

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

23 May 2011

Report of the Chief Leisure Officer

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 TONBRIDGE CASTLE FESTIVAL OF MUSIC AND FIREWORKS

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Members on arrangements for this year's event.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 At the last meeting of this Board, a number of proposals regarding the 2011 Festival of Music were considered by Members. It was agreed that in 2011 the Council should work with Opera Brava and that the event will take place during the weekend of 7, 8, 9 July 2011.
- 1.1.2 Opera Brava stage opera performances at a number of stately homes and other venues across the country throughout the year. Opera Brava is a charitable organisation with 24 years of experience and has won the acclaim of critics and music professionals.
- 1.1.3 Since the last meeting of this Board a number of meetings have taken place with Opera Brava and a formal contract has been signed. The following performances will be showcased at Tonbridge Castle this year:
- Thursday 7 July - The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (starts at 7pm, gates open 5.30pm) - Opera Brava will be working with around 80 children aged 7 to 13 from Sussex Road Primary School to put on this special performance of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. As well as learning about how to put on a production and designing and making props, the children will be rehearsing and singing so they can perform alongside the professional singers on the night.
 - Friday 8 July - The Magic Flute by Mozart (starts at 7.30pm, gates open 5.30pm) - This performance of one of Mozart's most beautiful operas will be accompanied by an accomplished chamber ensemble of musicians. This brand new production is the perfect introduction to the world of opera.

- Saturday 9 July - Candlelit Gala Concert (starts at 7.30pm, gates open at 5.30pm) - This concert will include a host of well-known operatic gems including “Nessun Dorma” the “Lakme” duet, the “Pearl Fishers” duet, the “Rigoletto Quartet” “Largo al Factotum” from the Barber of Seville and many others. The second half will include “Champagne” from Die Fledermaus, Gershwin melodies, Bernstein’s West Side story and a popular medley from the Gilbert & Sullivan operas, interspersed with informative and comic anecdotes. The evening will end with a display of fireworks to bring the Festival to a close.

1.2 Marketing

1.2.1 The Kent Messenger Group has been appointed as the main media partner for the event and will provide the following campaign, utilising a mixture of press, radio and online activity:

- Press - The event will be advertise in the KM’s Whats On supplement in the following publications

Kent Messenger
 Medway Messenger
 Kentish Express (Ashford)
 Kentish Gazette (Canterbury)
 East Kent Mercury (Deal and Dover)
 Sheerness Times Guardian
 Gravesend and Dartford Messenger

- Radio - Once a month airtime campaign on kmfm West Kent 96.2 – 101.6 – covering Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks
- Online on www.kentmessenger.co.uk

30,000 unique users and 118,000 page impressions per month
 Skyscraper/banner or mid page unit ad hyper linking through to the Opera Brava section on the Council’s website.

The Council’s Media and Communications team will also send out news releases to all local media advising that tickets are now on sale.

1.2.2 Leaflets/Posters/Banners/Adverts - 25,000 DL leaflets have been produced advertising the event and these will be distributed to Opera Brava’s database, the Assembly Hall Theatre (Tunbridge Wells) database and will feature in the May edition of the LSBU’s ezine newsletter. The leaflet will also be circulated to previous attendees of the Music Festival.

Banners have also been produced and are on display at Tonbridge Castle, Larkfield Leisure Centre, Tonbridge Swimming Pool, Angel Centre and Poult Wood Golf Centre.

- 1.2.3 Opera Brava has an established arrangement with Archant (Kent Life) and an advertorial has been designed for a full page feature in the June edition of the publication. Advertising has also been placed with Index Magazine, Primary Times, Kent Profile, West Kent WI News and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's newspaper for residents 'Local'. The Music Festival will also feature in this Council's Here & Now publication and the annual Leisure Guide. Both publications are distributed door-to-door to residents.
- 1.2.4 Posters will be advertised in local shops in Tonbridge High Street and have been sent to Parish Councils. Event posters will also be on display in the Council's billboards around Tonbridge town centre as well as using billboards in Tunbridge Wells (via the Assembly Hall Theatre).

1.3 Ticket Sales to Date

- 1.3.1 Tickets have recently become available to purchase from Tonbridge Castle, via the Opera Brava box office telephone number 01444 443000 or via their website at www.operabrava.co.uk. I will update Members at the meeting on sales.

1.4 Event Arrangements

- 1.4.1 For this year's event, the Council will be co-ordinating some direct operational elements of the event. These include items such as first aid, security, toilets, lighting, catering concessions and fireworks. A number of these items have already been booked with contractors who have worked at previous events at the Castle and are therefore familiar with the site.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The contract between the Council and Opera Brava was prepared with Legal Services and has been signed by both parties.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 Financial projections of both costs and income have been provided by Opera Brava and have been reviewed by Officers within Financial Services.
- 1.6.2 The overall estimated costs of the concerts amount to around £35,000. The income projections from realistic ticket sales provided allow for a small return to be made to the Council on a 50:50 basis with Opera Brava, after all costs have been agreed and deducted.
- 1.6.3 It has been agreed that risks will also be shared on a 50:50 basis leaving a maximum estimated exposure of costs of £17,500. Members will note that this is a worst case scenario based on no ticket sales and is comparable with the deficit incurred on the 2010 Festival.
- 1.6.4 Roughly, based on the ticket prices above, the breakeven point (allowing for some take-up of concessions) would be circa 700 tickets per performance. This is a

different type of event to the previous Festivals but, for comparative purposes, the 2010 Festival averaged 900 tickets per performance. The lowest attendance in 2010 was the Saturday evening performance with 685 tickets sold.

1.7 Policy Considerations

1.7.1 Community, Healthy Lifestyles. Customer Contact

Background papers:

contact: Lyndsey Bennett

Nil

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Chief Leisure Officer