

<b>Committee:</b> Risk Committee of the Barbican Centre Board	<b>Date:</b> 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2014
<b>Subject:</b> Procedures in place in the event of artist cancellations	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Audiences and Development	<b>Non- Public</b>
<p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>Following a query at a previous Barbican Risk Committee, this report summarises the processes put in place in the event of an artist cancelling.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report.</p>	

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. At the meeting of the Barbican Risk Committee on 10 June 2014 a member asked a question regarding artistic cancellations. He was interested in how the arts departments avoided cancelling events if a particular artist had to cancel, asking what processes were in place. During the discussion a question was also asked about box office practice and procedures in case of cancellation. The Director of Audiences and Development undertook to liaise with the Director of Arts and bring information to the next meeting. This short report gives information to members on these issues.

### **Artistic planning**

2. Generally the process for a cancellation would involve the following steps. Initially there would be substantial discussion at Head and Director level and discussions with any partners.

3. Once a decision is made the relevant people are informed: the Customer Experience department (Box Office and Centre Managers), Communications, Marketing, and Development if relevant due to funding.
4. Audience communication is then put into place through marketing and box office. These days communication is massively enhanced by social media which we can use in addition to email, phone and text.
5. Financial decisions will be worked through e.g. whether it is a fee cancellation, or whether we give an audience refund.
6. Events with high risk attached e.g. major names, controversy or very high income targets, go on to the organisational risk register. We have recently also started a separate document which lists potentially controversial productions, given the recent increase in protest situations.
7. There many variations that we have to respond to but the basic communication system described above is understood and has been proven to work. There are variations for each art form and some scenarios are listed below.
8. **Gallery:** In a recent example of an event cancellation, when Guy Tillim was unable to come over from South Africa because of visa issues, we cancelled his talk. However, if particular exhibits were withdrawn or unavailable at last minute we would find replacements or expand the rest of the show.
9. **Cinema:** Because of the nature of the cinema business, there are quite frequent changes to release dates. For these, the audience informed via the website or via direct communication if tickets have already been bought. Occasionally a print for an art house movie might not arrive, or could be of unacceptable quality. In these circumstances we would let people know in advance if we have time by phone, email or text or put something else on instead, whilst offering a refund.
10. **Contemporary music:** Recent examples of major artist changes included both our major offsite weekend events. Toots, from Toots and the Maytals, pulled out of headlining Open East in 2013 after being hit by a bottle at another gig, and sadly, Bobby Womack died

shortly before he was due to headline the Walthamstow Garden Party. On both occasions suitable replacements were found and we did not offer refunds. There is generally no understudy system for bands. The Just Jam cancellation in February of this year is another example of the different kinds of situation we sometimes have to manage and also demonstrates how we review a situation and implement learning across the organisation.

11. **Classical:** Within the classical music programme, extensive industry knowledge is used to replacements for soloists and conductors at the last minute. The information on replacement artists is then communicated to the audience and a decision is made on whether a refund is offered at the time the audience is informed. This judgment will depend on how major a name the soloist or conductor is.
12. **Theatre/Dance:** On certain theatre shows an understudy system is in place. A high-profile non-Barbican-related example was when David Tennant was replaced by an unknown understudy in Hamlet for a run in the West End. Some smaller companies do not have understudies and indeed can sometimes adapt the work to cover the person who has pulled out. Dance companies can usually adapt, unless a major soloist is involved. In another non-Barbican example, Akram Khan adapted his show at the Edinburgh Festival this year when a soloist was injured; a shorter version of the show was made and 20% refund given to audiences. Our learning from Just Jam helped us in handling the more current controversy over Exhibit B and we will in turn ensure we review and learn from this.

### **Box Office procedures**

13. There is a rigorous event change/cancellation procedure which the box office team follows as soon as an event change decision is made. The document states what has to be put into place and when, who has to be consulted and the responsibilities of each nominated manager. It also describes the customer communication protocol.
14. Alongside that document and more used on a day to day basis, as the procedure is now so engrained in staff, is an event change and cancellation checklist.

## **Conclusion**

15. The above report summarises procedures undertaken with regard to event changes and cancellations.

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