

Proposed Kids' Matinees at The New Theatre during 2007

Meeting held at The New Theatre on 29th May 2006 at 2pm

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| Present: | Sonia Bennett, Lynn Collingwood, Kate Freyburg (Minutes), Pat Russell, Ian Hamilton, Wayne Richmond |
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Agenda

The meeting was held to generate ideas and begin action for Kids Matinees to be held at The New Theatre during its 75th Anniversary Celebrations throughout 2007.

To discuss the possibility of Loosely Woven playing a major role in putting together monthly one to two hour interactive variety concerts aimed especially for kids (up to 12 years old) and their grandparents, starting in January 2007 on Saturday mornings at 11am, charging \$15 admission.

Discussion

The meeting opened with Lyn explaining how this was an exciting step for her. She is aware there is no live theatre aimed for kids. She felt that elements in the Loosely Woven concert Aba Daba Honeymoon would be suitable for what she has in mind. She invited members of the group to the meeting to discuss possibilities for the future.

Lyn has proposed that New Theatre have a Big Fete one day in 2007 to celebrate the theatre's 75 Anniversary. However she also felt strongly that something aimed especially for the grandchildren and grandparent market could be not only successful but also very lucrative for the New Theatre. She pointed out that there is a deficit in live entertainment and inexpensive activities for families with young children.

She said it is important children spend less time in front of computers and TV and be more involved in their own community. She expressed great concern that parents do not attend theatre and introduce children to theatre and performing arts, or enjoy outings, birthdays etc. in a more active way, in a "big live group". To have fun. Go up on the stage, watch short films etc.

General points

- Lyn is chairing the 75th celebrations and invited Wayne and Loosely Woven to “come on board”. We are only talking about a commitment for the 2007 year.
- She suggested that a matinee take place for each of the signs of the Zodiac (effectively monthly) and that we use these as themes for each concert, designed around birthdays. “We are 75, how old are you?”.
- The Matinees would be aimed at children up to 12 years of age and their grandparents.
- She said there would be a special event kids show on in January and that that would be a good time to start the series. She is hoping to have a list of the slots between plays soon.
- Lyn felt once there is a structure, it would need only a small adjustment each month. She will propose it to the committee. Different people could take responsibility for each of these segments.
- Ian drew up a plan of ten minute slots.
 - Intro.
 - Storytelling.
 - Sing Songs.
 - Film.
 - Interval.
 - Active Music.
 - Dance.
 - Panto/Music.
 - Sing Along.
- Lyn pointed out it would have to work around the current set on the stage.
- She said there will be new seats coming. There will be 99 flip up seats but the first four rows will remain the same. There are 160 seats altogether.
- Sonia asked how far out Lyn would expect to draw her audience. Lyn responded that she knew of people coming from as far as Castle Hill (Christmas card?) Said it could be promoted through local schools.
- Sonia suggested to perhaps take New Theatre out to the Blacktown Performing Arts. Lyn was more concerned for the local Newtown area.
- Bush-light nights?
- Sonia suggested a camel she had seen at Blacktown Festival.
- Lucky Dip for Birthday child. Lyn said that Birthday Kids should prove popular.
- Sonia asked about doing something similar to Macdonalds with a cake. Lyn felt reluctant to get involved with catering as well.
- Wayne suggested Ian be Master of Ceremonies and enquired re his availability. Ian agreed and said he expects to be away for September 2007 only.
- Lyn suggested another possible theme: VICTORIANA.
- Lyn emphasised again that we must include grandparents. Ian pointed out this would mean The Beatles and Bob Dylan! Sonia expressed her tiredness of Golden Oldies.
- It was agreed to send out minutes.
- Wayne spoke of a “wind up gramophone” as he has one. Someone mentioned that they knew of a large archive of records in Redfern.

Wayne

Lyn proposed a Variety Show with elements such as:

Short films

- to be projected by an old fashioned 16mm projector
- Ian said the “important thing is the film”.
- Lyn said she knew a man at work who had got 300 films from “Film Australia”.
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- Pat is a member of the Willoughby Film Club & will ask about kid’s films. Pat
- Wayne added that he has a friend who was a sound effects engineer with the ABC for many decades and sometimes does demonstrations of manual sound effects. Perhaps he could be involved with some of the matinees demonstrating and involving the kids with creating sound effects. Wayne
- Wayne said they would need a screen. Perhaps project to the back?
- Lyn spoke about getting films from Consuls. Particularly animation.
- Pat will ask about National Film Archives in Canberra. Pat
- Ian will find a projector. Both he and Wayne are experienced operators. Ian

Puppets

- Lyn spoke about Richard Bradshaw who has retired, but has a flat in the city. Lyn would contact him. Lyn

Plays

- Wayne suggested one New Theatre member could take responsibility each month to produce a mini play which could include the direct involvement of the children from the audience. Lyn spoke of the story of the Turnip and animals which had been taken to a spastic centre which was a great success. Lyn said she would be happy to create themes and generally take responsibility for organizing the plays. Lyn
- Wayne mooted whether to ask Dulcie to write a play (did I?). Wayne suggested there must already be scripts, while Ian suggested we ask somebody to write them especially for these events. Ian

Musical items

- Loosely Woven will take responsibility for preparing and presenting the musical items. At least some of these should involve the kids themselves such as 'Twelve Days of Christmas' and 'The Barnyard Song' which are already in the Loosely Woven repertoire. Wayne + other LW members
- Other songs that come to mind include: 'The Hen's Duet' and of course the Keith Murray songs.
- Lyn said they already have some percussion instruments at the theatre.
- Wayne mentioned that the fixed seating arrangement of the New Theatre was not ideal for mass involvement of the kids. We will have to get as many as we can up on the stage.
- Lyn talked about the Ross Skiffington act "Thinking Caps".
- Pat spoke of an artist who gave children tickets. When it was their turn to play an instrument they also had to run and paint on the canvas. Each had a turn.
- Ian felt it important to stick to the Zodiac themes and that songs match these.
- Sonia pointed out that it must be clear to anyone we ask to participate that it would be voluntary - not paid work.
- Ian suggested drumming classes. Sonia expressed enthusiasm. Ian suggested taking kids from the audience at random and giving them sticks. Sonia suggested Wollomi Pine song for this.
- Wayne pointed out the need for instrumentalists and ran through a list of those he thought might be available. Wayne (keyboard, concertina, accordion), John Macrae (recorders), Jill (concertina, keyboard), Bob (fiddle, mandolin), Fiona? (fiddle, viola), Kevin (percussion).

Dance

- Sonia talked about Aboriginals and their twelve seasons. Some discussion followed and it was agreed that a single dance would be ideal. (?) Ian has a contact at SBS who he will approach. Pat agreed to ask at the Aboriginal Support group. Ian & Pat
- Lyn spoke of 'Caporeira For Kids', a Brazilian Arts and Dance group who she had seen. She will look into this. Lyn

Magic

- It was suggested that a contribution from a magician would be good but no-one knew of any magicians to ask. Lyn thought she might contact Lee Rowney, but is reluctant to "take on too many things". Lyn (?)

Storytelling

- Wayne suggested storytelling with, perhaps, sound effects (Peter Wilkinson?). Wayne also said he would talk to Judie Eddington. Lyn suggested fairy stories. Wayne
- Ian suggested contacting publishers and inviting authors along - as a free promotional exercise for them. Ian
- Lyn added she would speak to the new book shop "Better Read than Dead" up the road rather than go direct to a publisher. Lyn

Lyn said she will put something about the whole idea in the New Theatre newsletter (Spotlight) once the minutes for the meeting had been circulated. Lyn

Next meeting to be held on Monday 10th July in the office of The New Theatre at 2.30pm.