

MEMORANDUM BY THE HON. MINISTER OF EDUCATION
FOR CONSIDERATION IN CABINET

Subject: (A) The Future Policy of the Manoel Theatre.
(B) The formation of a Theatre Club to support the Manoel Theatre.

A. The Manoel Theatre is being managed by a Committee appointed yearly by the Government. At present the Members of this Committee are the following:-

- (i) Col. G.C. Gatt - Chairman.
- (ii) Not. Dr.V.M. Pellegrini LL.D., Hon. Treasurer.
- (iii) G. Binns M.A. (Oxon.)
- (iv) A. Agius Ferrante L.P. Hon. Secretary.
- (v) Mrs. I. Bonello Casha.

The term of office of the present Committee appointed under Government Notice No.301 of the 11th August 1961 expired last August but it was extended up to the 31st December 1962. However a further extension ~~is~~ now ~~is~~ necessary up to the 31st March, 1963. By that time, it is hoped the whole matter will be fully discussed and decided upon and a definite policy established.

The Manoel Theatre Management Committee is receiving yearly from the Government a total subsidy of £6,500 by periodical instalments.

The Committee of Management is for all intents and purposes autonomous and consequently the subsidy paid by the Government is spent as the Committee deems fit. However the accounts of the Theatre as well as the stores held on charge are subject to regular Audit Inspections.

For the maintenance and efficient running of the Theatre the Management has the following persons in continuous full-time employment:-

1. A Manager.
2. One Clerk Typist.
3. One Archivist.
4. One Booking Clerk.
5. One Telephone Attendant/Messenger.
6. One Electrician.
7. One Assistant Electrician
8. Two stage hands.
9. One Resident Caretaker.
10. One Barnan.
11. Two Charwomen.

In addition a doorman and a number of ushers and usherettes are employed whenever necessary.

With regard to the future policy of the Manoel Theatre it seems that there are only two alternatives: either to carry on with the present arrangement with eventually some changes in the Constitution of the Manoel Theatre Management Committee or to give the Theatre by contract to a private person for a specified period on the old Impresa System.

The policy is to give life to the Manoel Theatre and to make full use of it as a centre of culture endeavouring to stimulate cultural interest and to make the public more theatre minded. These activities are to include lectures and conferences on subjects of literary, historical, archeological and scientific importance. Orchestral, Synphonic, Vocal and Band Concerts are also to form part of the programme.

In the circumstances it is considered more opportune to let the Manoel Theatre be run by an 'ad-hoc' Committee as at present. The Impresa System as an alternative does not seem to be indicated the Manoel Theatre not being exclusively intended for the Opera as was the case with the Royal Opera House in the past.

To ensure the proper fulfilment of the policy defined by the Government, and the wise spending of the funds allotted conditions have to be stipulated in the agreement. For this purpose the opinion of competent persons has been sought.

Concurrently with the Manoel Theatre Management Committee it is proposed to set up another Board denominated as "The Board of Cultural Development" whose task will be to promote in the Island as many cultural activities as possible. This Board will have to work out in advance periodical programmes. On the other hand the Manoel Theatre Management Committee will have to prepare its own Theatrical Programmes also in advance (possibly 6 months beforehand). Such Programme is to include Italian Prose, Opera, local drama performances of certain standard and so on. The two separate programmes prepared by the two different committees will then be consolidated into one altering dates as necessary thus ensuring that the Manoel Theatre be kept active for as much time as possible during the year, and that utmost benefit be derived in all field of cultural education. With this aim in view every endeavour should be made in due time to render the entrance fees as popular as possible.

B. With regard to the formation of a private Club to support the Manoel Theatre it does not appear that, on principle, objections should be raised. The idea of forming such a club has been originated by Dr. Victor Mercieca LL.B., and other Theatre enthusiasts. The aim of this club is to make suggestions and recommendations with a view to stimulating more and more interest among the public and to improving the standard of Theatrical performances that take place in the Manoel Theatre. Of course, this club will have no jurisdiction whatsoever on the Management of the Manoel Theatre, and its suggestions, however, useful and proper they may be will in no way be binding on the Committee of Management which has to be absolutely free from any influence or interference from outside sources.

It may not be out of place to state that similar clubs supporting Theatres exist in other countries. These are usually accorded full support in view of the advantages and improvements which they are bound to bring about. The setting up and running of such a club will not cost anything to the Government.

For Decision.

Hon. Ministers are asked to decide.

- A. On the policy to be adopted for the running of the Manoel Theatre. (i.e. whether by a Committee of Management or on the Impresa System). In either case if Ministers agree a Sub-Committee will be appointed to advise on the conditions and to formulate a draft agreement.

- B. Whether they agree that the formation of the Manoel Theatre Club should be encouraged.

Enclosures

The following documents are appended for the information of Hon. Ministers.

- 1) Copy of the Manoel Theatre Management Committee rules.
- 2) Copy of the Notes on the working of the Manoel Theatre as drawn up by the Secretary of the Committee.

5th February, 1963.

L-ARKIVI NAZZJONALI TA' MALTA

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MANOEL THEATRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE RULES

Management
Committee

1. (1) There shall be a committee, to be called the Manoel Theatre Management Committee, which shall exercise and perform the duties assigned to it under these Rules.
- (2) The Committee shall consist of Chairman, a Secretary and such number of other members, not being less than two, as the Governor may from time to time determine.
- (3) All the members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Governor, and every member shall hold and vacate his office in accordance with the terms of his appointment and shall, on ceasing to be a member, be eligible for reappointment; but any member may at any time, by notice in writing to the Governor, resign his membership.

Members to
be unpaid

2. No member of the Committee shall receive any salary or honorarium whatsoever in respect of his work as a member of the Committee.

Functions of
the Committee

3. It shall be the duty of the Committee to do all things necessary to encourage, promote and facilitate the working of the Manoel Theatre as a National Theatre, and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the Committee shall:-

- (a) investigate, formulate and carry out schemes which are calculated to promote the arts in the Manoel Theatre; and
- (b) endeavour to maintain a high standard of production in the Theatre.

House Manager

4. There shall be a House Manager, appointed by the Committee, who shall be responsible to the Committee for the proper administration of the Manoel Theatre. This appointment shall be subject to the approval of the Governor.

Appointment
of staff

5. The Committee may appoint such staff as they consider necessary for the proper administration of the Theatre, and the Manager and any such staff shall be employed by and be responsible to the Committee.

Power of the
Governor in
relation to
the Committee

6. (a) The Governor may give to the Committee:- such directions of a general or specific character as he may think fit, and the Committee shall comply with any directions so given.
- (b) the Committee shall furnish the Governor with such returns, accounts and other information with respect to the activities of the Committee as he may from time to time require, and shall in each year prepare and submit to the Governor estimates of expenditure and programmes in respect of the following financial year.

Financial provisions

7. The Committee shall receive from Government by way of subsidy such sums as may be required to enable it to meet any deficit in its running costs, up to a maximum of £4,000 per annum. The rate of £4,000 is based on an estimated expense of £10,000 by way of salaries and establishment expenses, including depreciation on movable property, and on an estimated income of £6,000 by way of profit from performances and from other sources, as detailed in the attached Appendix.

The cost of maintenance of the Theatre and of water and electricity consumption will be met by Government, apart from the maximum subsidy of £4,000.

The Committee shall keep a proper account of all monies received from the Government and shall submit such books of account to the Director of Audit for examination on or before the 31st day of July next following the expiration of the financial year.

Power to co-opt.

8. Where upon any occasion the Committee desires to obtain the advice of any person upon any particular matter or matters, the Committee may co-opt such person to be a member for such meeting or meetings as may be required, and such person, while so co-opted, shall have all the rights of a member of the Committee but shall not be entitled to vote upon any question.

Quorum

9. A quorum of the Committee shall be three, or such number not being less than three, as may be determined by the Committee.

Casting Vote

10. The Chairman of the Committee shall have an original vote and, in any case where the votes are equally divided, a casting vote in addition to his original vote.

Interest of member

11. (1) A member of the Committee who is in any way directly or indirectly interested in any contract or other matter which is being discussed before the Committee shall, as soon as possible after the relevant circumstances have come to his knowledge, disclose the nature of his interest at a meeting of the Committee.

(2) Any disclosure made under para (1) of this paragraph shall be recorded in the minutes of the Committee and the member:-

- (a) shall not take part after the disclosure in any deliberation or decision of the Committee with respect to that contract; and
- (b) shall be disregarded for the purpose of constituting a quorum of the Committee upon any such deliberation or decision.

Procedure in absence of Rule.

12. Subject to the provisions of these Rules, the Committee may regulate its own procedure.

Tel. No. C.22618.
Your Ref.No. 65/62
Our Ref. No.

MANOEL THEATRE,
Valletta, Malta G.C.

4th January, 1963.

Hon. Minister of Education,

Notes on the working of the Manoel Theatre

Management

The Manoel Theatre is managed by a Committee of management consisting of four members and a chairman. This Committee was appointed on the 8th July, 1960 for a period of one year and was composed as follows:-

R. Miller, M.B.E. Chairman
Not. V.M. Pellegrini LL.D.,
Mr. Graham Binns, M.A. (Oxon.)
Mrs. Ines Casha Bonello
Mr. A. Agius Ferrante L.P.

The members serve in an honorary capacity and have been appointed to undertake the general management of the Theatre in accordance with the rules contained in a Schedule forwarded for guidance to each individual member on the Committee. A copy of these rules is enclosed. These rules were originally drafted by a small committee composed of Messrs. A. Grossmith, H. Ellis, V.A. Castillo, A. Agius Ferrante and Mrs. Camilleri.

In July 1961 the Committee of Management was re-appointed for a further period of one year with one alteration. Col. G. Gatt substituted Mr. A. Miller as chairman. The Committee as at present constituted lapsed on July, 1962 but on the written directive of the Minister of Education, under whose aegis the Theatre falls, the life of the Committee was extended to 31st December, 1962. It is understood that a further extension up to 31st March, 1963 is being contemplated.

Finances

The Manoel Theatre is subsidised by the Government as follows:-

For the financial year 1960-61 a subsidy of £4,000 was granted to the Committee notwithstanding the fact that the Theatre functioned for only 3 months during that financial year. In the subsequent financial year, that is for 1961-1962, a subsidy calculated at £4,000 per annum was granted. Following representations made to Government by the Committee of management the subsidy was increased with effect from the financial year 1962-63 from £4,000 to £6,500 per annum. The Theatre derives its revenue, apart from the Government subsidy from the hire of the Theatre, from Messrs. Rediffusion (Malta) Ltd., for the right to broadcast, from the lease of the bar, from the sale of programmes, and from tourists visiting the Theatre, as shown in the following table.

Financial year	Bar	Hire	Rediffusion	Programmes	Visitors
1960-61 (part year)	£ 112	£ 235	£ 50	£ 292	£ 2
1961-62 (full year)	278	952	500	525	20
1962-63 (part year)	75	199	500	222	14

Again, following representations by the Committee, a once and for all payment of £3,000 was made by the Government for the provision of certain capital equipment not existing at the time at the Theatre. This equipment is gradually being acquired and approximately £2,000 out of this sum has already been expended. The Theatre, as indeed any other theatre, is liable to entertainment duty and in fact from our records it appears that the following duty was paid to Government as shown hereunder:-

Financial year 1960-61	£1,271. 4.10 (part year)
Financial year 1961-62	£1,984.18. 3 (full year)
Financial year 1962-63	£ 382. 4. 7 (part year)

Staff

I. Permanent Staff

A. Administration

- 1 Manager
- 1 Clerk Typist
- 1 Archivist
- 1 Resident caretaker
- 1 Booking clerk (on a daily basis)
- 2 Charwomen

B. Stage Staff

- 1 Head Electrician
- 1 Assistant Electrician
- 2 Stage hands

Of the above staff the Archivist, the resident caretaker and the Head Electrician have been seconded for duty from the Government.

II. Occasional Staff

A. Stage Staff

Extra stage hands depending upon the type of performance.

- 1 Doorman (Stage control)
- 1 Fireman

B. Front of House Staff

- 1 Ticket controller
- 1 Commissionaire
- 4 Ushers (one for each tier)
- 3 Usherettes (for Auditorium)
- 1 Cloak room attendant

The offices for the administration are situated at the back of the stage and consist of two flats leased from the Hon. Mabel Strickland at a rental not yet agreed upon; such flats were converted into offices as part of the adaptation works carried out at the Theatre.

Improvements

The improvements which have been carried out since the Theatre was inaugurated consist mainly in the provision of certain stage equipment with which the Theatre was not provided. These improvements have been made (and others are still in process of being carried out) because of Government's contribution of £3,000 mentioned earlier in this report. These improvements consist in the provision of a certain number of grid pulleys which were required to render the grid more efficient; the provision of a moveable cyclorama; the installation of sound producing equipment including intercommunication with all dressing rooms, offices, orchestra, booking office and board room; the purchase of velvet curtains, complete with curtain tracks and the acquisition of two upright pianos for stage use.

It is contemplated to provide electric heaters and carpets for the auditorium and main staircase. Both the heaters and the carpets should be available before the end of the current financial year.

Planning

The functions proper of a National Theatre comprise the establishment of the following institutions, namely:-

- a) A Drama School,
- b) A National Chorus
- c) A National Orchestra,
- d) A Repertory Company.

(a) Drama

We have unfortunately no indigenous professionals to cover a comprehensive drama course which would include elocution, voice production, acting, make-up, scenery-painting, stage managing and lighting. The management is already in correspondence with the British Institute regarding the formation of a drama school and assistance has been provided. Miss Ethel Farrugia of the British Institute has been sent abroad for purposes of training and on completion of her present course she would work at the Theatre in connection with the drama school and her wages defrayed out of the British Institute funds.

(b) National Chorus

Choral singing is different from singing in an operatic chorus. The Management would like to make a start with the formation of an operatic chorus. Ways and means for such formation are being studied by the Management.

(c) National Orchestra

This is a highly technical and complicated subject. It is admittedly a missing link in our cultural set-up and its eventual institution and development is bound up with a school of music. So long as there is no school of music staffed by fully qualified teachers, there can never be a sufficient number of fully competent instrumentalists.

(d) Repertory Company

Such a company is complementary to a National Theatre. The Management has already concrete plans about the formation and it is hoped that, assuming funds are available, such a company would be established.

A detailed memorandum covering the establishment of the schools etc. mentioned in the preceding paragraphs was submitted to Government in September 1961 together with a detailed estimate of the additional funds required both for capital and recurrent expenditure. Unless such funds are available we see no hope of making a good start of the projects we have in mind.

The establishment of the above schools etc. raises once more the question of accommodation. The Theatre Rehabilitation Committee had recommended at para 9 of its report the acquisition of the house at No. 115 Old Theatre Street, Valletta. This recommendation, it seems, was accepted by the Government and effect was given to that approval under the provisions of the Land Acquisition (Public Purposes) Ordinance (Chapter 136); please see in this respect Government Notice No. 173 dated 25/2/1958 in Govt. Gazette dated 10/3/58.

In order to appreciate the necessity of acquiring the above house it should be stated that (a) the Theatre has no Foyer proper; (b) there are only 3 front of houses lavatories to cater for a capacity crowd of about 650. This is undoubtedly very unsatisfactory; (c) there is no cloak room proper for the Theatre; (d) there is no advance booking office; (e) there is no rehearsal room and no room for scenery painting; we have no store where to put the bulky stage property such as furniture, costumes, scenery, curtains etc; (f) we have no workshop proper and much of the work has to be carried out on the stage.

I hope these notes will be of some use to you. If there is anything further you want to ask please do not hesitate to let me know.

A. AGIUS FERRANTE
Hon. Secretary.

L-ARKIVI NAZZJONALI TA' MALTA