

Arts and Entertainments Board Report

Jonathan McNaught- AEB Chair

Introduction

Arts and Entertainments activities at Imperial College continue to flourish with activities taking place on an ever greater scale each year and increasingly ambitious events being planned by societies. These activities take huge amounts of dedication and time from students to rehearse, organise and produce, with many events close to a professional standard and selling out, even though members of the societies are studying Science, Technology and Medicine, and not Music, Art or Drama.

This report will highlight the many successes of these societies and give details on their activities so far this year. It will also aim to update members of the Clubs and Societies Board on the current membership and financial situation of CSPB societies, before outlining some of the issues highlighted by the clubs. The Arts and Entertainments Executive Committee is additionally responsible for organising ArtsFest, a week long Arts festival at Imperial and has plans to make this much bigger and better than it has been able to achieve in recent years.

Finally, the Exec feel passionately that the Arts at Imperial could have a much greater profile and are working closely with both senior figures within the College and the Blyth Centre for Music and Visual Arts to further Imperial's Arts Community, encourage collaboration between societies and increase knowledge about this hugely successful group of clubs.

I would like to thank the committees of Arts and Entertainments Clubs who have been responsive and enthusiastic at meetings, and in particular to the vast majority of clubs who submitted extremely detailed surveys to me.

Club Activities

Societies within Arts and Entertainments have recently been involved in a huge range of activities. Most societies rehearse at least weekly and have regular social activities alongside one or two major concerts or events each term, though this is not the case for all societies.

Imperial's flagship orchestra, Imperial College Symphony Orchestra (ICSO) began this year with a tour to Helsinki, Finland where they were privileged to perform in the world famous Sibelius Hall in Lahti (receiving a standing ovation from a reserved Finnish audience) and also Sibelius' House on the anniversary of his death. The start of term saw an extraordinary standard at auditions with subsequent weekly rehearsals preparing for the Autumn Concert. This included a weekend spent in Dorchester where the Orchestra combine with the Thomas Hardye Choir to sing a fantastic concert. The Autumn Concert was a sell-out attracting a huge number of students and received some standing ovations.

Another of Imperial's orchestras Sinfonietta have had a very successful start to the year, particularly considering struggles they have had in recent years both financially and attracting members. They are a fantastic society very open to collaboration and have this term prepared an exciting repertoire with music related to art which culminated in a very successful concert with a larger orchestra than usual with on-stage projections and an art exhibition with pieces made by LeoSoc. They have also organised a wide range of socials to ensure that new members felt welcome and that old members stayed with the society.

Imperial College Choir took part in the 'Give it a Go' scheme and now have around 100 people coming regularly to rehearsals. They sung at Commemoration Day and recently had a hugely successful concert of the Handel Messiah at Hold Trinity in Sloane Square including some standing ovations. Before the end of

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term they will be singing at the College Carol Service, supporting the Children of St. Mary's Intensive Care Charity and raising money for FoodCycle with carol singing on Edgware Road.

Imperial College Chamber Choir were inundated at auditions with a high standard of singing and have thus expanded this year to accommodate as many deserving members as possible. They joined with the main Imperial College Choir and Medic's Choir for performances at the Albert Hall, and also travelled to Fareham, south Hampshire, where they took part in the Titchfield Carnival, singing in St. Peter's church between parades. They have sung fortnightly evensong services with higher attendance than previously. They have also sung concerts on St. Cecilia's Day and are now are working up to a performance of Dido and Aeneas.

Aside from their weekly rehearsals, Imperial College String Ensemble held a "concert in a day" and learnt Suk's Serenade in one day with the aim of recruiting extra players. They also performed at the UNICEF concert and had a successful concert on Friday 5th December in Holy Trinity. The society has grown and they now have over 35 regular players with a constantly increasing standard.

Imperial College Wind Band have had a rehearsal weekend in Oxford which attracted more members than previous years (selling out in a record 4 days) and have performed a successful Autumn Term concert alongside doing some Christmas busking in the Business School.

The Chamber Music Society organised an Instrument Taster session, a masterclass, social outings, freshers' welcome meeting and will be holding a Christmas Concert.

IC Big Band have managed to reach an incredible standard with both their two bands this term and have recently christened the new IC recording studio, recording 5 tracks with one of their bands, a highlight of this term for them. They now have their annual Christmas gig coming up in Metric at the end of term.

Imperial's Gospel Choir held several taster sessions at the beginning of term to encourage new members to join the society and have now been working towards a Christmas Concert which integrates both their band and choir. Like ICSE, Gospel Choir sang at the UNICEF charity concert and will also be performing off campus at an event for young patients of St. Mary's Hospital.

A Cappella society consists of four separate groups, three of which sent in auditions for The ICCA International round, all of whom have got through to the live semi-finals taking place in Imperial's Great Hall on January 24th 2015. The committee have worked very hard in liaising with Imperial Staff to get the ICCA's to be hosted at Imperial and it is a huge privilege for this to be taking place here. All four groups have been busking, recording and performing and have their Annual Christmas Concert on Thursday 11th December. A Cappella are in the process of allowing two new groups to form and become part of the society, as well as having a new group just for beatboxing. Expanding the society accommodates the many beatboxers at Imperial, and allows for many of the talented singers that did not succeed in auditions to still have a chance with A Cappella.

The Jazz and Rock Society have been finishing their practice room renovation and hope to have most things in place by next term so that normal use of the practice room can commence. They have also held several events including 4 Metric nights (band night, tribute night, jazz cocktail night) and will providing two bands for the Winter Carnival event on the last day of term.

After some struggles last year (and a period of Dormancy), GuitarSoc appear to be enjoying success this year with weekly guitar lessons, an open mic night at the end of this term. There are also several pupils being taught by guitar teachers within the society. MusicTech have held weekly DJ sessions, productions and provided DJ opportunities to their members.

DramSoc have had a busy term of events including their Fresher's play "Sexual Perversity in Chicago" and will be putting on a very ambitious performance of "Road" at the end of this term.

MTSoc have managed to attract a huge influx of new members to the society and started off this year with October “Acting” performances written by two society members. Their Revue which was performed for three nights was a huge highlight of the term, and encouraged collaboration from a number of societies including A Cappella, Big Band, ICSO, Cinema and DramSoc.

Imperial Cinema have moved back into the UCH post redevelopment and have installed a new sound system. There have been the standard weekly screenings, including a more experimental line-up in comparison to previous terms. They are now preparing for the ever popular All-Nighter.

AEB have welcomed one new society this year: Comedy. Their activities have been very successful so far with two comedy nights combining with the “Nice & Spiky” Comedy group and did a similar event later on in the term. The attendances at these were excellent and have really helped encourage membership. Every week they have held comedy writing meetings to prepare for these shows.

Clubs not mentioned here did not submit completed surveys.

Membership

The Arts and Entertainments Clubs have an average membership of 92% in comparison to their target membership, which represents 1163 members. Congratulations go to Cinema for having 167% of their target, Music Tech (123%), MTSoc (122%) and particularly our new society Comedy (120%).

Society	Actual Membership	Target Membership	Percentage of Target
A Cappella	47	45	104%
Calligraphy	2	20	10%
Chamber Choir	27	30	90%
Chamber Music	35	35	100%
Choir	117	116	101%
Comedy	24	20	120%
Design Collective	59	50	118%
DramSoc	38	65	58%
Fashion	13	20	65%
Gospel Choir	21	35	60%
Guitar	17	25	68%
Big Band	31	35	89%
Cinema	250	150	167%
Jazz and Rock	103	150	69%
LeoSoc	80	100	80%
Music Tech	43	35	123%
MTSoc	39	32	122%
Symphony			
Orchestra	80	80	100%
Sinfonietta	59	70	84%
String Ensemble	23	25	92%
Wind Band	55	50	110%
Total	1163	1188	92%

Comments from societies who have not yet reached their membership targets gives very reasonable reasons for not having done so including memberships needing to be bought when free Taster sessions expire, membership cost or numbers adjustments taking effect this year.

One notable concern is Calligraphy Society who have only 2 members of 20, which appear to be memberships bought by mistake since the society essentially no longer exists (there are no committee

members) and there have been no replies from club accounts. I am currently investigating whether this club needs to be closed down.



Financial Overview

Many of the Arts and Entertainments clubs have core aims and objectives which are expensive to run, however currently the clubs appear to have strong finances. For some clubs, a high positive figure can sometimes hide club financial difficulties such as overspends, however I believe that currently all clubs are in a reasonable financial condition. The table in the Appendix shows financial figures for AEB clubs currently.

The obvious concern from this table is Jazz and Rock, however they have Harlington money coming. When asked whether societies are happy with their finances, the majority of clubs stated that they were satisfied, although many did mention that their current amounts do limit activities. For example, ICSE are unable to pay their Conductor the amount he deserves and Chamber Music would have had to reduce welfare and activities had it not recently received a small amount of external sponsorship. Sinfonietta was facing serious trouble with negative SGI at the beginning of the year due to an unexpected bill, but their position is now substantially better.

Many societies have had some success with Harlington applications, and some have been able to gain external sponsorship. This is often tough for Arts societies and whilst AEB Exec support as much as possible, it would be great to increase the support from the Union with greater tailored advice to clubs. Notable successes are sponsorship from KPMG for Cinema, TeachFirst for Sinfonietta, EY for ICSO and O2 for Chamber Music Society.

Societies in Arts and Entertainments also often hold some SGI in reserve for numerous reasons. These reasons include summer tours (sometimes over a number of years), paying conductors, equipment contingency (especially for immediate replacements which cannot wait for other funding routes), sheet music and ground hire for events or future projects.

Administration

Committee members not buying membership for clubs, not completing training quizzes or societies with outstanding documents are very few (e.g. 3 naughty officers, 2 outstanding documents) and have all been followed up and reminded, many returning with legitimate reasons.

Two Constitutions were updated at AEB meetings: Wind Band added a committee member and the new Comedy Society had their constitution approved.

Highlighted Issues

College Conferences: As with every year there are issues with those societies who make their room bookings through College and are moved at short notice. This can have serious impacts on the club activities: for example, Choir feel that being kicked out of the Great Hall for 2 rehearsals early on in term led to a drop in numbers despite the best efforts of the committee. ICSE had a large issue when the Great Hall was locked one evening due to there being exam papers in there, despite it being booked. There are also issues by societies who use the SCR due to noisy staff during rehearsals and it is also unclear what state the societies are expected to return their room to after rehearsals when it was found in a bad state. I am in contact with Charles Gallagher and will endeavour to continue to improve this, however this may well be heading in the correct direction in contrast to previous years.

Union Bookings: There have been problems for Gospel Choir here who had to hold their Taster sessions in a lecture theatre that was too small for their intended use and difficult for Freshers to find. They also commented that it was difficult for them to book rooms at slightly shorter notice this term when they are

unsure how many rehearsals they will require before a show. A Cappella also had issues when their usual rehearsal venue became unavailable in finding pianos in College spaces. Something requested is information on pianos available in College- this is an action which has come out of the first ArtsImperial meeting and this will hopefully help clubs. MTSoc had problems after being allocated a College space on the 10th floor rather than a Union space and therefore having to lug keyboards, amps, music stands, piano stand, speakers etc. to a far corner of the campus. This arose when they were told that Union rooms were blanket booked prior to room bookings opening and has furthermore proved problematic due to the loud noise the club makes disturbing those working in the department.

Storage: Many clubs have approached me with storage issues this year. One place where there are storage issues is the untidy state of the Great Hall cupboard used by many societies and I am currently planning a massive Spring Clean of this for users so that it can be used much more effectively and easily. Issues also arise when the Great Hall is in use, as the cupboard is inaccessible without huge numbers of stairs, however I am hoping to discuss this with Conferences so that societies are warned in advance. Gospel Choir have had issues with their storage in the Union where they have had a keyboard go missing from their shared cupboard which is very disorganised and full of unwanted items. This is also concerning for them since they have recently purchased a large amount of band equipment which needs safe, secure storage. Music Tech's storage is also filled with unwanted rubbish and for MTSoc, Glendower School are constantly leaving items in the way of their items and in the marked "Keep Clear" sections making it difficult to get access to their equipment without moving heavy gym kit (an ongoing issue for more than 2 years). They are also having problems getting a key to use their new storage cupboard despite many attempts to chase this up. Many of these problems could be very simply solved by clearing out cupboards and making sure they are all secured properly. I will be working with the societies who have flagged issues up to me to see how they can be helped and also will happily assist the DPCS with her Storage Audit.

ArtsFest

The Arts and Entertainments Executive Committee is additionally responsible for organising ArtsFest, a week long extravaganza showcasing Arts at Imperial which will be held from 16th-20th February 2015. This has had varying success in recent years and failed to make as large an impact as it potentially could, due to a lack of enthusiasm from some societies and a lack of publicity in communicating it to College. The Executive feel that one of the ways we can further Arts at Imperial is by giving them a wider audience, giving them the opportunity to showcase their society and also by encouraging societies to collaborate. Therefore, we are hoping to increase the profile of ArtsFest significantly this year.

The ArtsFest Chair has been working very closely with the rest of the Executive Committee and we are almost in the position of having a finalised programme of events. These include several collaborations between societies and an increased number in comparison to recent years. One of our key aims is to increase the profile of arts particularly to students who would not normally go to arts events by having a lot of demonstration events around campus at lunchtimes which are hard to miss and exhibitions in public places. We are working closely with College staff and hope to enable some of these to happen. We also realise that publicity will be crucial to the success and we are working out a way to increase the amount of this that happens. If nothing else, we want people to at least know that ArtsFest is happening. Finally, we are working hard to provide funding for ArtsFest and have just been granted a small amount of external sponsorship and also some money from the Education Office which will allow us to be significantly more ambitious.

ArtsImperial and Future Plans

ArtsImperial is the umbrella of the Union societies and the arts activities from the College which take place in the Blyth Centre for Music and Visual Art. This has a board which meet every term to discuss cross

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College-Union matters, one of which has taken place this term, and includes student representatives and the DPCS. The meeting was productive and with some developments which I am hoping to implement next term this Board can hugely be a hugely effective platform for discussion of strategy and issues, as well as being a great example for the rest of Imperial about how the Union and College interact.

Finally, we are working to make people in arts societies across Imperial feel like they are part of a community. This has been identified by the majority of club Chairs as “Hugely Important” with some beliefs that there is currently a small community which could be developed and others believing there currently is not one at all. There are a huge number of suggestions on how this could be accomplished which include better networking amongst societies, more collaboration on events, more publicity of ArtsFest, improvement of facilities, cheap concert outings, better coordination of publicity and increased social events for members of all clubs. We are working on all these points to increase the success of Arts and Entertainments at Imperial.

Appendix

The following table shows the financial figures for A&E Clubs on 09/12/2014.

Society	Grant	SGI	Harlington	ICTrust	College	Grand Total
A&E A Cappella (421)	534.3	4,089.53	0	0	0	4,623.83
A&E Calligraphy and Oriental Painting (422)	20	154.98	0	0	0	174.98
A&E Chamber Choir (423)	295	4,732.27	0	304.57	0	5,331.84
A&E Chamber Music (412)	236.71	340.77	97.75	0	0	675.23
A&E Choir (403)	2,378.70	8,814.66	0	228.94	116.66	11,538.96
A&E Comedy Society (424)	0	50.54	0	0	0	50.54
A&E Design Collective (478)	656.6	1,750.40	0	0	0	2,407.00
A&E Dramatic Society (406)	-7.79	36,998.12	0	30.95	0	37,021.28
A&E Exec (400)	100	-88.47	0	0	0	11.53
A&E Fashion (146)	61.64	121.74	0	0	0	183.38
A&E Gospel Choir (418)	96.75	1,394.98	630	0	0	2,121.73
A&E Guitar (409)	64.6	610.46	0	0	0	675.06
A&E IC Big Band & Jazz (408)	371.43	4,878.62	0	320.36	0	5,570.41
A&E ICU Cinema (411)	668.5	1,732.10	0	0	0	2,400.60
A&E Jazz & Rock (413)	387.67	4,601.04	-8,025.80	0	0	-3,037.09
A&E LeoSoc (405)	408.41	4,275.00	1,244.10	0	0	5,927.51
A&E Music Technology (414)	152.43	1,521.36	0	0	0	1,673.79
A&E Musical Theatre (415)	796.5	4,536.92	0	0	0	5,333.42
A&E Orchestra (401)	657.13	7,489.69	0	0	0	8,146.82
A&E Sinfonietta (402)	1,073.71	1,909.74	0	561.6	0	3,545.05
A&E String Ensemble (417)	107.21	1,652.90	0	1,001.50	0	2,761.61
A&E Wind Band (419)	375	3,385.28	422.24	0	0	4,182.52
	9,434.50	94,952.63	-5,631.71	2,447.92	116.66	101,320.00