should give much more scope for advertising, cross over/ partnership with them yes.

Customer commented on Film leaflet adjustments, much better to read now. EG - now white background with dark writing, should make it easier to see the vital information. Thanks to customers for feedback on this.

EG discussed how customers requested live bands last time, since then have had Corey band, and are in talks with some other live music people.

Customer asked if any uptake from Ukulele orchestra? HR explained RY is trying to work on this, and hopefully will have an update on this soon.

Customer commented season coming up to panto is a little disappointing apart from pantomime. All tributes and comedians. Didn't seem to be anything different, no ballet/opera. EG explained Opera no longer tour, working on some alternates. Limited to what available, Lots of touring companies keeping an eye on the news, Brexit looming. Tributes and comedians are pretty much guaranteed sellers so tour all year round. Feedback will be given to RY though. *Customer commented sometimes much better than thought when get here, to which all agreed and discussed coming to see something alternative to see.*

Customer asked if That'll be the day is coming up? EG – yes October 2019. Customer commented on discussion re putting on a 'best of' show soon for anniversary.

Customer asked re sliding doors? EG apologised for inconvenience, sadly bigger job than first thought, takes time. Other doors should be open, customers commented not always. EG to pick up with DM's on this.

Customer asked re Car park and damaged barrier. HR informed sadly not our car park, council are working on a fix.

Customer made comment – film Monday afternoon, cold in the auditorium. EG informed last week had complaints re too hot, can differ depending on show/number of customers etc. Customers discussed Left hand side is cold side – EG to ask tech to look into temperature. EG explained during Cinema obviously there is no theatrical lighting on, not same amount of bodies – lots of the heat that is usually generated, isn't.

Customer made comment when house is full bar is jam packed. Can people that are ordering drinks have a separate area further down the bar? EG explained most people buy a drink and order one for interval, so difficult to police. Bar discussion, re layout issues.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 2nd October 2019 at 10am