

## Chairman's Report MAODS – AGM 2017/18

Since the last AGM, MAODS have had successes and challenges alike, which is to be expected of an organisation of such scale, ambition and delivers on quality in every area of operation. MAODS success has to be attributed to the dedicated team of volunteers, who are passionate and often go over and above the call of duty to ensure we produce great theatre and nurture children and young people. The scale and complexity of the organisation isn't something I can articulate in a report, only by walking in the footsteps of those who've gone before whilst trying to forge our own path and direction, can you appreciate the demands and work which goes on behind closed doors. It is always very easy to be critical, find fault or point the finger, rather than champion the great or advocate the successes, so we need to reflect on what is achieved and I need to recognise without the support of key members of the board over the past 12 months, it is likely I'd be stepping down tonight. Whilst writing the report I wanted to understand why the society is important to us all, yes we produce great work – but more importantly we have a community of people, who not only want the best for the society but also for each other, we can support each other when we are struggling, we can offer advice when its needed, we can challenge without judgement. I feel the MAODS family teach by example and learn through experience whilst remaining true to our values. Our loyalty to MAODS is built through the ability to support each other through sickness and health, want and good fortune, failure and success, and I'm fortunate to witness that every time I walk through the doors of the studio.

Overall the past season, has been successful for a number of reasons, a total of 4945 people have watched the three main productions, an increase of 2% compared to the previous year. Broken down, Brassed Off had a house of 96%, In The Heights 59% and Gypsy 78%, each production made a surplus, and added to the reserves of the society. We made a conscious decision two years ago to change the established programme, allowing us to develop new audiences, with the intention to future proof our ticket sales and demonstrate that a diverse programme can work. With two years under our belt, with this approach – I feel confident we can continue programming the productions based on this model. There is

a slight increase in membership this year, primarily based on the increase of Next Gen members, which currently sits at 202 paid members.

This season, three productions have been housed at The George Lawton Hall, and whilst we are all aware of the demise of Carillion over the past 12 months, it hasn't 'to date' impacted up on our bookings. We are aware there is likely to be a conversation with the new facilities management company, who intentions are to increase the hall rent during our fit up times, but we will negotiate and outline the developments MAODS have made to GLH over the years. The three productions included: Brassed Off, In The Heights and Gypsy. Brassed Off was well received by audiences, but the process came with challenges mainly around a change in production team part way through the rehearsal process. The real positive was the relationship which evolved with Mossley Brass, and has informed the change of format for the September production, changing the play to a collaboration with the brass band. In The Heights, saw Sam deliver a quality production with his directorial debut. The energy and commitment from the young company was infectious and shone through at every performance.

The committee play an integral part to the organisation and have a legal responsibility to ensure MAODS is governed in line with charitable law and that everyone is accountable for decisions which directly affect MAODS members and reputation. So I would like to thank all the members especially those who are stepping down this year. It goes without saying, that sometimes within an organisation the workload and responsibility can be carried by the few rather than the many. We can only progress and develop if we all take this statement and apply it. So I request those putting up to be nominated to carefully consider the requirement of committing to more than just attending a meeting and participating in your usual activity within the society.

Next Generation continues to grow, which is demonstrated by the increase of members over the past 12 months. The young people have been presented with a wealth of opportunities to perform, including the GMDF One Act Play Festival, with two entries, a great production of Anne Frank here at the Mill, a variety of external performances with the APG / Musical Theatre group including light switch on's throughout Tameside, the NODA

Awards in Manchester and recently Showcase at The Lowry, which was very well received. Over the past 12 months, we have started to implement a more robust governance process for Next Gen, providing a clearer structure of roles and responsibilities for Gary Jones-McCaw and also MOADS. Implementing this will provide more transparency for everyone moving forward, and enable MAODS to guide and nurture members coming through Next Generation for many years to come.

Unfortunately we had to cancel the Diner Dance this year, due to clashes and availability of members, so this will be rescheduled for later in the year. We have become GDPR compliant but are working towards improving systems to make this more effective. We are hopeful over the forthcoming months to have new software to help assist managing memberships and communication to all members and supporters. It does need to be shared we have had a serious Safeguarding Disclosure which we have been working with Greater Manchester Police with for over 6 months, and been commended on our procedures and support in the matter. The Charities Commission have been informed and depending on the outcome of the case, we have press statements at the ready.

Awards are a celebration of someone recognising something, on a given evening, of their attendance to a production. I would like to take a moment to recognise everyone from FOH to Chaperones, who all contribute in their own special way to allow an audience to have a positive experience when watching a MAODS production. It is easy to acknowledge: cast / creative team and technical but the other roles involved are just as valued to me and the board – so thank you. We have received numerous nominations and awards over the past 12 months, including MMA's / GMDF / NODA and ACT. It must be noted that a life time achievement award went John Buckley at NODA, for his contribution to technical theatre.

Moving forward into 2018/19, we want to build on our current position, streamline systems and make ourselves efficient for our members. Our programme will include the partnership with Mossley Brass Band in September, Bring It On which is based on a cult film in December – which has been cast, directed by Sam Maurice and Full Monty in April 2019. We have agreed to programme our December show 2019, as a National Premier of a new

musical 'Sleeping Beauty' written by Ian Curran. The Musical is gaining interest from professional venues Nationally, and we will have the first performance rights to produce it.

To finish off, on behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all the Volunteers who have given time to the society and without your support there would be no society, the 'in-kind' time would be measured at 000's of hours and it does not go unnoticed – so thank you.