

Thursday 12th December 2013

Arts and Entertainment Board Report

Paper written by Alex Savell

Introduction

Given Imperial is a Science, Technology and Medicine oriented university it is constantly surprising the volume and calibre of talent that is on display year in and year out here. This is in no small part due to the dedication of the student led clubs within the Arts and Ents board, who with relatively little support produce concerts to near professional level, sell out performances of plays and musicals, rock gigs, big band nights and many, many more examples of their various activities. This term has been no exception and starting from as early as Fresher's fair and even before Arts and Ents clubs have been a key presence on campus with plenty of participation, opportunities to learn a new skill or develop an existing one and, not to forget, performances that provide affordable and high quality entertainment open to all members of college and often heavily relied upon by the union.

Below we will cover the key issues of membership and finance of these clubs, but also highlight some of the major successes than clubs have achieved this term and note some of the issues that have been observed as well as a brief outline of the steps that are being taken to mitigate them. We will also discuss briefly two of the main endeavours of the Arts and Ents Board; ArtsFest and ArtiFact the organisation for both of which is ongoing. Arts and Entertainment being quite a small management group I have at one time or another managed to meet personally with club chairs to discuss how the year is going and have had a good response to my request for short written reports; qualitatively I'm pleased to say that most of them were happy with how their year is going and with the management group with only a few issues highlighted during this time which I will discuss below.

Membership

Table 1 in Appendix 1 shows a breakdown of club memberships (full and associate combined) compared to the same point (December 3rd) in previous years. As can be seen from this, most clubs have been more successful this year than previously. Notably Cinema is up by 80% compared with the last couple of years achieving a massive 236 members (227 full). There are only two societies of particular concern here; Guitar Soc and Sinfonietta. Guitar Soc have been put into dormancy to try to help with these issues and will be discussed later in this document. Sinfonietta are at 61.3% of their full membership, significantly lower than previous years, I am unsure of exactly why this is the case but I will be communicating directly with them in the new year to make sure they have matters in hand and take any measures necessary to guarantee they achieve their full membership.

Table 2 of Appendix 1 includes the current full membership (09/12/13) of AEB societies as well as the percentage of their target membership. As can be seen, half of clubs have already achieved or exceeded their target with three quarters of clubs within 20% of their target. Sinfonietta have already been noted, as have guitar, the other exceptions to this are Design Collective and MTSoc Tour. ICDC are up on last year's membership and have been running successful workshops and talks and are confident of achieving 30 members; they are slightly worried that the youth of

Thursday 12th December 2013

their society means they are not well known and understood and are therefore attempting to attend undergraduate lectures to advertise themselves further to a wide range of students. MTSoc tour will be mentioned later, however they are up on last year's membership at this stage and due to the nature of their activities are unlikely to make their membership target until the summer term.

Finances

Arts and Ents clubs have a history of strong finances within ICU. This is due to the fact that they are some of the clubs that are able to more easily attract sponsorship due to being performing arts societies and in addition they are able to gain revenues through their main activities unlike most other clubs at Imperial. As such, the grand totals in Table 2 of Appendix 1 are primarily very healthy. There are two notable exceptions to this which are Cinema and Musical Theatre Tour. As noted previously MTSoc Tour will be discussed below, however Cinema's accounts are not as unhealthy as they appear. This is due to their agreement with the union of a capital purchase of an approximately £35k new digital projector with the agreement that the union will be paid back £2000 per year for the next 5 (the rest of the money was funded themselves and through Harlington). I am pleased to say that Cinema is on track to paying this back as planned or faster.

Other notable points within finance are that Wind Band are waiting for Harlington money. Also, A Cappella's summer tour finances are still not in order due to the issues that this had, again this will be noted below. In general, all societies are worried by the potential new budgeting guidelines that may come into force early next year. A number of A&E societies operate with a reasonable amount of money in their account and justify this in a number of ways. One of the principal of these is that due to the nature of performance art societies many societies own and maintain a large amount of expensive equipment which can break as part of general wear and tear and is therefore not eligible for contingency funding. However, a number of societies have discussed with me the potential for modifying how they operate in order to reduce the amount of operating reserve they maintain; this may lead to some clubs pushing forward for larger projects this year such as CD production, charitable concerts and acquisition of new or replacement equipment.

Activities and Successes

There has been a huge amount of success so far this year, much too much to list everything. Alongside the various rehearsals, workshops and performances a few notable highlights are ICSOs highly successful concert in the Great Hall which sold out as well as the highly successful freshers events from a number of societies such as Musical Theatre's first show that was entirely written by an alumna member. Fresher's fair itself was also very successful, with several societies participating in the Fresher's Fair after party performances as well as some making use of the Metric Stage during the day. Thanks should in particular go to DramSoc who's technical support makes a lot of what our societies do possible. A number of societies have already run rehearsal weekends away and the feedback from these has been that they are very well attended and have potentially helped the social cohesion and therefore engagement in societies. Other notable events have been that Music Tech have done DJ sets at Ministry of Sound on a semi regular basis and Gospel Choir provided backing singing for the X-Factor; both societies have therefore been high profile representatives of the college and the union off of campus in a professional capacity.

Thursday 12th December 2013

There are some huge events planned for the rest of the year in addition to this, much of which will coincide with ArtsFest; including a particularly large collaboration between IC Choir, ICSCO and Bournemouth Choir who will be performing Benjamin Britton's War Requiem in Winchester Cathedral in February. This event is a massive undertaking but should be an incredible event and opportunity. Another notable planned activity is ICSCO's planned tour to Helsinki to play in Sibelius Hall (one of the greatest venues in the world) at a charity (UNICEF) concert; this is obviously a huge opportunity to raise the profile of the arts at Imperial and I am very excited for ICSCO about this very unique opportunity.

Highlighted Issues

Starting off with general issues the one that has come back in reports several times has been room bookings. Particularly early in term clubs and societies had quite a lot of issues with this; new committees seemed not to be aware of the fact that most bookings require at least two weeks' notice and as such the Blyth Centre (where rooms can be booked more quickly) was overbooked a lot of the time. Some societies have also had issues with conference bookings not being put in or being altered without the club being informed. I have taken several steps to try to help with these concerns; firstly I have met with Charles Gallagher to make sure that a professional relationship is in place for resolving any issues, in addition, hopefully over the winter break I will be compiling a list of available rooms in college, how to book them and any issues that there may be with such bookings. This will hopefully help clubs get appropriate rooms without worrying about the fact that there are at least 4 entirely independent booking systems depending on the room and should help to more efficiently allocate space. However, space is a real issue in particular the union concert hall is the only real dedicated performance space for societies and is woefully inadequate for the volume of clubs that would like to perform.

Specific club issues are mostly Guitar Soc, Musical Theatre Tour and A Cappella's Summer Tour. Starting with Guitar Soc, they lost a chunk of their committee unexpectedly over the holidays and have therefore struggled to get themselves up and running. As part of that process the AEB voted to place them into Dormancy in order to give them support until such time as they have managed to gain more members and hold an election. They appear to be achieving this as their membership has increased up to 17 members and they have several events (including an open mic night and beginner lessons) planned which should be occurring prior to this meeting (unfortunately I won't have a chance to find out about this beforehand) and an EGM to refill their committee early next term. A Cappella had some issues with their tour as a large amount of their receipts were stolen when their car was broken into. As such they have had a difficult financial start to the year sorting out a claim on union insurance for lost possessions and liaising with the finance team in order to rationalise their Imprest with the lost claims. This led to a delay in invoicing the various venues that owed them money in return for performances. However, thanks to tireless work from Aziz and the finance staff this should now be on track.

Musical Theatre tour are possibly harder to explain. Their finances are at a worrying low and there is no obvious route for them to recoup this. Tours have made significant losses over the past half a dozen years and as such myself, the DPFS and Anthony Crowther met with their new committee to discuss plans. We agreed that they would be allowed to continue for this year pending

Thursday 12th December 2013

them providing us extensive analysis of where previous tours have made losses and how they intend to insure this year begins to reduce the deficit of nearly £5000 that they are currently carrying. They have been explicitly told that this is their final chance.

ArtiFact and ArtsFest

Finally, the AEB help to organise two specific events. ArtsFest, a week-long, campus-wide celebration of the arts at Imperial and ArtiFact which is a networking organisation intended to foster collaboration between Imperial students and arts students from nearby universities and particularly the RCA. ArtiFact this year has an incredibly enthusiastic group of organisers and has already held its first event; a pub quiz held at the RCA which approximately 30 participants attended. Several events are planned for next term and in the Summer term we aim to have another exhibition of collaborative work which we hope will be of much higher quality than last year and really be a great display in the college main entrance.

ArtsFest got off to a difficult start this year with no ArtsFest chair elected to the AEB Exec last year. However, since then preparations have very much got underway and we unanimously elected a chair, Luke Salter, who is already putting in a lot of effort and helping to fill up a calendar of events spanning February 19th – 28th. Planned activities include the collaborative exhibition in Blyth gallery which LeoSoc and Media's Photosoc will be heading up in addition to their own individual displays, an open ICSO rehearsal, Big Bang performing on the Queen's tower, a fashion show by Fashion, an 'ArtsFest Afterparty' Metric night analogous to the Fresher's Fair afterparty, wandering performances at lunchtimes in communal areas and potentially several more.

In summary, it has been an extremely exciting term for the AEB and there are some fantastic events to come for the rest of the year. The few issues that we do have are mostly in hand and hopefully can be managed without taking away from any of the other great activities that are going on.

Thursday 12th December 2013**Appendix 1**

Table 1: Comparison of Membership totals with previous years				
A&E Club/Soc	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	% of average
A&E A Cappella	40	32	44	122%
A&E Calligraphy and Oriental Painting	21	18	18	92%
A&E Chamber Choir	29	28	30	105%
A&E Chamber Music	28	32	42	140%
A&E Choir	119	115	138	118%
A&E Design Collective		35	37	211%
A&E Dramatic Society	46	47	54	116%
A&E Fashion	2	19	21	200%
A&E Gospel Choir	28	28	31	111%
A&E Guitar	29	27	19	68%
A&E IC Big Band & Jazz	35	27	30	97%
A&E ICU Cinema	104	158	236	180%
A&E Jazz & Rock	103	96	138	139%
A&E LeoSoc	86	111	103	105%
A&E Music Technology	38	41	39	99%
A&E Musical Theatre	34	31	31	95%
A&E Musical Theatre Tour	5	5	11	220%
A&E Orchestra	85	87	81	94%
A&E Sinfonietta	88	93	52	57%
A&E String Ensemble	26	27	25	94%
A&E Wind Band	48	48	56	117%

Thursday 12th December 2013

Table 2: Membership and Finances							
Name of Club	Full Club Members	Grant (0)	SGI (1)	Harlington (2)	ICTrust (3)	Faculty (4)	Grand Total
<u>A&E A Cappella (421)</u>	44 of 40 (110%)	600	230.14	0	1369.38	0	2199.52
<u>A&E Calligraphy and Oriental Painting (422)</u>	18 of 20 (90%)	148.5	256.08	0	0	0	404.58
<u>A&E Chamber Choir (423)</u>	29 of 25 (116%)	155	4917.1	0	0	0	5072.1
<u>A&E Chamber Music (412)</u>	43 of 28 (153.6%)	261.33	505.33	0	0	0	766.66
<u>A&E Choir (403)</u>	121 of 105 (115.2%)	1690.5	9758.46	0	0	570	12018.96
<u>A&E Design Collective (478)</u>	36 of 50 (72%)	540	443.02	0	0	0	983.02
<u>A&E Dramatic Society (406)</u>	56 of 65 (86.2%)	449.93	41948.93	0	0	0	42398.86
<u>A&E Exec (400)</u>		100	-7.77	0	0	0	92.23
<u>A&E Fashion (146)</u>	21 of 20 (105%)	176.67	112.57	0	0	0	289.24
<u>A&E Gospel Choir (418)</u>	30 of 35 (85.7%)	25.68	1838.23	0	0	-18	1845.91
<u>A&E Guitar (409)</u>	19 of 30 (63.3%)	60.17	530.17	0	0	0	590.34
<u>A&E IC Big Band & Jazz (408)</u>	30 of 35 (85.7%)	857.14	3274.47	0	650.04	0	4781.65
<u>A&E ICU Cinema (411)</u>	227 of 120 (189.2%)	0	-2374.72	0	0	0	-2374.72
<u>A&E Jazz & Rock (413)</u>	131 of 120 (109.2%)	133.7	4258.56	0	0	0	4392.26
<u>A&E LeoSoc (405)</u>	102 of 100 (102%)	146.04	4202.57	144.9	0	0	4493.51
<u>A&E Music Technology (414)</u>	39 of 35 (111.4%)	159.21	1436.5	0	0	0	1595.71
<u>A&E Musical Theatre (415)</u>	27 of 32 (84.4%)	51.67	4312.29	0	0	0	4363.96
<u>A&E Musical Theatre Tour (416)</u>	10 of 20 (50%)	350	-5267.47	0	0	0	-4917.47
<u>A&E Orchestra (401)</u>	80 of 80 (100%)	568.06	12142.54	0	0	0	12710.6
<u>A&E Sinfonietta (402)</u>	49 of 80 (61.3%)	313.81	694.7	0	120.51	0	1129.02
<u>A&E String Ensemble (417)</u>	22 of 25 (88%)	313	1101.11	0	358.64	0	1772.75
<u>A&E Wind Band (419)</u>	57 of 45 (126.7%)	275.45	2850.78	-2770	0	0	356.23
Totals:		7,375.86	87,163.59	-2,625.10	2,498.57	552	94,964.92

Thursday 12th December 2013