

METROPOLITAN EXPOSITION-RECREATION COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 184

Whereas, the Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission previously authorized a contract with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) for use of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts (PCPA) by OSF; and

Whereas, the Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission and the OSF have had a continuing dialogue over whether and to what extent the OSF shall be granted an exemption from the Commission's Box Office Policies; and

Whereas, it is the desire of the Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission to accommodate the needs of OSF, where such accommodations are consistent with the legitimate requirements of the Commission; and


Whereas, the Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission and the OSF have reached a tentative agreement resolving this issue.

THE METROPOLITAN EXPOSITION-RECREATION COMMISSION FINDS:

1. That the OSF has unique ticketing requirements, differing from those of the PCPA's other users, due in large part to its dual city operations;
2. That the OSF requires full integration of data between its Portland and Ashland operations;
3. That OSF must have the ability to sell tickets not only by standard subscriptions, but also to Members/Contributors to the Festival on a single ticket basis;
4. That members/contributors in Portland and Ashland are entitled to the same ticketing benefits in both cities;
5. That OSF, with its subscription season, helps provide a solid base of performances, scheduled well in advance of actual performance dates, which helps the PCPA plan, budget, and operate in the most efficient manner, allowing for financial stability, maximizing scheduling opportunities and guaranteeing theater usage;
6. That an exemption from the Commission's Box Office Policies will allow OSF to meet the above requirements in the most efficient and economical manner, is important for the financial health of OSF, and will help promote continued usage of the PCPA by OSF;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission authorizes the General Manager of the Commission to negotiate and sign, on behalf of the Commission, an amended contract with OSF which shall contain the original contract approved by the Commission for OSF, with the addition of an exemption from the Commission's Box Office Policy in a form substantially similar to the Conditions detailed in the Staff Report dated June 8, 1992, which is attached to this Resolution as Exhibit A.


Passed by the Commission on _____, 1992.


Chairman


Secretary/Treasurer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

DANIEL B. COOPER, GENERAL COUNSEL


By: Mark B. Williams
Senior Assistant Counsel



Portland Center for the Performing Arts

Robert A. Freedman, Director / Portland Civic Auditorium • Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall • Intermediate Theatre • Dolores Winningstad Theatre

TO: METROPOLITAN EXPOSITION-RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: LEE FEHRENKAMP, GENERAL MANAGER *Lee*
 ROBERT A. FREEDMAN, DIRECTOR, PCPA *Robert*

DATE: JUNE 8, 1992

STAFF REPORT OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL TICKET ISSUES

In August of 1991, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival began conversations with the Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission staff regarding conversion of their ticket operation to the Prologue computerized ticketing system. This automated system is the one in use in the Festival's Ashland theatres.

The initial staff reaction was not positive as we were not given very much detail as to why the Festival felt that it was crucial for their success to make this conversion given that numerous other arts organizations do operate without much problem on the systems authorized by the Commission.

We requested that the Festival meet with the authorized ticket agency of their choice, in this instance, Ticketmaster, to see if it were possible for the ticket agency to meet the needs of the Festival.

Meetings began to take place in February/March of 1992. During these meetings full discussion took place about the ticketing needs of the Festival, the relationship between the Portland and Ashland operation, the cost of ticketing operations for the Festival, the need to appropriately service the patrons of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts and MERC's philosophy of making the most tickets available at the most locations for the citizens of our region.

It was during these discussions that we learned of the uniqueness of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's ticketing requirements. Among

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the special needs of the Festival for ticketing include: 1) Full integration of data between the Portland and Ashland operation; 2) The Festival sells tickets not only by standard subscriptions, but also to Members/Contributors to the Festival on a single ticket basis; 3) Members in Portland and Ashland are entitled to the same benefits in both cities.

A considerable amount of time was spent on these issues to see if it were possible to somehow manage the information about subscribers, members, contributors and single ticket buyers required for efficient operation of the Festival. Particular attention was given to reviewing the possibilities of integrating, up-loading and/or down-loading information between two very different and discreet ticketing systems. This posed many complex problems that truly seemed unresolvable and/or terrifically cumbersome and perhaps costly. One of the stumbling blocks is the fact that the information is changed and updated on a daily basis and even up-loading and or down-loading from one system to another could not be managed in such a way to stay current with the new data.

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival clearly has unusual operational needs in the fact that the Festival 1) is running theatre operations in two different cities; 2) is making significant efforts to bring these two operations closer together for efficiency and cost savings and, 3) needs to maintain updated data on their consumers in both cities concurrently. Given these unique business circumstances, that no other organization using our facilities has, the General Manager will offer a special exception from our box office policies to allow the Oregon Shakespeare Portland to integrate their ticket system with Ashland, and for their own use, install and sell tickets for Portland on the Prologue system.

There are certain conditions that need to be met in order to grant this special exception. These conditions have been reviewed by Martha Richards, Administrative Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Portland and have been agreed to in principle. The conditions are as follows:

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival Portland:

1. shall provide an allotment of tickets to be sold through one of MERC's approved automated ticketing contractors. The allotment shall be in all price ranges available after subscription sales are complete and an excellent selection of available seats.

2. shall advertise MERC facilities, outlets and phone room of one of the MERC's approved automated ticketing contractors to ensure that tickets are available to the widest public and at the normal

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outlets for tickets that consumers use for purchasing tickets to MERC facilities.

3. will not solicit interest in or advocate to any other organization the use of the Prologue system.

4. will submit any necessary box office audits required by MERC to monitor ticket sales, user fees, etc.

5. shall provide a bond of \$100,000 to be placed in an escrow account, the interest of which shall accrue to the Portland Center for the Performing Arts.

6. execute a contract for use of the facilities as amended by the General Manager of MERC to take into account this special ticketing circumstance.

7. work with the Director of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts and the Portland Center for the Performing Arts Box Office Manager on technical details for night of show sales, how allocations will be handled and any other details required to successfully ensure a smooth transition to Prologue and the least confusion for the public.

The Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission recognizes the value of having a nationally renowned regional repertory theatre company, such as is the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, as one of its major tenants. It is interested in the well-being and health of our tenant organizations and doing what it can to ensure that health, without compromising the public's good in access to MERC facilities and in their efficient operation. The above exception is granted in the spirit of cooperation and the understanding that the future of the facilities are tied to maintaining superior programs which can be made available to the widest amount of citizens in the greater Portland region.