

## **Arts and Entertainments Board Report – December 2012**

*A note by AEB Chair, Adam Funnell*

### **Summary**

So far this term has been a great success across the management group. Three general meetings have been held and well attended, and positive feedback has been given on their usefulness and relevance. On the whole, membership levels have remained high, finance problems have been low, and the high standard of performances has been upheld in the wide variety of end-of-term concerts and other events. We have welcomed a new club to the board who have participated fully in discussions and we are looking forward to more exciting

### **Financial Report**

Most clubs are in a strong financial condition and there is little danger of them falling into debt. Clubs are making good progress in spending their grant, though this is continuing to be monitored and reminders are being sent to those clubs who are yet to spend grant. It is too early to call financial success or failure for events held at the end of this term, but there have not been any major disasters yet, as far as we know. We have not yet had to utilise any of our contingency funds.

The slight cut in grant on the year 11-12 has affected some clubs that would normally hold events off campus and have lost out on ground hire grant. Several clubs are also planning to spend less on equipment purchase than in previous years due to less grant support to back up their purchasing SGI.

There are no major debts of difference to previous years, though the regular financial problem clubs are still in the same boat as usual. Cinema, who have slowly working their way out of debt, have struggled to continue their rise throughout this term, and their progress next term will be monitored closely. MTSoc Tour did not make an enormous loss last year (for the first time in recent memory) but it will be a real struggle for them to make the large profits needed to bring them out of their current debt, since they can barely continue their current activities whilst breaking even. Again, their budgets will be scrutinised very carefully this year.

A notable exception to this is last year's Fusion event, which has left ~£15k debt currently still sitting in the AEB Exec. Although it does not directly affect our day-to-day running, all the talk at the end of last year about moving the debt to be covered elsewhere has disappeared, and I fear for the long term effects this debt may have – it may prevent future large scale events, even if they are realistically financially managed next time!

Several clubs have either submitted Harlington applications or are planning to in the near future, for example Musical Theatre and Big Band – I have been working with some of them to ensure the applications are of the best possible quality before submission.

### **Constitution Changes**

None so far this year, though the move of constitutions to eActivities will undoubtedly uncover some changes that need to be made.

### **New Clubs**

The Imperial College Design Collective was formed at the start of this term, and was placed in the AEB. They have gone from strength to strength, with several projects underway and more in the pipeline for next term. Workshops and talks have been run by notable speakers including , Prof. Peter Childs (IDE RCA and Mech Eng Design Lead) on Future Aircraft Cabin Design, Simon Manchipp (Someone Design) on Branding not Blanding and Rick Banks (Face37 Design) on Social Networks. We are looking forward to their contributions to the AEB, especially the potential for collaborations.

### **Club Membership**

Half of clubs have already exceeded their membership targets, and the remainder are working hard to also achieve this and should be there soon – there are no clubs that I am particularly worried about in this regard. Some of the smaller clubs that struggle to reach their targets of 20-25 are working on new initiatives to increase memberships e.g. running an Oriental Arts group underneath Calligraphy to help them hit their target of 25(Oriental Art was rejected at NCC due to a lack of long term viability in maintaining membership numbers). Excellent work by Fashion has seen their membership almost hit the target, impressive for a club considered to be dying at the end of the year 11-12. Congratulations also to LeoSoc and Cinema for vastly exceeding targets. MTSoc Tour's membership is incredibly low, but they will fulfil their target by July (their activities do not start until after Easter).

### **Arts Imperial**

Normally by now there would have been a meeting of the joint College/Union committee looking at Arts, but the first meeting is scheduled for next week. We will ensure that these meetings continue to happen regularly, since even though little action comes from the meetings, they are a great forum to discuss important matters with senior College representatives.

### **Major Issues**

College Conferences – All large music groups have issues booking rooms, booking concerts and generally dealing with College Conference and Events. Bookings have been moved without warning, concerts almost cancelled, and general unhelpfulness on their part is rife. The issues seem to be with the bookings staff – going over their head to managers generally resolves issues to everyone's satisfaction, but we shouldn't have to do this every time. These issues come up every year and it is getting ridiculous! Next term I am determined to get to the bottom of it once and for all, either through the Arts Imperial Board or through direct meetings with College Commercial Services.

Room Bookings – It is not just College that is difficult to book rooms with, the Union has also had its fair share of double bookings and inconvenient considerations recently. Specifically, clubs that rehearse regularly and try and book the same room at the same time each week seem to get treated with lower priority than other users – somewhat unfair. Competition for the Union Concert Hall has also increased recently, inconvenient for Cinema who are in dire need of expanding their showings to provide income. However, the opening up of the Media shared space is a great resource and making clubs aware of it is a priority. The lack of rooms with pianos in College is worrying, since

several clubs are unable to rehearse without one, and the increasing pressure on College spaces is leaving them in trouble sometimes. More research will be carried out on this next term.

Storage- Clubs that did not need storage at the time of the DPCS sending out the request from in August but now do are unaware of how to get some, and their requests often go unanswered. If we have plenty of storage as the DPCS stated at CSB recently, please could it be advertised and allocated swiftly, as clubs are storing equipment in personal lockers or carrying it around, inconvenient for everyone.

### **Future Plans**

This year I'm keen to work on things within the AEB that can help everyone, possibly going beyond the remit of directly overseeing clubs, but certainly in everyone's interests. Those discussed so far include but are not limited to:

- Sorting out the College Conferences problems once and for all!
- Online clash calendar for shared resources (e.g. music stands, College owned instruments) and to avoid clashes of events with large crossovers of attendees (e.g. avoiding DramSoc and MTSoc auditions on the same day)
- ArtsFest next February 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> will be more student focussed – collaboration with College's Festival Fringe, and a black-tie dinner are on the cards
- Co-ordination of advertising of performances across College and Union systems (alongside the pending Social Media co-ordinator for Arts Imperial)
- ArtiFact collaboration with the RCA, taking the best parts of the programmes from the last two years and expanding
- Potentially creating an ArtiFact style project with the RCM
- Club nights – probably not in the same style of the ACC but certainly trying to build a monthly night for the whole AEB to socialise over a few drinks – perhaps with a theme or cabaret style entertainment?
- Advertising the Arts at Imperial to both current and prospective students – does College do enough?
- Upgrading the application process to be able to use Blyth practice rooms by looking into an online system.

### **Individual club reports**

All AEB clubs have submitted reports on the form shared by the ACC Chair – I have not had time to compile these as an appendix, but the files are available from me on request.