

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY THEATRE SYNDICATE, 2004 – 2005

2004/05 was a year of real achievement for the ADC Theatre. Record audience figures were achieved despite a slightly shorter year of performances than usual. Phase 2A of the redevelopment work, although continuing after the end of the reporting year, was completed on time and within budget. A new booking system was installed which came into action on 1st April 2005 ending many years of relying on a third party agency service.

Programme Review

The theatre was reopened in October by the Vice-Chancellor and Nicholas Hytner (Director of the National Theatre) and presented 296 performances until closing for further building work in the middle of July. The programme was wide-ranging including drama, dance, comedy and musicals, presented by both student companies and local amateur drama groups. A full list of shows is attached.

October saw a strong month of drama including the return of **As You Like It** from its American tour and a sell-out production of Stoppard's **Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead**. Later in the season there was new-writing success with the winner of the Marlowe/RSC Other Prize, **Rostov's House** and the annual ADC/Footlights pantomime, **Great Expectations**. **The Tinderbox and other stories** proved to be a successful family show shortly before Christmas.

An innovative production of **Romeo and Juliet** was presented by the European Theatre Group at the start of the Spring season. This was followed by more strong drama and comedy, in particular an adaptation of the classic, **Volpone**, and a hilarious production of Michael Frayn's **Noises Off**. Musicals were well represented with a newly written operetta, **Wetmarsh College**, at the start of February, and the annual Lent Term Musical, **My Fair Lady**, for two weeks in March. The end of the season saw shows from three local drama groups. In particular Whizz Kids returned with **Our Day Out** having not performed at the ADC Theatre for a number of years.

At the start of the Summer season the theatre hosted **cambridgewordfest** for the first time. Events included talks by authors such as Michael Morpurgo and Graham Swift. Comedy was particularly well represented with a production of Kesselring's **Arsenic and Old Lace**, a number of newly written lateshows and a two week run of the annual Footlights tour show.

As already noted, record admissions of 38,089 were achieved despite the summer season being two weeks shorter than in a full year due to building work. The previous high was achieved in 2000/01 with 36,989 admitted.

Financial Performance

Income from Theatre Hire was a record £78,186, significantly higher than in any other year in the theatre's history. This increase, of course, mainly reflected the record admissions. Bar surplus remained in proportion to theatre hire and contributed significantly as usual to the overall trading activity of the theatre. Income from scenic hire also reached record levels.

Just under £30,000 was invested in the installation of a new box office system but despite this a healthy surplus of £17,017 was still achieved.

Capital Projects and Redevelopment

The only major item of expenditure was the installation of the new box office system. This has allowed the ADC Theatre to run its own box office and to cease relying on a third party. The result has been a much improved booking service for our customers and a significant strengthening in the relationship with them. Staff have been employed from 3pm till 7pm, Tuesday to Saturday to handle telephone and in-person sales. However the vast majority of advance sales have been online through the Theatre's website, another element of the new system. Data about customers' preferences is now being collected so that targeted marketing can be carried out. All this, plus the fact that the running costs of the system are significantly lower than the charges previously paid to the Arts Theatre (the third party booking agency).

Phase 1B of the redevelopment was completed by Marriott Construction in October. This involved the construction of a new toilet extension, a hugely enlarged foyer, new frontage to the building and completely refurbished office and common-room areas. The changes have been extremely well received, both by regular users of the theatre and by members of the public. Work on phase 2A commenced at the end of May with work planned around shows for the first month and a half. This work included the installation of a lift to make the theatre compliant with disabled access requirements, the construction of a new walkway providing access to the far side of the auditorium, an extension to the bar, and new sound and lighting control rooms.

Staffing

The Manager and Licensee for 2004/05 was **Michael Nabarro**. The Housekeepers were **Tristan Booth** and **Laura Greenfield**. Both settled well into the jobs. Tristan put a lot of work into developing the theatre's hire business and also worked on some of the finer details of the building project. Laura assisted with the installation of the new box office, in particular with its staffing. She also put a lot of work into developing the theatre's marketing strategies, including a major overhaul of the brochure design, and worked hard to build good relationships with members of the local press.

The Theatre also employed three casual Duty Managers (**Robert Loxley**, **Frances Allsop** and **Anna Hobbs**) to help the full time staff cope with the workload of the long seasons whilst keeping working hours within reasonable limits.

Daniel Morgenstern has continued to design the theatre brochure.

The Syndicate wishes in particular to express its thanks to **Michael Nabarro** whose contribution as Manager and Licensee has been critical to the Theatre's success and its steadily growing stature. It is delighted that he is remaining as Manager and Licensee for 2005/06. **Lucy Gibson** and **Christina Elliot** have been appointed as Housekeepers for 2005/6