

Background

PRESS RELEASE: Opera House gives a fine performance

The latest annual figures for the Opera House show that we had a really successful year and came back from a disappointing performance the year before. This was all during a difficult economic climate. Total revenue for the year was \$3.8 million – that's an increase of 15% on last year. There were 1,762 performances to more than one million people. That means that the number of people watching these performances rose by 13%. The increase was mainly because the percentage of people below the age of 18 years attending grew by 30%. This was part of the plan to bring in people who don't normally go to the opera. There were more shows for younger audiences, including plays and modern music. We also created close relationships with five local schools and we now have a full-time educational coordinator so this area should continue to grow.

Since the Opera House opened in 1989 *ballet, *opera and *classical music have always been the main performances and this year they represented 63% of all performances. Sales of tickets to the corporate market and sales of group tickets remained steady for these. However, the total audience for these areas fell slightly on last year. The total revenue from ticket sales remained stable due to an increase in ticket prices.

Revenue from *backstage and guided tours of the opera house also fell. Income from these has always been small but the service is popular with tourists. However, numbers dropped this year. Interestingly, the requests for tours in foreign languages grew. This is probably because of the increased number of foreign tourists visiting the capital this year with the weak dollar. We also started school tours with

the increase in younger audiences, and the students met some of the performers.

Building work continued all year on the main entrance to the building and we also improved access for wheelchairs. We received some government funding for this and the \$30 million project was completed on budget and on time. Part of this budget also helped to establish an *environmental policy for the Opera House. All products in the bar and restaurant (e.g. bottles, paper napkins) are now made from recycled materials and we will be looking at a range of ways we can improve the environmental impact of the Opera House in the future.

Last year, we lost our sponsor and we have spent this year looking for a new partner. So we were happy to announce at the end of the autumn a new five-year contract with the electronics company AMI. This sponsorship deal helps to ensure our financial security for the future. In addition, AMI will also be a technical partner and provide new technology in sound and lighting for the main theatre.

Donald Sumners, CEO of the Opera House, summed up the year: 'I would like to thank everyone for their support including the financial support of local government and AMI. We welcome AMI to the Opera House and look forward to a long and successful partnership. I would also like to welcome these new members of our audiences this year and thank the people who come back year after year. I know that many of you make individual donations as well as buy tickets. Finally, thank you to staff and management. As a result of your energy and hard work, you have all made this another great year in the life of the Opera House.'

Glossary

**backstage* = behind the stage with the lights and scenery

**ballet* = a traditional type of dance

**classical music* = traditional music with an orchestra (e.g. Mozart)

**environmental policy* = an official plan for helping the environment

**opera* = a type of play with singing

Exercises

1 Discuss as a class.

- 1 Do you ever go to the theatre? What do you like watching? Plays, opera, musicals?
- 2 How much do you normally pay for tickets? Is it expensive?
- 3 Governments or sponsors also give money to many theatres. What are the reasons for this?

2 Read the text about the financial performance of a theatre.

- 1 How successful was it this year?
- 2 List the ways it makes money.

3 Read the text again. Find the reasons why ...

- 1 they increased audience numbers.
- 2 audience numbers for ballet, opera, and classical music fell, but total revenue was the same.
- 3 there were more foreign tourists in the country.
- 4 they could pay for the building work to the entrance and wheelchair access.
- 5 their financial situation is more secure for five years.

4 Work with a partner. Match the outcomes to the reasons. Make sentences using the linking expressions from the text in the middle of the table.

For example: *The increase in audience numbers is due to the increase in younger audiences.*

OUTCOMES		REASONS
The increase in audience numbers is	due to because of as a result of	a new sponsorship deal.
Revenue from tickets remained steady		the increase in younger audiences.
The number of foreign visitors grew		a new environmental policy.
The financial future is better		government funding.
Building work was done		the increase in ticket prices.
The bar uses recycled materials		the weak dollar.

5 Use a word from A and a word from B to match definitions 1–6.

A		B	
total	financial	climate	revenue
sponsorship	economic	donation	funding
government	individual	support	deal

- 1 all the income: _____
- 2 help with money: _____
- 3 money from one person as a present (e.g. to a charity): _____
- 4 agreement for a company to give money to an organization in return for publicity: _____
- 5 financial help from the state: _____
- 6 the financial situation within a country: _____

6 Look back at the text and choose three words that you could use in your day-to-day work.

7 Discuss as a class.

- 1 Where does your company's total revenue come from? What different ways does it make money?
- 2 Think of an organization which receives financial support, government funding, or individual donations. Do you think they should receive this money? Why / Why not?
- 3 Does your company have sponsorship deals with other organizations? Does it sponsor events?
- 4 Describe the current economic climate in your country? Excellent? Satisfactory? Poor?