

## **OUDS Meeting: Trinity Term Week 7**

8th June 2020, via Zoom

**Present:** Alasdair Linn, Ana Pagu, Henry Calcutt, Alison Hall, Ros Ballaster, Krishan Emmanuel, Katie Friedli Walton, Georgina Dettmer, Darcy Dixon, Emma Hawkins, John Watts, Lola Beal, Nancy Case, Mina Moniri, John Livesey

**Apologies:** Ariadne Si Suo,

### **Agenda**

#### 1. Open Letter to the University

The letter encourages individuals and organisations associated with the University to sign. AL asked those with any grievances against OUDS signing to raise their hands, no one did - OUDS will sign this in the week.

#### 2. Last Week's Statement

We were keen to get the statement out as soon as possible, and there was some ambiguity about whether our donation would be okay - ultimately it is.

We have had some responses from the statement, with a few complaints. DD explained that we had one from a student and one from a critic - they felt that stating that Oxford had a diverse body was an understatement, what she meant by this was rather that even though it may be fairly positive in Oxford, that isn't what it is like elsewhere. The email from the critic, according to DD, requires a two-pronged approach. First, investigate - a survey put out to ethnic minority students to gauge their experiences. The remedy - welfare teas where DD can act as a sort of 'agony aunt', workshops with visitors from an ethnic minority background, a less Eurocentric monologue bank, and an action statement about what OUDS does if an issue arises during rehearsals/auditions/show weeks.

JL suggested that, as part of the enquiry, a data set could come out with information about the ethnic make-up of the shows (playwrights, directors, cast members) being put on in Oxford. This was something spoken about a few years ago.

KFW thinks that directors should have the language to say I'm going to have a quota on a production for people of colour. Because there are so many backgrounds over-represented, it's difficult to try and adhere to these quotas and attempts. It's an access problem as much as it's a drama problem.

KE believes there is a direct link between the lack of ethnic minority students in Oxford drama and the lack of ethnic minority students at Oxford at large.

EH thinks it's hard to find people of colour to get involved in shows - how can we reach out to students of colour to make them actively want to get involved.

JL - after Medea, there were four all-BAME cast and crew productions, in the two years since then, he has seen nothing like that. Often, what it takes is just one person to throw the baton out, and people do take that up. It's about centering different stories.

HC spoke about a possible list of resources for directors - plays by black playwrights so that directors and producers can use these resources.

JL has data on diversity in the UK at large, and spoke about the library project for the BT.

NC says that BT isn't accessible for disabled students.

JL - we can't have it in public spaces in the BT, it would have to be in his office. A pidge post deal?

KFW - online watch-along events at the moment with productions from Drama Online - making sure the plays we choose centre the stories of black and ethnic minorities.

AL brought up the list of commitments of Rachel Chavkin (<http://theteamplays.org/?fbclid=IwAR3W6gbitR7JfxsPI35xlfmxqyALcEpNty9I1leQ2Hjn4xuAKJfqI80ntOoY>) to diversity and re-evaluate the ingrained racism in her shows and productions. Someone came to AL with this.

KE noted that - pandemic or no pandemic - we care about standing up to racism, this should be something freshers know as soon as they arrive, workshops etc.

### 3. Bidding Meeting

JL and AP disagreed - AP felt as if the statement was too optimistic. One of the things that JL thinks we cannot do is delay interviews too far into the holidays - it is not our remit to tell people how to operate in the vac, he would rather have bidding happening earlier with resources there if the situation changes. Cam Mack Board is happy to have a pot of money if things fall through, as well as 'alternative forms' of theatre - streaming etc. The extent to which this is an OUDS committee is limited, it's rather an issue for the individual theatres.

JL has tasked the venues with 'best practice' guides - this will have the outcomes of their conversations with their wardens.

AL was going to propose a bidding meeting on Friday - it seems a lot clearer than he had thought it would be.

AL asks whether, still, he could have a discussion on Friday about insurance, with AP, JL, and possibly a senior member. RB says that she could do before 11 on Friday, so can JW. AP will send out a when to meet for Wed to Fri.

#### 4. New Positions & Amending the By-Laws

AL - the creation of formal, new positions for GD and DD in the committee. The job description for Outreach Representative will go into the by-laws in 13. F. In terms of changing the by-laws, this must be voted for by two-thirds of the committee. AL asked if people had any amendments to the description, which GD posted in the chat.

It reads:

Be responsible for the organising of participation and outreach in the local community in the dramatic arts for those underexposed and excluded from theatre.

This was taken to a vote, and passed.

The next role, formerly known as 'Equalities and Other Societies Rep', will be filled by DD and is now being called 'Equity, Diversity and Access Rep.' It is taking the term of 'Other Societies' out of the equation.

The description is as follows:

13(d)The Equity, Diversity and Access Rep, who shall:-

- i. work to improve the equality, diversity, and accessibility of the Oxford theatre scene.
- ii. work to provide a consistent support outlet for those from minority and/or marginalised groups to communicate and raise concerns with.
- iii. represent OUDS at OxBame and DisDram meetings.

It went to a vote and passed.

AL wondered whether going forward, in future elections, because the 'other societies' role has been disbanded, that TAFF has been left out of the 'other societies' part - going forward it could be possible to formalise that role within the NWF role. To create a role that says that the NWF role represents OUDS at TAFF meetings, essentially putting the TAFF rep role within the NWF role.

This was taken to a vote, and passed.

#### 5. WUDS and Fundraising

AL reported that there had not been much progress on the Senior Member. Emma Smith has accepted the role, though she has not got back to AL formally. The possibility was floated that David Taylor may end up taking the other role once Emma becomes the main Senior Member, though this has yet to be confirmed.

Once we've got the money for the WUDS fundraiser, then we can choose which theatre we give the money to afterwards.

JL thinks the best thing to do is say yes to Warwick, and then think about it a bit later down the road. In terms of the structure of the timeline, there is supposed to be a challenge each week, but it is reasonably open.

KFW is organising some stuff for 8th Week with TAFF - she's going to announce tonight a theatrical pub quiz, which will be on Tuesday evening of 8th Week.

AL thought we could have a vote to think about which theatre we should donate to.

If we don't have much interest and don't raise that much money, and then split it four ways between different theatres, is that almost a bit patronising?

NC wonders whether there are people who are already doing outreach theatre work who would be better placed to receive our donations. GD is happy to do research into this.

## 6. AOB