

## STAGE NORTH THEATRE SOCIETY

### BOARD WORKSHOP

Sunday, March 5, 2017 Artspost 12 noon – 3pm

Present: Kevin Smith, Blair Scott, Matt Preprost, Emry Mika, Teela Gould, Bronwyn Hall, Suzanne Lawson, Jesse McCallum (second ½), Annie Peachey, Sue Popesku (Facilitator)

**Regrets:** Twyla Jordan

11:30 Thanks to Blair Scott who served waffles before the meeting. Thanks to Suzanne, Kevin and Teela for the trimmings.

### **12 noon: What does Stage North do well and what do we need to improve upon?**

#### **DOES WELL**

- Produce a Variety of Shows
- Mentor others
- Create friendships
- Include all ages
- Have a large talent pool
- Develop audience (numbers are up and expectations are high)
- Planning programming better than previous years
- More interest and passion in the Board
- Caught up with cash and in-kind sponsors

#### **COULD DO BETTER**

- Marketing
- Fostering new talent
- Training Volunteers for more than acting
- Work on Board Succession and consistency
- Strategic Planning (multi-year plan)
- Production scheduling at least 2 years
- Conflict Resolution
- Organization of set, costumes, props
- Deeper pool of Crew for all production with cross over
- More consistency and better alliances with sponsors

### **12:30 pm: Membership Policy**

Benefits of being a member are: 1. Be part of Stage North productions and events all season long. 2. Be covered under Stage North insurance when you are involved in activities conducted by Stage North. 3. Have opportunities to take part in workshops and theatre training sessions. 4. Received emails and other

communications about upcoming events 5. Support community theatre in your hometown and 6. Enjoy the company of others who like theatre.

**The Board DECIDED that:**

- Annual Membership of \$20 for each individual (cast and crew) in all productions will continue. All ages are eligible to be members.
- No Family memberships at this time.
- Lifetime Members to be nominated once a year 2 months before the AGM. A Nomination Form is to be completed by any member of Stage North. The Board will select on a criteria of quality, variety, and length of service to Stage North. Awards to be presented at the AGM.

Lifetime members have all the benefits of a regular member without paying the Annual Membership fee.

A list of all past Lifetime recipients is to be recorded and filed with documents to be kept.

**TABLED to be discussed further:**

- Members of a live pit band that is desired for musicals have resisted paying Stage North memberships. An option is to communicate with the Orchestra leader (instead of each band member) and promote the Band name/organization as partnering with Stage North and have a contract, of sorts, worked out. Have each band member sign a waiver that they understand they are not covered under SN insurance for injury nor theft. Some Directors/Producers may wish to use canned music instead. No consensus was in sight for the length of time allotted to this issue.
- Honorary Memberships are possible. Categories may be those who died, extraordinary sponsors, famous theatre people who came from FSJ. Further discussion as to criteria required.

**ISSUE STILL UNRESOLVED** (no time to address this point): Memberships are \$20 and Friends are \$100. Do Friends who pay \$100 automatically become members and not have to pay \$20? Or do they remain in the Sponsor Category of Friends only. If so do all sponsors then automatically become members?

**1:00 PM Issues about production process:**

**Fundraising with or during shows:** A Production strictly for Fundraising and a production that adds fundraising for another organization to a Stage North show are 2 different issues.

Fundraising Show may be with the Rotary or Legion who are raising funds for a project as the purpose of the event. SN agrees to be the entertainment and receives a pre-arranged fee for this show.

A Stage North show that opens up various opportunities for other groups to make money has arisen this year a few times. The question is "should Stage North be raising funds for another organization, or allowing other groups in to raise money, when sponsors give Stage North money to put on theatre shows?" Reasons to do this: 1. Often times, there are not enough members who will come forward to provide the manpower for the sales. 2. Offering the opportunity to other groups is good community

relations and 3. This alleviates yet another thing to organized in getting the production to opening night. Reason to be cautious: Sponsors also give to those organizations and may questions why SN is not conducting these added fundraising opportunities ourselves. Why are we asking for sponsors to support when we could be making out own funds through added sales.

Examples this year: Concession at Carnage was given to the SPCA who made about \$200. Raffle at Buddy run by Stage North made \$1550 and \$1 drinks sold made about \$400. Colosseum gave a silent auction and coat check opportunity to the United Way. Wizard had \$1 drinks and made \$303 for SN and let the Candy Shop come in and sell for 5% of sales--\$ ? which was a promotional opportunity for the Candy Shop.

Question also arises that these added profits should be accounted for the in the financial report of the show they were managed and sold for because they would not have happened if the show had not happened. Earlier this year the Board declared that extra sales were to be recorded separately.

#### **The Board DECIDED that:**

Each individual situation would be considered and approved (or not) by the Board. Each show Production Team is to present the situation to the Board before any action is taken. Planning for these situations as soon as possible in the production planning is preferable. Stage North members may be able to be found to keep the earned funds within Stage North. Whatever the situation, fast action and decisions may be required quickly so voting by email may be necessary. An option is to pick one or two other community organizations per year to work with and change to other alliances in a year or two.

Whatever is decided much comply with the policies of the venue and the audience informed about food and drinks into the theatre or not.

**Relationship with Business and Service Clubs:** Rotary and the Legion have been talking about partnering with Stage North for a production. In the past Stage North did shows (mostly Improv) for Business Christmas parties. After a while, the Improv group went on their own and did not go through Stage North and has now gone dormant. Stage North has done show on request for Service Clubs, Conferences and as part of revues and special variety shows at the NPCC.

#### **The Board DECIDED that:**

All discussions about SN doing a production outside of the planned season is to be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors and no one person can make promises for SN. Plenty of planning must take place to anticipate all responsibilities that SN would be taking on with such productions.

**Reaching Out for more assistance with productions:** Challenges include 1) production teams are finding it difficult to find crew since SN members seem to have the idea that once one acts in a show, they are done until another acting role comes up. 2) Production teams find it harder to try to get new help and overwork themselves thinking it is just easier that way. 3) SN also does not manage volunteers as well as they could. 3) Newcomers are often marginalized and think that they are not part of the "in crowd". This sentiment is a prevailing theme in SN and we lose good talent because we just do not take the time to find out what a newcomer can or wants to do. We also tend to have deep

friendships after working many shows together and do not realize that the newcomer is not included in the "in jokes" or after-rehearsal pizza stops.

**Some solutions are:** Have a few sessions on Volunteer Management which might kick-start the attitude of all-inclusiveness among members and awareness to put newcomers to work right away. A suggestion that if you wish to act in one show, you need to work backstage on another the same season. Better planning going into a production would help to express the needs of the team and other SN members should help to find more recruits.

**IDEA----FRONT OF HOUSE DIRECTOR ON THE BOARD** - One person who looks after all lobby action before and during every show of the season would help each production team. This Director would have a team to do whatever it takes to make the lobby interesting, active and helpful for the audience. The role might be to arrange for the sales, greet all audience, get the complimentary flowers to the green room, identify and thank sponsors as they arrive. This person would also liaise with the venue front of house personnel and handle the odd things that arise before a show.

**2:00 PM Setting Up Season** After a discussion about the new Board identifying the season or taking over the season already identified was a question which did not have a satisfactory answer for everyone. However, due to planning requirements, summer holidays and starting the season in September, the following template was outlined for an **Annual Schedule:**

**GOVERNANCE:**

February 15 Call out for next season shows (*asking director/producer/cast size/time slot preferred and venue preferred*)  
April Board decision on season  
Year End May 31  
August AGM *Suggestion to stagger ½ Board for 2 year terms to avoid total new Board*

**PRODUCTIONS:** *Themes to be considered by Board but not solicited*

Auditions June  
September Season Promotion Starts  
October large cast show  
December Christmas family show or Nutcracker Co-Prod  
February large cast show  
May smaller cast show *Possibly Festival Entry*

**VENUES:** NPCC have been booked for to 2019 and the Evangel Chapel is a smaller option.

**For 2017-2018 Season:** The Alcan Craze of '42 directed by professional director Michael Armstrong is a Co-Prod with NPCC for Sept 29,30, Oct 5, 6, 7. Auditions April 21, 22, 23.

**QUESTION:** Will SN be doing anything to celebrate their 40<sup>th</sup> Year for the rest of 2017?

**SUGGESTION:** If Directing or Producing Options are: 1. not sit on the Board 2. Step down when conflict of interest 3. Vote according to what is best for Stage North as a whole and not just what is best for your show.

**SELLING CD'S OF SHOWS ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED:** Videos or CD's of any SN show cannot be sold. Videoing is only acceptable as a learning tool for actors in the show. All rights and contracts state this in their materials.

*Workshop Time 12 – 3pm ran out so last words brought up the following list:*

**REQUESTS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSIONS:**

Put a Social Media Director on the Board.

Marketing Consistency and alternative methods.

Have a Volunteer Management Workshop for all Members.

Do a Strategic Plan for 3-5 years.

Roles and Responsibilities of a Board and each member.

Template for a Successful Production- Remove Obstacles- How to measure success.

**In Closing:** One bite at a time and we can conquer most of the challenges we face at this time.

***Please list the top three issues in order of priority that you would like to address.***

When is the Next Workshop?

**Adjourned 3:06 pm.**

*Thank you for allowing me to facilitate this session. I think everyone who wishes to facilitate a session should step forward. Please be aware that some preparation is required and a summary after it is over is also necessary... Sue Popesku Treasurer*

July 19, 2017



#### Mainstage report:

Bridge to Broadway's 'Self Help' took a cast and crew of 11 people to Vernon for Theatre BC's Mainstage. The adjudicator Katrina Dunn had incredible knowledge, was well loved by audiences and groups alike. She met groups at the knowledge level they were at, which everyone appreciated.

Elysia Cruz was awarded a certificate of merit for 'Remarkable Performance by a High School Student' with her performance as Bernice the Maid in Bridge to Broadway's production of Norm Foster's 'Self Help' from the Peace River Zone.

Something that came up time and again in the meetings over the week was that the focus of the Zone Festivals and Mainstage should NOT be about winning but about the opportunity to get together and learn!!

Mainstage is in Vernon again in 2018 (June 29-July 7)

PRZ – have booked CC for festival for May 22 (Tuesday) -May 27 (Sunday)

#### Traveling adjudicator:

Will be brought back for next year. 2 clubs from different zones made use of the travelling adjudicator this year. Important to note the need to TRY to get a full festival going before using this option.

Theatre BC will sponsor up to 10 high school students for a Mainstage registration package.

Theatre BC also has a graphics design competition that SN and our designer should look at entering. (need to be a member of Theatre BC)

The Peace River Zone AGM will be held this Monday July 24<sup>th</sup> at the Cultural Centre @ 6:30 pm in the multi-purpose room.

**Minutes for the 2017 Annual General Meeting  
Stage North Theatre Society  
Monday, August 14, 2017  
@ The Space, 11520 East Bypass Road, Fort St John, BC**

**Present:** Emry Mika, Jesse McCallum, Kevin Smith, Matt Preprost, Michael Armstrong, Sue Popesku, Teela Gould, Monica Maika, Stevi Eby, Maureen Sharp, Elyssa Cruz, Cynthia Vance, Suzanne Lawson, Bronwyn Hall, Dennis Szalai, Oliver Hachmeister, Aron Eady, Chantel Bowen, Elan Miller, Justin Lawson,

**Call to Order: 7:03**

Michael Armstrong – Spoke of some Alcan Craze needs, such as a costume director, 2 male actors, and a file drawer cabinet. Also gave more information on an Acting Workshop on Sept 9<sup>th</sup>, pot bellied stove

**Approval of AGM Agenda:** Motion to Approve: Dennis, Seconded Monica

**Approval of 2016 AGM Minutes and Special AGM Minutes** – Motion to Approve: Jesse, Seconded Bronwyn, All in favour

**President's Report** – Kevin Smith - See attached

**Financials** – Sue Popesku – See attached

**Election of Officers**

**President**

Jesse nominates Kevin Smith – Kevin lets his name stand  
Kevin president by acclamation

**Vice President**

Emry nominates Blair Scott – Blair lets his name stand  
Blair vice president by acclamation

**Secretary**

Stevi nominates Emry Mika – Emry Declined  
Emry nominates Teela Gould – Teela will let her name stand  
Teela is elected by acclamation

**Treasurer**

Bronwyn nominates Sue Popesku – Sue will let her name stand  
Sue is elected Treasurer by acclamation

**Admin and Membership Director**

Jesse nominates Bronwyn Hall - Declines  
Teela nominates Emry Mika – Emry will let her name stand  
Emry is elected Admin and Membership Director by acclamation

**Production Director**

Bronwyn nominates Stevi Eby - Stevi will let her name stand  
Stevi is elected Production Director by acclamation

**Facilities Director**

Jesse nominates Dennis Slazai – Dennis will let his name stand  
Dennis is elected to Facilities Director by acclamation

**Youth Delegate Director**

Bronwyn nominated Elyssa Cruz – Elyssa will let her name stand  
Emry nominated Elan Miller – Declined  
Elyssa is elected Youth Delegate Director by acclamation.

**Director at Large Positions (3).**

Emry nominates Bronwyn Hall – Bronwyn will let her name stand  
Jesse nominates Monica Maika – Monica will let her name stand  
Teela nominated Suzanne Lawson – Suzanne will let her name stand  
Bronwyn, Monica, and Suzanne elected Director at Large by acclamation.

**New Business**

- Next Board Meeting Sept 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Motion to adjourn** – Dennis motions to adjourn, Jesse seconded. 7:56



**President's Report**

I would like to thank you all for coming. We are only as strong as our membership makes us.

It has been a busy and interesting past year, as we put on a grand total of 8 plays. I'm not sure if that is a record season for Stage North, but I don't ever remember us being that crazy busy before.

We started off with 'God of Carnage,' hosted in a new venue, and with a rookie director (Jesse) and crew. It had its challenges, as do all plays, but with such a handsome cast (especially me), it surged ahead to almost break even. Then we put on the fabulous, record attendance-setting 'Buddy Holly,' with a great cast of actors and musicians in a play that might well be the best play ever put on, by one of Stage North's best directors (Blair). Stage North followed that up by doing a co-production with Studio 2 Stage dance studio and NDTs bringing the Christmas sensation 'The Nutcracker' to life for the third time in the last five years. We had a crazy February, putting on two huge productions at almost the same time. 'Wizard of Oz' was presented by our fearless rookie director Bronwyn, who tackled a huge cast of fabulous actors, a pit band and a thousand Christmas trees. Sharing the February spotlight was the self-written and directed dinner theatre 'Colosseum,' by rookie director Matt. Spring saw us continue the frenetic pace with 'What Corbin Knew' by rookie director, Les; 'Five Women Wearing the Same Dress' by returning director Melissa; and then our festival entry play 'Saltwater Moon' by our experienced young director, Ted. 'Saltwater Moon' took local festival awards for Runner-up Production, Best Actress, and tied for Best Actor. The other two festival entries included many Stage North members, including the winning production of 'Self Help,' which used our space for rehearsals and set building. We were excited to have a successful festival return, after having it cancelled the past couple of years.

All of this took a huge amount of work both on and off the stage. I consider it a huge success that we were able to tackle such a wide variety of plays and venues, which gave enormous opportunities to our membership to stretch their wings. We were able to showcase four rookie directors in an artistic and financially successful year, with 'Buddy Holly' leading the way by showing a profit over \$16000, and Colosseum and Nutcracker both netting over \$2500 apiece.

We look forward to a busy, but more evenly paced year, starting off with 'The Alcan Craze of 42', a coproduction with the North Peace Cultural Centre, hitting the stage at the end of September. This performance is being directed by a well-known professional, Michael Armstrong. Michael will also be hosting a workshop on September 9<sup>th</sup>, which is available to all members. Another coproduction, with the Rotary this time, will see Blair directing a dinner theatre play, as 'Tony and Tina's Wedding' hits the stage during the last two weekends of January. Then our festival entry play, Mary's Wedding will hit the stage on April 26 to 28, before competing in the local festival in May. There are rumours of a fourth play, possibly happening around Christmas time. I am hopeful, and negotiations are on-going.

We are open to other ideas and play suggestions for the next couple of years. The board would like to start planning plays and activities further in advance to allow us more time to create a louder buzz over upcoming events and help with promotions. The board is also working on reforming our Societies Act to conform to the new B.C. Societies Act. This will probably have us announcing a special membership meeting later this season to vote on the new proposed act.

I thank you for letting me be your President for the past year.

Sincerely, Kevin Smith