

## Everyman Theatre Cardiff: The Patient is Stable and Recovering Well

I must stress, as I have said to the outgoing board, I would never leave Everyman in a state that I did not think was sustainable. I am pleased to say, thanks to a brilliant team effort by the board and the membership, Everman has a solid foundation on which to grow and recover a majority of its losses that it incurred due to the 2024 Festival.

### The disease was worse than we thought...

The aftershocks of the 2024 festival by November of 2024 had put Everyman in a worse financial position than what was anticipated at the AGM. To be specific, if the *Odd Couple* broke even or had made a loss we could not have afforded to stage *Amadeus* without a huge reduction in their budget. If *Amadeus* had also made a loss or broken even we probably would have had to terminate our lease at Chapter.

In addition, there was a realistic possibility that the board would have had to recommend to the membership that the company be wound up. With a £10,000 loan that was still to be paid we would have had nothing left to disperse other than enough to cover any outstanding rent and other bills. The patient was critical and we needed to make some very difficult decisions.

It was evident from an analysis of the figures that we had no guaranteed income streams other than:

- Approx. £6500 from membership contributions.
- The Playhouse Season was not paying its way sufficiently. Whilst modest profits did occur, most productions broke even or made small losses.
- Furthermore, our relationship with Chapter was precarious at best and it was nearly impossible to put together a reliable twelve-month program

### Tough Medicine

What did the board do to stem the bleeding and get the patient into a position of recovery?

- The board reduced all production budgets for previously submitted proposals and those productions currently in rehearsal, specifically *Odd Couple* and *Amadeus* combined returned £6000 profit after this review. (Thank you, Simon and Pam for your support)
- We took the decision to cancel the previously scheduled program of future productions but doing our best to make sure the original directors selected had first opportunity to direct another production chosen by the board.
  - The criteria for the productions were to firstly have a more than realistic chance of returning a substantial profit. At least enough to cover our running costs, such as rent, website, digital costs etc during rehearsal period and a bit more.
- Stop any additional expenditure that was not regarded as a priority.
  - Unfortunately *Melting Pot* as a result had to be moth-balled until such time our fortunes improved and that is still the case now, though I believe we should restart
  - *Melting Pot* very soon given what our anticipated position will be at the beginning of 2026

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- The Everyman Youth Theatre could not have the budgets they were used to and to a large part, through their own fund-raising initiatives financed themselves for the first six months of this board year (thank you!)
- The board withdrew the financial support originally promised to the Everyman Community project, however we have since agreed to release of £300 to support the Grange Town Initiative
- Encourage a spirit of innovation within Everyman to help raise money and awareness.
  - Thank you to Meg and Tyler for their efforts in spearheading two fundraisers at Christmas and Spring this year which raised approx. £5,000 of much needed profit.
  - Thank you to the Everyman Youth Theatre who held fund raisers during Winter and Spring to help finance their activities
  - Thank you to Peter Harding-Roberts for his production of *Under Milk Wood* which brought in a profit of approx. £8,500
- Reduce operating costs where possible
  - Reduce the number of Microsoft Licenses to board members only
  - Reduce our accountancy costs. Thank you to Kate for helping sourcing another accountant which reduced our accountancy costs by over 50%
  - Reduce web hosting costs to a lower priced hosting package more in line with our needs

## Remission and Ringing the Bell

The last three months have been the most enjoyable of the 24 months as chair and here is why:

- At time of writing we have approx. £16,500 in the bank and £10,000 in reserve
  - Note: We have a liability of approx. £9000 of loan to pay back
- We have an estimated profit, not income, of £12,000 which should surface between now and the end of December
  - Taking account of expenses between now and the end of 2025 we should, excluding liabilities, have a balance of approx. £24,000 and £10,000 reserve
- If we combine *Abigail's Party*, *Antigone* and *Revlon Girl*, conservatively they should together yield another £6,000 in profit
- Thanks to board colleagues, our relationship with Chapter is very much back on track and we are again able to reliably plan with confidence and support
- We have a great program to look forward to:
  - *Hamlet* directed by Sarah Bawler, September
  - *Under Milk Wood* directed by Marilyn Le Conte, November
  - *Christmas Carol* directed by Simon West, December
  - *Abigails Party* directed by Pam Weiner in Jan
  - *Antigone* directed by Brian Van Duyn in April
  - *Revlon Girl* directed by Wayne Vincent in May

## Hold on – There is a Limb Missing...

As some of you are already aware from attending the EGM and reading Cressida's correspondence, the *Everyman Open Air Theatre Festival* on the scale and in the format it used to be will not be

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coming back in the near future, unless of course the new board take a different view. After a lot of detailed modelling within Everyman and with our partners, *Live Under the Stars (Cardiff Christmas Festival)* – who reached the same conclusion that the Everyman Board did, even with their backing, the risk was just too great to comprehend.

I am speaking for myself in this instance but I would only ever recommend Everyman embark on a similar venture only if it is in partnership with another organisation and or a substantial sponsor where the risk is shared. Only relying on ticket revenue for an event of that size with a huge variable such as the weather in an increasingly contended location is not realistic. Even if 2024 did not sustain the losses it did I am convinced 2025 would have been our last year to hold a Festival of that scale where Everyman owns all the risk.

## Don't forget your Prescription on your way out

I can't force you to take this medication as it were, it is just advisory but if you do it will possibly help reduce the likelihood of sober Chair addresses such as this becoming a regular thing:

- For the foreseeable future the board should take a more hands-on role of choosing the Playhouse Program and helping with the budgets
- As soon as you can, pay the loan off. It is a niggling liability we need to get rid of to reduce our risk
- We need more diverse income streams if we want to accelerate our recovery
- Whilst fund raisers arguably are not required anymore, there is no harm in holding one big annual event to fund raise
- We are now on a path to a strong recovery so we shouldn't be afraid to take risks and dare to tread where most amateur theatre companies cannot (our Charitable objectives should be our guide, not to mention our location, Chapter.)
- Suggest a main winter focal point such as a Winter Shakespeare and or a Christmas production (Thank you to Sarah Bawler for *Hamlet* and *Live Under the Stars* for partnering with us to produce *Christmas Carol* with Simon West.)
- Plan for a main summer event but keep it within our means both in manpower and risk vs reward
- The Everyman Community needs better support as does Everyman Youth Theatre- both have massive untapped strategic benefits
- Collaborate and support each other, always work as a team, leave your ego at the door!
- There is no such thing as a volunteer in Everyman - you are either a member or you are not. Make your contribution count!
- If you project warmth, enthusiasm and professionalism people will want to join and who knows, you might end up with a bigger board! (You may ask as I am the outgoing chair with the smallest board, where did it go right for you then?!)

Finally, try not to take it or yourselves too seriously. Everyman is just a hobby at the end of it all. As I heard someone say, we're just a bunch of people with nothing better to do, putting silly clothes on and telling stories.

## Thank you!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody on the board, past and present, during my tenure. We are/were a small but mighty team who have had probably more than their fair share of sleepless nights than is healthy for a hobby over the last year. Thank you for being so proactive and supportive. You really have been a joy to work and spend time with.

I would also like to thank Tyler for her role as marketing lead – her contribution has been invaluable. To Kelsey, our new treasurer who joined us halfway through the new board cycle and embraced the challenge of putting our finances in order, mentored by Russell – thank you!

Special thanks to the Everyman Youth Theatre and massive congratulations on your 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as well as winning NT Connections for the second time!

To the membership, thank you for your forbearance, I know we don't get everything right but always remember all decisions were/are taken with your interests front and centre. Please continue to enjoy Everyman and please, please continue to get involved as much as you can – it is **your** company - nine months ago we very nearly didn't have a company at all.

**Toby Harris**

**Chair, Everyman Theatre Cardiff**