

Publicity Report – 2017-18

Season launch

For the season, a planning session was held August 7. The session was attended by Astrid and Julia for the Artistic Committee, Roxy for Shuswap Event, Lisa as our in-house designer, and Kim and Hammy for the Board.

A plan was developed which included marketing tools, timing, goals, and audience targets. A general theme was identified, and it was agreed that bold, clean fonts should be the basis of our marketing graphics, and that our brand image should be consistent throughout the season, the colours changing to reflect the character of the individual plays. On this basis season rack cards and brochures were produced, the season announced on our website, and tickets put on sale September 5.

Romeo & Juliet – Nov 3 - 18

A planning session was held October 4th attended by the two Susans (producers), Lisa, Paula, Kim and Hammy. The details of the publicity effort were agreed to along with an estimate of the associated costs.

A media release was issued October 23 announcing the cast. Paid advertising rolled out as planned, 3 consecutive weeks starting October 25 in each of Salmon Arm Observer, Shuswap Market News and FridayAM, as well as a week in Enderby Rivertalk. An EZ Rock radio contest was added. Director Liz Hobbs was interviewed by the Salmon Arm Observer and on Voice of the Shuswap. The Prompter supported R&J in four issues, Aug 21, Sep 5, Oct 20 and Nov 13.

Opening Night – Feb 23 – Mar 10

Work on publicity began with attendance at the “Opening Night” production meeting on November 17. Audition notices were prepared and distributed to the usual media, supported by The Prompter and our website.

The Salmon Arm Observer/Shuswap Market News entertainment writer, Barb Brower, retired in late November. During the “interregnum” we dealt with writer Martha Wickett, until Lachlan Labere was appointed in early February. He handed us off to reporter Jody Brak for “Opening Night”. As it turned out, Jody relied on the second of two media releases we issued for the story he wrote about the show and its author.

Paid advertising was scheduled for 3 consecutive weeks starting February 14 in each of Salmon Arm Observer, Shuswap Market News and FridayAM, as well as a week in Enderby Rivertalk.

Kim MacMillan was interviewed on Voice of the Shuswap prior to opening.

A poster was created (the art was also used for the paid ad campaign), approved by the director and the producer. Publicity was not included in the approval process.

The Prompter ran stories on “Opening Night” on Nov 26, Dec 29, Jan 22, Feb 9 and Feb 23

Perfect Pie – Apr 27 – May 12

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were sent to the media announcing auditions Feb 12.

Advertising buy followed the normal pattern; 3 consecutive weeks starting April 18 in each of Salmon Arm Observer, Shuswap Market News and FridayAM, as well as a week in Enderby Rivertalk.

Media release led to a Lachlan Labere interview with Elizabeth Ann Skelhorne and Hamilton McClymont resulting in a story and photo in the Observer. During the last week of the run, Labere attended the show and published a review in the Observer.

Elizabeth Ann Skelhorne was interviewed on Voice of the Shuswap

The Prompter ran stories on “Perfect Pie” on Mar 16, Mar 27, Apr 13, Apr 26, May 10 and May 18 (OZone)

At the end of the first week of the run, it was clear that sales were very slow. Kim, Tracy, Paula and Kim met to make sure “no stone was left unturned”. Additional tasks were undertaken. There was no perceptible bump in sales.

Social media

Shuswap Theatre maintains an active website and posts regularly to its Facebook. This year we added an Instagram account. Partway through last season we engaged Shuswap Event to supplement our social media presence. This season they came on board again and helped with two fundraisers for the Comfy Bottoms project as well as “Opening Night” and “Perfect Pie”. Notwithstanding their efforts, we could not discern tangible results in terms of ticket sales commensurate with the cost of the program (which involved a doubling of our publicity budget for the year). The Board determined that going forward, Shuswap Theatre will rely on its own volunteer resources drive its social media presence.

Season end Publicity debrief

Kim, Hammy, Paula and Tracy met June 12 to review the publicity effort made this season and framed questions for the Board to consider.

- 1 Is an integrated, consistently branded marketing campaign needed for each season?
- 2 Who is the publicity coordinator responsible to – the producer or the Board?
- 3 Should we consider professionalising our publicity efforts beyond Shuswap Event?
- 4 How should we handle social media?

Recommendations

At its meeting on June 20, the Board resolved the following:

Consistent brand image? The publicity coordinator and the director are to have sign-off on the marketing image for individual shows.

Recognizing the need to have the publicity coordinator work in concert with the producer and the director of each show, the publicity coordinator is responsible to the board.

Professionalizing our publicity efforts? The company should be prepared to pay for professional service when it is unable to recruit volunteer help of the required level of skill

Social media? The committee recommends that the company investigate alternative ways of creating and distributing content on social media platforms for the coming season and that the company rely on its own resources to keep social media platforms lively.

Publicity Team

Kim Mac Millan, Paula Shields, Althea Mongerson (Shuswap Event), social media; Lisa Bennett, graphic design; Susan MacMillan, The Prompter; Hamilton McClymont, planning, media releases, budget