



Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club

Minutes, 23.10.22, 15.00, Larkum Studio

1. Apologies for Absence

Present: Jonathan Black, Thomas Shortland, Lucas Holt, Izzie Sayer, Tom Chandler, Rosie McLeish, Zachary Green, Amy Meyer, Mercy Brewer, Tungsten Tang

Absent with apologies: Kate South, Stephanie Cho

Absent without apologies: Rishi Sharma, Christian Longstaff, Lily Blundell

2. Event Reports

a. Writing Workshop

TC reports: The workshop went well, with maybe 10-15 attendees, who were engaged and chatty. Lots were interested in pitching & competition. They are looking forward to the second one.

TC confirms the deadline for the CUADC Playwriting competition is 1st Jan 2023. The workshop attendees also asked about the Fringe; and they confirmed that the writing competition is entirely separate from Fringe applications.

TC is planning on reaching out to someone in the industry for judging.

b. Publicity Workshop

MB reports: it went well. The turnout was relatively low but all the producers for the Freshers shows came along and seemed to get a good grasp on how producing works in Cam Theatre.

c. Tech Workshops

LH reports: He regrets not being more on top of organisation - some attendees came to the bar instead of the stage and the information on the Freshers Fair leaflet was slightly different to that on other publicity material. The individual workshops seemed to go very well, with very high attendance and so overall it was good.

d. Pitching Workshop

TC reports: The event was run by a double Tom dream team. The turnout was lower than expected but the workshop still went well. The information provided was mostly quite repetitive with info already on the website, but it let people field specific questions which was helpful. Mostly freshers attended. Overall it was beneficial but could have benefited from some more planning.

e. Costume Workshop

AM reports: the workshop was quite informal as 2 people attended: the Costume Assistant for *Blue Stockings* and someone looking to get involved next term came. The workshop also suffered from a lack of publicity; JB has noticed that publicity has become a very big job and he is planning on recommending that a publicity team is recruited to support the club publicist for the next committee.

f. Producing Workshop

MB reports: the workshop went well; maybe 10 freshers attended, including all producers from the freshers' shows and some other interested people. Overall it was nice and successful. There is a general discussion of the lack of men in producing; MB reports all workshop attendees were women. JB adds that Panto are very desperate for more assistant producers; he suggests MB gently pushes anyone interested but not yet involved in any shows this term towards panto.

ZG reflects on the prevalence of 'the insta'.

g. Directing Workshop

RS reports retroactively: the workshop was fairly well-attended, especially considering its location in DR1 – he didn't do a count but around 12 people came along. Most of the people who came were freshers. Spent around 50 minutes presenting a powerpoint, followed by 40 minutes of Q&A. A lot of questions concerned pitching, slots, scheduling, show rights, and other practical things. A few more unusual questions were about specific shows and doing exciting things with the theatre space, which was great to see. A few people also asked to be sent the workshop slides, including some people who couldn't make the workshop but saw RS's post about it on Cambridge Theatre.

h. Tech at the Corpus Playroom

IS reports; the workshop also suffered from a lack of publicity. Only 2 people attended but it made for a fun, more informal session and was definitely helpful to those who attended. LH reflects that unfortunately neither of these attendees are involved in freshers' shows and so the fresher technicians at Corpus may need some extra support.

i. Social this week: disabled students

KS not attending. JB is aware that the social was supposed to happen in the Larkum but the *Amadeus* team are using the space and the bar is not a very accessible space. AM asks if the bar can be made more accessible for the event. TC reflects that it is likely the light and sound level that make the space inaccessible. LH asks if it is also an issue of separation from people, which cannot be achieved in the bar. JB reports the social is at 8pm and so the bar is unlikely to be very busy. JB will talk to LD about logistics.

j. Puppetry workshop

This did not occur. JB reports that it was because the man who was supposed to run the workshop does not reflect the values of CUADC. Unfortunately Jamie Rycroft did not establish this when it was initially organised, but JB could establish this from an email he received.

5. Show Reports

a. Wuthering Heights

LH does not have a SPATE but JB reports:

The show has happened and has made some money. TT and TC report that they have nothing significant to add. TS adds that submissions to the reimbursement form are lacking details. There have potentially been crossed wires regarding what needs to go in the reimbursement form.

b. An Uncomfortable Silence

JB confirms he came. It was silent. He was uncomfortable. His fellow audience attendees were keen on interaction. TC enjoyed it, and thanks CUADC for funding it.

c. Adrift!

JB reports that the show is happening next week but has currently sold 0 tickets. Allegedly the team now has a producer but the specifics are unknown. TC asks TT to push their team especially on publicity as so far there seems to have been very little.

Action: TT to push Adrift! to publicise more

d. Blue Stocking

ZG reports as show contact:

A readthrough has occurred and rehearsals are also occurring. The team previously had an issue with getting into the ADC but hopefully this will not be repeated.

120 tickets have been sold.

A prod team meeting will be happening soon.

A poster has been made, and will be printed soon.

The prod team is meeting Gabrielle James (GJ, current ADC Production Manager) this week to talk through the risk assessments & complete SM training.

JB asks ZG to ensure the poster is sent to him and LB

Action: ZG to ensure poster is sent to JB and LB

e. Education Education Education

TC has not been in touch with them yet but will do that now. ZG notes they are a bit behind the other two shows as they cast a bit late. JB reports that their directing team seems on it and the show is also not long so hopefully this should be manageable.

f. Government Inspector

TS does not have contact details for their producers and so hasn't contacted them. JB informs him that the contact details will be on the Committee Google Drive.

LH asks if there is a script editor. TC needs to contact the director regarding this. Applications are still open and so far they have received 9 applications.

ZG adds that they have had their first readthrough so the sooner the better for the script editor to be brought on board.

JB and TC decided it would be best to accept 2 script editors.

g. Panto

JB notes this show has not been discussed much yet. Panto has had some challenges, often due to poor communication across teams and individuals. JB has tried to improve things with mixed success.

The show has also faced some casting challenges and has not been cast, pending an additional set of auditions which have not yet occurred. Rehearsals have not started and the show opens in 3 and a half weeks now.

JB adds that any support from the committee, particularly from reps would be much appreciated, but he acknowledges that it is also a challenging project and he understands if committee members cannot commit to this.

On a positive note, JB adds they have a TD, SM, Floor Manager, DSM, LD, all songs bar 1, (most of) a cast and publicity design is occurring.

JB still has concerns about the pace at which it is going.

TT adds that the show may not be helped from a large amount of intervention from the committee; as it is the responsibility of the show's production team to ask for support. They add that there is not a clear organisational structure which may potentially be hampering progress and they think a clearer management structure could be very beneficial.

JB agrees and notes this will be discussed in more depth later. He agrees that there are already a lot of people involved.

AM asks what other issues the show is facing; she has been accepted onto the prod team and so far no meetings have been organised. JB believes that it is a combination of those in charge committing to other shows as well as Panto and also not being certain what the next steps are.

ZG offers to run a welfare warmup and line run with just him (no prod team) before the show as it sounds like the process will be quite stressful for the cast.

Action: ZG to organise welfare warmup before the first performance of Panto

6. Freshers plays

JB asks if any committee members have any points to raise on this.

MB reports that *Blue Stockings* will have an assistant producer and they have a group chat. Officially no freshers shows have publicity designs but *Blue Stockings* already has some publicity material created by the set designer.

One of *Education Education Education*'s producers has done some digital art before; JB encourages MB to ask them to take on the role of publicity designer in addition. MB and JB discuss ways to offer support to; perhaps a meeting about this and use of CUADC's canva could be helpful.

LH suggests sending out an advert to ARU graphic design course. JB asks MB to do this.

Action: MB to organise publicity advert for publicity designers to ARU graphic design course.

TT asks if ARU members can be added to CUADC mailing lists. JB and RM confirm yes.

MB adds that *The Government Inspector* doesn't have a costume designer. JB asks MB to ask the producers to publish an advert.

MB asks when budget meetings will happen; JB confirms they will take place at the end of this week pending TS's availability.

Action: TS to arrange budget meetings

MB notes that *The Government Inspector* team has asked if they can print scripts. JB is reluctant to say yes due to the environment and also money. He notes that the *Wuthering Heights* team need to return their scripts

Action: LH to chase Wuthering Heights on this

ZG asks if it is okay for scripts from Drama Online to be printed. TS confirms that it is okay. Various other options are suggested including printing at college.

JB suggests that the team are told there is not a budget for printing scripts but if this is going to cause an issue for them, they should contact their show contact.

JB asks if meetings have happened with technicians. LH has not organised individual meetings but has encouraged them to come to freshers get in etc. JB suggests that meetings would be helpful.

TT suggests that information could be sent out to the freshers show technicians ahead of these meetings and then they could come to the meeting with questions. This information could include links to the various guides available and explanations of risk assessment structure. TS agrees; potentially a 'what should you be worrying about now' document would be useful.

Overall JB would like reps to meet this week so that freshers can have someone to contact.

Action: Committee reps to arrange meetings with the freshers

JB also asks show contacts to meet with their shows sometime this week and then at some point in week 5.

Action: Show contacts to meet with their show teams this week and some point in Week 5

JB notes that the freshers show get in, tech and dress also need support from the committee.

Action: IS to arrange rota for committee support for get-in, tech and dress for all freshers shows.

ZG adds that managing expectations for tech teams would also be helpful to know that they should expect things to change and also expect these few days to be full on.

ZG reflects on the audition process: He thanks the committee for all the support on the process. He has had lovely feedback from the auditionees on the atmosphere. He also has some reflections on the process:

- During the Actors' Rep handover to the next committee, he feels it should be enforcement that the Reps don't participate in any shows during Weeks 1-3.
- Due to the issues last year with Camdram cast lists going out before all audition results emails were sent, ZG was very particular about keeping control of the acceptance and rejection letters. He thinks this was a great thing to do to ensure the process worked smoothly, but reiterates that the Actors Reps should not take part in any shows between Weeks 1-3 as this job alone is very full on.

JB agrees, and thinks this could be extended to the rest of the committee rather than just the Actors Reps.

ZG adds that he found going to the read throughs also helpful. He has also found out that there is some overlap on show involvement from freshers but this affects a very small number of people.

ZG adds that the lack of BME male auditionees in particular was disappointing. He has found that other events including BME Shakespeare also act as other opportunities to recruit from this demographic but CUADC could be better in future.

ZG suggests reviewers are not invited to freshers shows considering the issues with reviewing at the moment. TC agrees; they suggest there is a significant lack of experienced reviewers currently and for the sake of the freshers inviting reviewers wouldn't be helpful.

JB suggests CUADC sit down with Varsity/the tab to ask for an article about the freshers shows generally - essentially a preview but carried out by CUADC rather than the producers. TT agrees, and add that the production view point should also be included.

MB will tell producers not to reach out to reviewers and also ask GJ to not offer comps for the freshers' shows.

Action: MB to tell freshers show producers not to reach out to reviewers and also ask GJ to not offer comps for the fresher shows.

LH adds that if any reviewers come to the shows, we could ask them to not add stars to their reviews. It's noted that CUADC can't enforce this but in all likelihood the reviewers will not come without comps.

ZG also reflects that working on the freshers' shows auditions has been an amazing experience and the freshers teams are excellent. He's really pleased with how it has gone and notes that there are still things that should be changed for next year but overall it has gone very well.

TC asks if there are any plans for socials around the time of the freshers' shows. JB notes there is a club night during the week of them so that could be used.

ZG asks if there will be a deal for the freshers week shows. JB is keen for one and hopes that it may encourage more ticket sales for the shows struggling a bit with sales.

[RS joins the meeting]

RS asks about the Corpus late show length; it is confirmed to be at most an hour and a half.

7. **Group O/Management meeting follow up**

JB notes Group 0 (minus TS) met with management recently (minus Alex Bevan, current ADC Technical Manager, AB)

a) Reviewing

JB clarifies that the onus is on the shows to chase reviewers and organise comps. TC believes this is contrary to previous advice. JB clarifies that it is not the responsibility of GJ to reach out to Varsity but she will of course still handle booking press comps.

JB also notes that management have confirmed that they cannot take any responsibility for the reviewing guide produced recently.

TC asks if the strike system can be more effectively publicised. JB adds that management don't feel that the strike system is effective but GJ will still try to enforce it.

JB adds that press releases are now very uncommon. It was suggested that blogs for the ADC Website should be written instead. JB adds that non-student press timelines are simply unreasonable for student theatre except maybe LTM.

b) Panto timeline

JB proposed that the current timeline for panto has not been working and he has suggested an alternative system, where Panto is pitched for in Lent (rather than Easter). The producer will be first person chosen, and then they will sit on the panel to choose the panto script. Currently, as the producer is not chosen first, the hierarchy can become complex and unhelpful. This new proposed system would put the producer clearly at the top of the hierarchy.

Applications for directors would also be opened at the same time but not interviewed until a week or so after the writers are chosen, with writers not being a part of those decisions.

During Easter, the production team would be assembled, script extracts and scene breakdown would be complete by the end of May and auditions would be run by the end of Easter. JB feels this would solve many of the problems this year's Panto has faced which have led to rehearsals not yet starting when the show opens in around a month. JB understands that the show will likely still be written over summer, but this also allows for it to be

written with a cast in mind. Management will also add harder deadlines for script across the summer.

TC asks how many times the producer application pack was opened this year; they are concerned there is no backup plan for the eventuality where no producer applications are received. JB has not considered this but he would ensure that this format would still prevent the writers from choosing the directors or producers.

RM asks if a few cast roles would be left empty for freshers. JB clarifies that, yes, a few would be left for freshers and auditions would be held around October.

c) Training and Tech Support

AB unfortunately didn't attend the meeting, which was disappointing. GJ was very open; she doesn't have that much technical experience but is directly responsible for key holding, SM and special permissions, and would love to be able to support students in any ways that she can.

LH adds that another issue affecting training was that of the stage being booked out so much that it was very difficult to plan time for TR training.

JB asks us to be proactive as students to organise what training may be required in advance. TT has experienced a lack of available training even when this has been asked for significantly far in advance. LH reports that management will also preemptively book out slots for training which people can book onto.

LH also emphasises that management are doing their best but they are still very new. JB adds that the issues they have been facing have been exacerbated by lack of experienced older techies due to the Covid overhang.

d) Intimacy funding

It was clarified that this term, GJ inherited the project from Lucia Revel-Chion (previous ADC Production Manager); previously the general termly intimacy training workshop was organised by the ADC with 'money that doesn't exist'. The donations received from societies go into a pot aimed at offering intimacy direction to shows with significant intimacy requirements which would be unlikely to be able to afford the direction otherwise. This term 5 funding bodies donated and 5 shows initially

requested IDs but since then other shows have required training which has had to come out of the show budgets for those individual productions.

Overall it appeared to be unsustainable to do this long term. Next term there will be a general workshop, with preference for directors of Lent term shows, then ADs for Lent term shows, and then anyone else, with no-one who has previously attended being permitted to attend again.

TC asks if any guidelines could then be produced; JB clarifies there are guidelines online.

JB notes that this does not solve the issue of e.g. Corpus shows with significant intimacy requirements. He notes there is a show support money pot intended to support theatre-making which would not be able to take place without extra financial support, but this is insufficient to support the level of funding required to make this reasonable.

e) Welfare

This will be discussed in a following meeting between Group O and management; unfortunately there was insufficient time for it during this meeting.

[ZG leaves meeting]

8. Special General Meeting

This will be taking place on Sunday 13th November at 2pm. Everyone must be there. Everyone must bring their friends. JB confirms cheese straws will be provided.

Action: IS to advertise especially the cheese straw element

JB confirms there will be special and general things to do at the special general meeting.

These include constitutional amendments for:

- VP role
- Code of Conduct
- Existence of the Welfare Policy
- Membership
- Cloffice
- Anything else committee members raise

LH asks if an appendix to the constitution could be included that can be edited without a SGM. JB suggests that a clause similar to 'shows are bound by code of conduct and welfare info' would still be ideal.

9. Vice President role

JB will confirm the suggested constitutional amendment for this proposal on Slack by Wednesday. Committee can then comment and it will be sent out to members in advance of the SGM.

Action: JB to put the constitutional amendment proposal on Slack

10. Code of conduct

Ongoing

11. Membership

JB reminds everyone that the constitutional definition of life membership doesn't line up to the membership systems in place currently.

Action: RM to note all the things that should change regarding membership.

LD has also requested that alumni contact information is shared with the ADC but currently this is an issue of GDPR. This is unlikely to be reflected in a constitutional amendment but it will require a change to the membership sign up form, pending Charlie Jonas being amenable to this.

LD has also suggested scraping annual membership. RM confirms membership is for insurance purposes but there is confusion regarding how specifically this works. Nevertheless RM will change email to producers to encourage this.

Action: RM to change email to producers

JB notes the issue of people turning up casually to get ins etc. who don't have membership and hence insurance. He also notes that often the band and photographer for a show aren't asked to get membership.

Action: RM to research details of insurance and membership.

12. Club dinner

KS is alas not in attendance. JB suggests her theme idea on her behalf: 'speakeasy'.

JB also reports that there is potential for running ticketing through ADC rather than just through TS.

JB explains the timeline for ticket sales.

LH asks if pricing is fixed yet. JB will discuss this with KS and TS. Releasing tickets at the end of November will also hopefully give people more time to know the price before they pay (payment will be requested later on). JB notes that the amount the dinner will be subsidised by CUADC for the committee also needs consideration.

LH asks if CUADC have already paid; JB confirms there is a deposit which has been paid and several other payments which will be paid in future, some of which are based on headcount.

JB confirms that Richard Barnes will be in attendance. It will be a great night.

13. AOB

a. Pitching workshop question about Diversity & Inclusivity guide [TC]

TC has heard that the Diversity and Inclusivity guide created last year was never signed off by the committee; it was instead just posted on the Cambridge Theatre Facebook page. They are uncertain if people should be signposted to this guide, particularly as they feel there are currently some issues with it for instance with how it handles disability, or if the guide should be edited.

JB adds the context that the guide was released near the end of last year's committee tenure and some issues were raised then. He is uncertain how many directors use the guide, and is also not certain if current committee members will have the time to update it. He notes that currently it is not widely publicised.

AM hopes that a culture of awareness of this could be promoted without a document potentially.

JB adds it was written at a time of significant discourse around Diversity and Inclusion and so the formal nature of a document was seen as useful.

JB adds that those pitching often still refer to it. He thinks that the document still has a place but maybe needs more consideration.

TT adds that realistically CUADC is limited when it comes to Diversity and Inclusion; a guide isn't really solving the problem that those who have done theatre before and hence often dominate the community generally come from a particular background. They give the example of fewer international student and BME student people getting involved, for instance the lack of accent diversity within Cambridge Theatre.

LH mentions that a recent 'How to Get Involved in Cambridge Theatre' article stated that a key element is 'have a nice accent'. He notes that obviously this was a joke but this attitude is maybe unhelpful.

RS agrees that accent diversity is an important issue here.

TT feels that Cambridge theatre is ahead of the UK generally on this issue but often identities are tokenized, rather than there being genuine efforts towards inclusion. They suggest that it may be good to take a step back from this, and approach the issue from a creative, arts viewpoint rather than just writing a guide. They give the example of musical theatre being dominated by white students in Cambridge and note that a piece of paper 'solving' this isn't necessarily helpful for natural progression on this issue.

JB would be hesitant removing the document but would be supportive of someone making edits. He suggests we come back to this topic at the end of term.

b. Audition Workshop

ZG can't attend the current date; it is going to be moved.

c. CUADC Card [AM]

AM asks who to contact with regard to the CUADC card for expenses. JB says at the moment the easiest way is to email TS. Production team members should send him specific links to items they wish to be purchased, but this system may change in future.

d. Pitching [TC]

TC confirms that pitching is in person but this information has not been widely publicised and is different to last few terms.

Action: JB to get LD to ensure this is mentioned on the website.

e. Queens Costume Store [LH]

LH notes that the big costume move has been booked for 3rd and 4th. The Fitzpat is also fully booked for the rest of time. JB notes that the executive committee were not keen to just get rid of the costumes but he thinks some will still need to be got rid of. This is a significant challenge. JB will communicate with Richard from Queens about the conclusion the committee comes to on this. AM, LH, JB will discuss this separately. JB will also talk to LD about possible locations to store some of the costumes.

f. Committee Photo [RS]

RS asks if it will happen. JB confirms it will happen but not right now.

g. Props Store [LH/SC]

LH asks on behalf of SC if production teams from shows not taking place at the ADC/Corpus can take props out of the props store? JB suggests no as this would be too much work for AM, especially when it comes to returning items. This will also apply to the costume store eventually. He notes the signs on both stores need to be updated.

Meeting adjourned at 17:22