

Minutes of EGTG AGM – 22 March 2023
at the Royal Oak Bar, 1 Infirmary Street, EH1 1LT

Present: Hannah Bradley Croall, Wendy Brindle, Martin Foreman, Alma Forsyth, Wendy McEwan, Siobhan McGovern, Wendy Mathison, Claire Morand, Brian Neill, Trevor North, Alan Patterson, James Scott, Alastair Smith, Hilary Spiers, Richard Spiers, Eirini Stamkou, Kate Stephenson, Robert Wylie

Apologies: Andy Ellis, Claire Wood, Beverley Wright

1. **Matters Arising**: to be covered in AOB.
2. **Current Business**: to be covered in AOB.
3. **Reports from outgoing officers covering 2022**

a. President - Hannah Bradley Croall

Our outgoing president has stepped away from the committee and so the task of reporting on the previous year falls to me, but I would like to take a moment to thank Anji, or Angela to use her Sunday name, for her leadership in what can only be summed up as a tumultuous tenure. Anji dedicated a huge amount of time and effort to the group in her four years as president, and more on the committee general before that, and we are incredibly grateful to her.

What a year 2022 was for her to go out on. Our first full season since the pandemic with six different productions. We started the year with Martin Foreman directing Noel Coward's *Hay Fever*, hotly anticipated after it being rearranged from 2020. Later in the spring we oversaw a new venture with StagEHd, an outdoor theatre festival at the Ross Bandstand in Princes Street Gardens, which saw nine performances from local theatre companies including our own in the form of a new play, *rock* written and directed by Claire Wood.

For the Fringe we spread our wings beyond venue 241 at the Royal Scots Club and took our productions of Lucy Kirkwood's *Bloody Wimmin'* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* to the Dunbar Battery, before Merchant also went on to Stratford and continued our relationship with The Royal Shakespeare Company's Open Stages programme.

Finally in autumn and winter we put on two grand productions at Assembly Roxy. A new adaptation of *The Satyricon* by Martin Foreman, a co-production with Arbery Productions; and Angela Harkness-Robertson's impressive adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*.

This year we're keeping that momentum going, with five of our own productions and a second outing of StagEHd Festival in June. Already Claire Morand has presented her directorial debut at the SCDA One Act Festival with *Tunnel Vision* by Sheila Hodgson, where she and the team were awarded with the Margaret Allan Quaich for Acting.

And our spring show, *Copenhagen* by Michael Frayn, is currently in rehearsal with director Ross Hope at the helm, with assistance from Abbye Eva and Emma Carter. *Copenhagen* will be on Upstairs at Assembly Roxy from the 17 - 20 May, with tickets being released soon.

Audition dates have recently been shared for our two Fringe productions, *Shakers* by John Godber and Jane Thornton, with Hilary Spiers directing; and new writing from Claire Wood with *crackers*, a crucial script about mental health. Both shows will run at the Royal Scots Club Monday 7 - Saturday 12 August.

Finally, I (Hannah Bradley Croall) will be directing a post-apocalyptic play, *Chalk* by Walter McGough, to be performed at the Roxy in November.

I hope you are all looking forward to our season of one word titles as much as I am; and we look forward to seeing you in the rehearsal room, on stage, and in the audience as the year goes on.

b. Treasurer – Wendy Brindle

- AGM Treasurer Statement
- Good evening everyone. First of all, let me say that EGTG remains in a healthy financial position.
- First, let me give a brief overview of the highlights of our activity as reported in our trustees' report over the past year.
- In 2022:
 - Our long-delayed production of Noel Coward's *Hay Fever* finally came to fruition – we produced this at Assembly Roxy Upstairs to critical and audience acclaim.
 - We presented the inaugural StagEHd Festival at the Ross Bandstand in Princes Street Gardens. StagEHd reached an audience of over 1200 people and involved over 120 artists and volunteers. It was extremely well received by audiences, performers and volunteers alike; and allowed for a small donation profit share to be split equally between all performing companies.
 - We continued our strong fringe strategy by producing two shows at the Royal Scots Club: Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Angela Harkness-Robertson, and Lucy Kirkwood's *Bloody Wimmin*, directed by Hilary Spiers. We then toured both productions to Dunbar Battery for a very successful weekend; and took *Merchant* to the Royal Shakespeare Company's Dell Outdoor Theatre in Stratford-Upon-Avon.
 - We finalised our 2022 season with a production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, directed by Angela Harkness Robertson, performed at Assembly Roxy Central. This was an ambitious and technically difficult show, which was extremely well received by audiences.
 - Throughout 2022 we continued the reorganization of Home Street. With the welcome addition to the committee of Kate Stephenson as Head of Costume we have added to our coffers by way of the sale of some of our more valuable pieces of costume.
 - Angela Harkness Robertson stepped down as President; Alma Forsyth stepped down as Vice-President. Both have brought so much to the EGTG Committee, and I would like to extend my own personal thanks to both for the support they have given me.
- So, what has that meant for us financially?
- We had a strong year in 2022. We had income of £14,935 against expenditures of £15,615, whilst this shows as a deficit of £680, excluding outstanding uncashed

cheques that were approximately £182, this includes the spend of a £5,000 grant received from Edinburgh Council for the StagEHd Festival prior to 2022; this means that our true profit for the year is £4,320. At the start of the year, we had approximately £12,700 cash in the bank. We had an annual membership that brought in almost £1400. Our operating costs were £2,750 for the year, comprised primarily of insurance and Home Street costs (water and power). We had an average spend per production of just under £2600, this is up from our previous spend of £2200; whilst some of this is due to the technical costs required for *A Christmas Carol*, this mostly reflects the rise in costs due to the cost of living crisis.

We end the year with around £12,600 in the bank, with no material liabilities.

Production costs, especially venue hire and transport costs, continue to increase.

I echo comments made by EGTG's esteemed previous Treasurer, David Grimes, in saying that in order to remain viable and successful, our productions require targeted and aggressive publicity campaigns as well as a push from everyone involved in selling the shows and ensuring that we find an audience.

Lastly, I will also be stepping down as Treasurer; this is for personal reasons only, there has been no falling out or animosity of any sort. I will be passing the mantle on to xx

I will still remain a member of EGTG and hope to be treading the boards in upcoming productions.

4. Election of office bearers

- a. Nominations from outgoing committee were as follows:
 - i) President & Communications Officer – Hannah Bradley Croall
 - ii) Vice-President – Claire Wood
 - iii) Secretary & Membership Secretary – Martin (Michael) Foreman
 - iv) Treasurer – TBC

- b. Nominations from the floor

There being no nominations from the floor, the above were unanimously elected.

5. Election of Committee

- a. Nominations from outgoing committee were as follows:
 - i) Siobhan McGovern
 - ii) Claire Morand
 - iii) James Scott
 - iv) Alastair Smith
 - v) Kate Stephenson (Head of Wardrobe)
 - vi) Robert Wylie

- b. Nominations from the floor

There being no nominations from the floor the above were unanimously elected.

6. AOB

- a. **Ticket Prices:** Hannah announced that the price would remain at £15, not including members' discount (see point 6e). Replying to a question put by Wendy M, Hannah confirmed that no concessions are available and that this does not seem to have a negative impact on audience numbers. Richard S asked what our audience demographic is, suggesting we cannot rely on friends and family in order to increase the membership. Martin concurred, explaining that he and Robert were working on

ways to expand the membership. Hannah thought a post-show survey might also help to analyse who attends EGTG's productions. Wendy M wondered if EGTG itself might not sell tickets rather than via a site such as Eventbrite. Hannah agreed that we could look into this but recalled that when we had sold our own tickets in the past it was a laborious process involving many hours of work. Richard S asked if it is part of our contract when performing at the Roxy that they sell the tickets, thus incurring a booking fee. Confirming this, Hannah pointed out that there is no booking fee for tickets bought on the door.

b. Friend of EGTG: The scheme, having been in place for a trial run of one year, was deemed not to have been successful and therefore was discontinued.

c. Membership of EGTG: While the annual fee will remain at £25, Martin elaborated on the proposal to move from a membership period running for a calendar year, starting on 1 January, to a membership which runs for 12 months from date of purchase. Speaking from previous experience, Richard S queried the ease of running such a system. Martin and Hannah reassured him that EGTG has a new automatic system which will issue payment reminders to members. The membership fee will include the possibility to participate in performing or producing shows. On being advised that only members could be in a show, Richard S asked why backstage teams are not obliged to be members, especially as they are just as, if not more, susceptible to suffer mishaps. Wendy B explained that our Public Liability insurance covers those who work with the company as well as the audience. Since the EGTG Constitution requires approval of the general membership to change matters relating to the membership year, Martin, seconded by Robert, proposed that the meeting vote on moving to a rolling 12-month membership period. The motion was carried *nem con*.

d. Show fee: According to the Constitution any change in the show fee must be put before the general membership. On behalf of the Committee Martin, seconded by Alastair, proposed the show fee be scrapped. After a positive discussion, the motion was carried *nem con*.

e. Members' discount: Members may purchase up to two tickets per show at a discounted price of £12, a reduction of £3 (20%) per ticket. This discount is subject to confirmation for Fringe shows.

Questions from the floor: **1.** As EGTG is a charity Richard S enquired about our articles of association. Alastair and Hannah confirmed we are a non-incorporated charity registered with the OSCR (SC018121) and have a constitution which is on our website. **2.** Replying to Hilary S, Kate said we do not have at present a costume inventory.

Hannah closed the meeting at 20h15, receiving a vote of thanks from members.

7. The next AGM will be held in March 2024 on a date to be decided.