

Cayman Drama Society
Annual General Meeting - 20th January 2012
Theatre Manager's Report

Good evening.

Can I start by thanking you all for coming out to the annual general meeting of your society. Many volunteers have worked tirelessly to move the society forward in the last year, and your attendance here shows that there is an interest in what has occurred and in how we move forward.

This year's AGM is being held on the 20th of January, a Friday, and this slightly late date was the only evening available due to rehearsal commitments for the first two productions of 2012 – CAYTUBELIVE and HAIRSPRAY, a testament to the Executive Committee's push to ensure that the theatre is fully utilized within the limits of what our Articles allow us to do.

The Chairman has reviewed our 2011 productions. I will not mention them further except to reiterate that they prove that CDS is the premiere provider of dramatic entertainment in the Cayman Islands and that our members are extraordinarily talented.

I'd like to review the year as a whole and list our achievements.

1. Two rotten containers were removed from the rear car park and the third partially useful container was moved adjacent to the rear stage door for the storage of large props.
2. Four coconut trees were removed from the front lawn where they were wreaking electrical havoc, and we are in process of having a sign donated which will identify the building from the road as The Prospect Playhouse. More of this in a news item when final details are worked out.
3. Thanks to the efforts of Niamh Hutchinson and a few volunteers, the props and costumes areas are tidy, boxed and clearly labeled. Hopefully, cataloging can happen as we engage with technology.
4. We passed our annual inspections for renewal of liquor licence and the new committee now understands just how much is involved in this exercise and the tremendous work done by Peter Phillips in the past.
5. The Phoenix group donated a storm-proof window and an upper area built and designated as an office but which was instead being used instead for large props storage was reconverted into a comfortable modern office with wireless internet access. This office will feature in future plans to man the theatre at certain key times on a volunteer basis to allow for things like vendor delivery, ticket pick-up and so on.
6. Thanks to a donation from Butterfield Bank, an upgrade of the playhouse was begun, starting with the two community areas – namely the foyer and the upper bar and rehearsal areas. This led to a few complaints about a drinks shelf being removed but the majority of our visitors have been highly complimentary about how the foyer now looks and seem happy with the tables

available for resting drinks. The green room was also upgraded and is now very comfortable for cast members.

7. The upper bar and rehearsal area has been in continuous use for some months as first CayTubeLive rehearsed while Midsummer Night's Dream was in productions, and now Hairspray is using it while CayTubeLive is on stage. A simulated Maple floor has been laid down and this area can now be used for public events associated with theatrical performances such as staff group buffets or whatever.
8. We successfully hosted the world premiere of an Indie movie, Duppies, using our new projector and back projection screen.
9. We accommodated various schools at no cost as part of our community outreach programme, and in the process built wheelchair ramps to allow access to lower areas of the auditorium. We hosted the following events:
 - a. Exam rehearsals for Cayman Prep and High School
 - b. Mock exams for John Gray High School
 - c. The Lighthouse School parents entertainment event
 - d. And GIS filming of an award-winning Lighthouse School play
10. We hosted La Vida Loca, a charity event organized by ARK (the Acts of Random Kindness group) involving many bands and entertainers
11. We provided facilities for a parents event for Centrepointe Dance and hosted their American Academy dance examinations.
12. Finally, we presented the Lorca double bill, Blood Wedding and The House of Bernarda Alba, Godspell and the SEC production of A Midsummer Night's Dream. And in this context, it should be noted that SEC members provided staffing for lights, sound and front of house for both Godspell and Midsummer and we are building up a competent core of future theatre technical talent.

I may have missed a few items but I think that you can see that a core group of volunteers has been very active. The entire committee manned paintbrushes to move the foyer, green room and upper bar décor forwards. Chairman Richard laid floor in the two upstairs toilets and installed new sinks and toilets which met inspection standards for public use. Bar manager Bill Mervyn has assisted in set building and in laying the new floor in the upper rehearsal area and at the same time has done an admirable job in his first year as Bar Manager, succeeding Phil Pace who is still actively involved behind the scenes and assisting with set and building construction.

So this is where we are. You can wander around afterwards if you have not already done so to check things out for yourself. But where do we want to be?

In 2012, we shall install large quantities of shelving in the technical store to create a proper workspace for theatre and set maintenance. We shall install a lean-to on the outer north-west wall for the storage of timber and other large items freeing up more stage area. Both manlifts will be the subject of intense maintenance to ensure many more trouble-free years of service – it is not possible to operate the theatre without the large man-lift.

A committee will be reviewing ideas to provide more public space – by better use of the foyer, bar and kitchen areas, and possibly by partially enclosing the front access way. The same committee will look at ways to encourage corporate use of the upper area for staff events associated with theatrical attendance.

The outside stairs to the dressing rooms must be covered for all weather use and a sponsor will be sought to put this in place based on naming the stage door after the sponsor for a period of years.

On the technical front, we shall be exploring ideas to open up the sound booth so that the sound technician has a better ear for what the audience are hearing.

We shall increase our use of technology without forgetting how to use standard equipment. In 2011, A Midsummer Night's Dream became the first CDS production whose entire sounds including pre-show, interval and postshow music together with all sound cues were delivered from a small inexpensive netbook computer.

We shall purchase an inexpensive device which will allow our stage lighting to be controlled from a back-up computer in the event of trouble with the lighting console.

Technology is being applied to front-of-house with bookings information for productions now being instantly available to all who have need of it. And revised methods of providing 24x7 box office services at no cost are working well.

The current security system is very old and inefficient and must be changed. The rear car park must have a simple gate installed so that visitors to functions at the Mary Miller Hall do not use our spaces when we need them – they are supposed to use the Red Bay Primary School car park. For further security, we will investigate fencing the rear of the property to meet up with a new roadway fence which is about to be installed at the Lighthouse School. Cost is a consideration here and a sponsor would be welcomed.

There is much to be done and we hope that more people will volunteer an hour or two here or there to learn about theatre in all its forms. This takes the load off the few and avoids burn-out.

I am happy to stand again for the position of Theatre Manager safe in the knowledge that a core of members are always there to help when needed. And I would welcome your help too if I am reappointed.

Thank you.

Paul de Freitas
Theatre Manager
Prospect Playhouse
Cayman Drama Society