

University of Pretoria etd – Le Grange, R (2003)

Effective planning and organisation of a student theatre festival

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**Mini dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree M.A. in the
Drama Department of the University of Pretoria**

November 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people:

Prof. A. J. Munro for supervising this research project.

Prof. C. G. Trichardt, Head of the Department Drama of the University of Pretoria, for his support.

Dr. M. Coetzee, head of the UP Department Drama research committee, for her assistance and support.

The University of Pretoria for granting me a Masters bursary to complete this degree.

Mrs. E Schaffner from Academic Information Services at UP for all her assistance.

All the artists and festival organisers who completed the questionnaires.

Everyone who contributed to the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals.

My parents, family and friends for their support.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION	1
1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND AIMS	5
1.2.1 Research problem	5
1.2.2 Aim	5
1.2.3 Sub aim	6
1.2.4 Sub aim	6
1.2.5 Sub aim	6
1.3 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT	6
1.4 MATERIAL	6
1.5 STUDY METHODS	7
1.5.1 Study methods and design	7
1.5.2 Data gathering	8
1.5.3 Validity and trustworthiness	9
1.6 DATA ANALYSIS	9
1.7 BRIEF CHAPTER OUTLINE	10
1.8 ETHICS	11
1.9 CONCLUSION	12

CHAPTER 2

SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP	13
2.1 THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF AN ARTS FESTIVAL .	13
2.1.1 Culture	13
2.1.2 Community	18
2.1.3 The nature and function of arts festivals in general	24
2.1.4 The nature and function of a student theatre festival	29
2.2 ADVANTAGES OF ARTS FESTIVALS	34
2.2.1 Advantages for the artists	35

2.2.1.1	Opportunities and exposure	35
2.2.1.2	Financial advantages	38
2.2.1.3	New and old ideas	39
2.2.1.4	Training / learning	41
2.2.1.5	Exchanging ideas	42
2.2.2	Advantages for festival organisers	43
2.2.3	Advantages for the community ...	44
2.2.3.1	Advantages for the festivalgoers	44
2.2.3.2	Advantages for the area and its people	46
2.2.3.3	Outreach projects	49
2.3	CHALLENGES OF ARTS FESTIVALS	50
2.3.1	Challenges for the artists	50
2.3.1.1	Financial and related challenges	50
2.3.1.2	Other challenges ...	53
2.3.2	Challenges for festival organisers and their staff	54
2.3.2.1	Financial challenges	54
2.3.2.2	Marketing and publicity	57
2.3.2.3	Infrastructure	62
2.3.2.4	Selection	64
2.3.2.5	Administration and communication	73
2.3.3	Challenges for the community	79
2.4	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	80

CHAPTER 3

	CASE STUDY: KRÊKVARIS 2001 AND 2002	84
3.1	VISION AND MISSION OF KRÊKVARIS	85
3.2	PRE-FESTIVAL PLANNING	86
3.2.1	Time	87
3.2.2	Organisational staff	88
3.2.3	Entry forms	89
3.2.4	Contact details of the festival organiser	91

University of Pretoria etd – Le Grange, R (2003)

3.2.5	Selection	92
3.2.6	Entry fees	93
3.2.7	Scheduling	95
3.2.8	Legal aspects	96
3.2.9	Sponsorships	98
3.2.10	Marketing and publicity	99
3.2.11	Programmes	104
3.2.12	Costumes, props and décor	105
3.2.13	Technical teams	107
3.2.14	Lighting design and rigging.....	110
3.2.15	Sound recordings	111
3.2.16	Technical rehearsals	113
3.2.17	Meetings and correspondence	114
3.2.18	Refreshments	116
3.3	KRÊKVARIS 2001 AND 2002	117
3.3.1	Time	117
3.3.1.1	Dates	118
3.3.1.2	Time of day	119
3.3.2	Number of productions and genres	120
3.3.3	Schedules	122
3.3.4	Cancellations	125
3.3.5	Ticket prices	127
3.3.6	Opening	129
3.3.7	Storage of décor	131
3.3.8	Technical teams	132
3.3.9	Cleaning up in and around venues	133
3.3.10	Feedback and reviews	134
3.3.11	Refreshments and open microphone	135
3.3.12	Attendance statistics	136
3.3.12.1	Attendance statistics for 2001	139
3.3.12.2	Attendance statistics for 2002	143

3.3.12.3	Comparison and conclusions	146
3.3.13	Income statistics	147
3.3.13.1	Income statistics	147
3.3.13.2	Comparison and conclusions	149
3.4	POST-FESTIVAL	149
3.4.1	Clean up and strike	150
3.4.2	Costumes and décor	150
3.4.3	Paying out of fees	152
3.4.4	Feedback	153
3.4.5	Suggestions	154
3.5	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	155

CHAPTER 4

GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AND ORGANISING A STUDENT THEATRE

FESTIVAL	157
4.1 PRE-FESTIVAL PLANNING	157
4.1.1 Time	157
4.1.1.1 Planning time	158
4.1.1.2 Dates	158
4.1.1.3 Time of day	159
4.1.2 Organisational staff	160
4.1.3 Legal aspects	162
4.1.3.1 Entry forms	162
4.1.3.1.1 Limitations	163
4.1.3.1.2 Dates	163
4.1.3.1.3 Contact details	163
4.1.3.1.4 Venues	163
4.1.3.1.5 Facilities	164
4.1.3.1.6 Décor	164
4.1.3.1.7 Fees	164
4.1.3.1.8 Contact details of the participants	164

4.1.3.1.9	Scheduling information	165
4.1.3.1.10	Contract	165
4.1.3.1.11	Submitting the entry form	165
4.1.3.2	Contracts / Lease agreements	166
4.1.3.2.1	Smoke	166
4.1.3.2.2	Pyrotechnics	166
4.1.3.2.3	Facilities	167
4.1.3.2.4	Payments	167
4.1.3.2.5	Moving into and out of the theatres	167
4.1.3.2.6	Complimentary tickets	168
4.1.3.2.7	The use of equipment	168
4.1.3.2.8	Cancellations	168
4.1.3.2.9	Rules / Laws of the theatre, department and country	169
4.1.3.2.10	Penalties	169
4.1.3.2.11	Chain of command and legal actions	169
4.1.4	Contact details of the festival organiser	170
4.1.5	Selection	171
4.1.6	Number of productions	172
4.1.7	Cancellations	174
4.1.8	Entry fees	174
4.1.9	Ticket prices	175
4.1.10	Scheduling	177
4.1.11	Sponsorships	179
4.1.12	Marketing and publicity	180
4.1.13	Programmes	182
4.1.14	Costumes, props and décor	183
4.1.15	Technical teams	183
4.1.16	Lighting design and rigging.....	184
4.1.17	Sound recordings	185
4.1.18	Technical rehearsals	186
4.1.19	Meetings and correspondence	187

4.1.20	Storage of décor	188
4.1.21	Refreshments	189
4.2	THE ACTUAL TIME OF THE FESTIVAL	190
4.2.1	Opening	190
4.2.2	Technical teams	191
4.2.3	Feedback and reviews	191
4.2.4	Refreshments and open microphone	192
4.2.5	Cleaning up in and around venues	193
4.3	POST-FESTIVAL	194
4.3.1	Clean up and strike	194
4.3.2	Costumes and décor	194
4.3.3	Paying out of fees	195
4.3.4	Feedback	196
4.4	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	197

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION	198
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BIBLIOGRAPHY	204
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LIST OF TABLES

Table 3a: Masker Theatre Attendance 2001	139
Table 3b: Lier Theatre Attendance 2001	140
Table 3c: Masker Theatre Attendance 2002	143
Table 3d: Lier Theatre Attendance 2002	144
Table 3e: Chapel Theatre Attendance 2002	145

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FESTIVAL ORGANISERS 211

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ARTISTS 212

APPENDIX C

CHECKLIST FOR FESTIVAL ORGANISERS 215

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research project was to determine and describe the challenges and advantages presented to artists taking part in student theatre festivals as well as the challenges and advantages presented to the organisers of such festivals. A further aim of the study was to determine, address and describe the functions of a student theatre festival within the community in which it takes place and then to describe how such a festival could be most effectively organised and planned.

The study is original, since very little research has been done on this topic in the past. When collecting data for the project, no documents were found describing such study projects. The findings of this study are also important, since guidelines are given aiding festival organisers and future festival organisers in the effective planning and organising of such an event.

The research was conducted using three research methodologies. These were a survey of scholarship, structured and semi-structured interviews and action research. The information gathered by the first two methodologies is described in chapter 2. Information gathered by the action research methodology is described in chapter 3, which is a case study of the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals. After the first festival had ended, it was evaluated in terms of which methods of planning were successful and which were not. The second festival was then planned, adapting the unsuccessful methods and emphasising the successful ones. Thereafter the festival was evaluated again, formulating suggestions for the effective planning and organisation of a student theatre festival.

From this research project, it can be concluded that student theatre festivals present many advantages and challenges for those involved. It is therefore

necessary for the organisers to be well prepared for the task at hand and to do sufficient planning in order to most effectively organise such an event.

Key terms

Art

Artist

Arts festival

Community

Culture

Drama

Drama department

Entrant

Festival organiser

Festivalgoer

Participant

Student

Theatre

Theatre festival

Theatregoer

EKSERP

Die doel van hierdie navorsingsprojek was om die uitdagings en voordele van kunstenaars en feesorganiseerders, spesifiek diegene betrokke by studente teaterfeeste, vas te stel en te bespreek. 'n Verdere doel van die studie was om die funksie wat so 'n fees kan speel in die gemeenskap waarbinne dit plaasvind vas te stel, te beskryf en aan te spreek, asook te beskryf wat die mees effektiewe beplannings- en organiseringsmetodes is om so 'n fees te organiseer.

Die studie is oorspronklik, aangesien daar in die verlede weinig navorsing oor die onderwerp gedoen is. Toe materiaal vir die studie versamel is, was daar geen dokumente beskikbaar wat 'n soortgelyke studie beskryf nie. Die bevindinge van hierdie studie is verder belangrik, aangesien riglyne voorgestel word wat feesorganiseerders en toekomstige feesorganiseerders kan lei in die effektiewe beplanning en organisasie van so 'n geleentheid.

Vir hierdie studie is drie navorsingsmetodologië gebruik. Hierdie metodologië was wetenskapsoorsig, gestruktureerde en semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude, asook aksienavorsing. Die inligting wat deur die eerste twee genoemde metodologië ingewin is, is in hoofstuk 2 beskryf. Inligting wat deur die laasgenoemde metodologie ingewin is, is in hoofstuk 3 beskryf. Hierdie hoofstuk is 'n studie van die 2001 en 2002 Krêkvars kunstefeeste. Na afloop van die eerste fees, is dit geëvalueer om vas te stel watter organiserings- en beplanningsmetodes suksesvol was en watter nie. Daarna is die tweede fees beplan. Die onsuksesvolle metodes is aangepas en die effektiewe metodes is beklemtoon. Na afloop van hierdie fees is dit weer geëvalueer en voorstelle is geformuleer vir die effektiewe beplanning en organisasie van 'n studente teaterfees.

Na aanleiding van hierdie navorsingsprojek kan afgelei word dat studente teaterfeeste verskeie voordele en uitdagings bied aan diegene wat daarby betrokke is. Daarom is dit noodsaaklik vir die organiseerders om goed voorbereid te wees op die taak en om voldoende beplanning te doen, ten einde die mees suksesvolle fees te organiseer.

I, René le Grange, hereby declare that the research presented in this document is original and has never before been submitted in its entirety at any other tertiary institution for degree purposes. All the sources that were used have been mentioned and credited in the body of the text and bibliography. No information from any literary source has been used without referring to the original text from where it was taken.

Signature

Date

(René le Grange)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

At the time of writing this project, there were over 19 major arts festivals in South Africa. The Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK) in Oudtshoorn,¹ the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown² and Aardklop in Potchefstroom³ are probably three of the best-known South African arts festivals.⁴ Smaller ones, like the Volksblad festival in Bloemfontein,⁵ is just a one of the newer festivals that have emerged.

The patrons of KKNK (Klein Karoo National..., 2003) describe their festival as an opportunity for audiences to “enjoy productions in genres such as dance and movement, cabaret, musical theatre, drama, comedy and poetry.” Other trademarks of this festival include open-air festivals, street markets, craft markets and various food courts.

These festivals, like many others across the world, have their positive and negative aspects, as one can derive from the interviews conducted with

¹ KKNK was started in 1994 and takes place during the March / April school holidays (Klein Karoo National..., 2003).

² The festival was started in 1974, as a project of the Grahamstown Foundation, and takes place in the June / July school holidays. Standard Bank became the main sponsor of the festival in 1984 and the festival became known as the Standard Bank National Arts Festival. The title sponsorship agreement ended in 2001, but Standard Bank decided to remain involved. The name of the festival changed simply to National Arts Festival (About, 2003).

³ Aardklop made its debut in 1998 (Feesstatistieke, 2003). The festival usually runs for five days during September (Visie en missie, 2003).

⁴ According to an Internet article (Klein Karoo National..., 2003), “ticket sales prove that the Klein Karoo National Arts Festival is the biggest South African arts festival at present.”

⁵ The festival took place for the first time in 2000. It was called the Gariep festival then and it was presented in Kimberley. For various reasons, it was moved to Bloemfontein the next year and the name was changed to the Volksblad festival, after the University of the Free State was convinced to become a partner in the festival. This was done in order for the festival to take place on the campus of UFS. The festival usually takes place during the July holidays (Meiring, 2003).

various artists, festivals organisers, as well as performance reviews published in various journals. Hill & Paris (2002), for example, explain that it is quite a challenge to get funding for controversial performance art.

According to Hill & Paris (2002), some of the positive aspects include the opportunity for artists to perform in front of new audiences.⁶ However, the exposure is not only limited to the artists and the arts being exposed to the audiences. It works the other way around too. In an Internet article about the Performance Arts Series (PAS) (PAS: A Brief..., 2002) it is stated that the festival is not only a “unique vehicle for local arts groups to expand their experience, audience base and repertoire. At the same time PAS offers the community access to diverse cultural arts programming.”⁷

Arts festivals also present many benefits for the communities that they take place in. Carlin, M. & Alcock, D. (1996:53) state that “Grahamstown depends on the National Arts Festival for a significant part of its annual revenue.” The organisers of the Hadedda festival in Tzaneen (Give flight to..., 2002) admit that they use the festival as a tool to “introduce and market” their part of the country. The impact study on the 2002 Aardklop festival in Potchefstroom (Impakstudie, 2002) states that tourism in this town has increased, even outside the festival season. The Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education has also recorded a significant increase in first year students registering to study there. This phenomenon they attribute to the number of

⁶ The patrons of the Aardklop arts festival (Visie en missie, 2003) state that their target market, or people they want to come to the productions, is the whole family. They also state that children enjoy special attention annually.

⁷ The question of cultural diversity, especially at arts festivals, also seems to be a South African problem, which needs to be addressed. According to Marlene le Roux, (Burger, 2003b) director of development and education of Kunstekaap in Cape Town, performing arts in South Africa still does not represent our cultural diversity after nearly a decade of democracy. Le Roux is of the opinion that the performing arts in South Africa is largely supported by whites and that other cultural groups do not seem to be interested.

parents and children who visit the arts festival and then decide on Potch as the university of their choice.⁸

The artists and festival organisers, however, experience challenges, as well as positive effects. One of the biggest challenges to overcome nowadays is the financial aspect. Thomas Mulready, Performance Arts Festival founding director, states in his interview with Hill & Paris (2002) that, “corporate funding for controversial art is *never* easy.” This also rings true from the artists’ point of view. Graver (1997:56) comments on productions at the 1996 Grahamstown festival, produced on limited budgets. He states that one-person productions are a response to limited resources for theatre and that community theatre productions are “always produced on a limited budget.”

This lack of funding is further aggravated by high production costs. These costs include registration fees, venue hire and, what Carklin & Alcock (1996:56) describe as “the almost insurmountable production cost” of taking productions to remote parts of the country.

Another factor that aggravates the already uncertain financial aspect of arts festivals is the usual inability to attract large numbers of audience members, as was the case at the 2003 KKNK (Burger, 2003a). This, according to Burger (2003a), is largely due to the fact that many of the artists are relatively unknown and that festivalgoers are seeking out productions featuring well-known artists.

From both the artists’ and the festival organisers’ point of view, the process of selecting productions for the festival programme is one more of the big

⁸ A reason for this phenomenon might be the fact that the patrons of the Aardklop festival (Visie en missie, 2003) state that the festival is mostly Afrikaans. (From this one can conclude that the audiences will be mostly Afrikaans speaking.) Deon Opperman (Opperman, 2003) describes the town of Potchefstroom, which includes a large number of students, as an “extremely dominant white, Afrikaans speaking population.” One can then derive that the Afrikaans speaking audiences are introduced to a town (in which there is a university that they might consider attending) and people that they can identify with.

challenges. Some artists find it difficult for their productions to be accepted into a festival programme. This becomes evident when reading the letter that Andries Vrey (2003) wrote to the newspaper Beeld, asking about the selection process of KKNK. The selection process is usually very strict, as Karen Meiring (2003), organiser of this festival, states in her reply to Vrey's letter. It is not always an easy task to make the selections. In an Internet article on the Aardklop festival (Rekord getal aansoek..., 2002), Martie Meiring, chairperson of the Aardklop Programme Committee, states that it is very difficult to bring down the number of productions entered to a manageable number, in order to stay within the festival budget.

When considering all these factors, it becomes evident that proper planning and organisation of a festival is vital for such a project to succeed. Carlson (2000:286) supports this opinion in his article on the 11th Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre, where he discusses the notable lack of proper organisation and information to both artists and festivalgoers.

All the above-mentioned challenges and advantages were notably present when I organised the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars⁹ arts festivals. (These festivals are examined and discussed as case studies in chapter 3.) The festival was first presented in 2001 by the Department Drama of the University of Pretoria. The aim of the Krêkvars arts festival was to give young artists, especially students of the University of Pretoria, an opportunity to perform new work in front of live audiences, and also to introduce the general public, especially UP students, to a wide variety of artistic productions at an affordable price.

⁹ The name Krêkvars comes from the Afrikaans word "kraakvars," which means very fresh. The first syllable "krêk" is an "Africanised" spelling of the English word "crack," which is a direct translation of the word "kraak," the first syllable of the original Afrikaans word. The mixing of the two languages is symbolic that the festival was not only meant for one cultural (or language) group. The name itself, symbolizes the whole purpose of the festival, which is to attract new and "fresh" talent and audiences.

In the mission statement of the University of Pretoria (About, 2003) it is stated that UP is a scholarly institution that “provides excellent education in a wide spectrum of academic disciplines” to its students and encourages them to “participate and excel” in cultural activities and the arts. Therefore the Krêkvars arts festival can be seen as an event that allows these students an opportunity to participate in the arts, whether they are artists or audience members, and to showcase their talents.

The first two festivals consisted mainly of theatre productions (productions that took place on the stage of a theatre) and the participants were mostly UP students. These students came from various academic disciplines, not only Drama. The audiences were also mainly made up of students of the University of Pretoria. For these reasons, the focus of this study falls specifically on the planning and organisation of a student theatre festival.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND AIMS

1.2.1 Research problem

How can a student theatre festival be effectively planned and organised, taking into account the challenges and advantages experienced by artists, festival organisers and festivalgoers?

1.2.2 Aim

The purpose of this study is to determine and describe how a student theatre festival can be effectively planned and organised, bearing in mind the challenges and advantages experienced by artists, festival organisers and festivalgoers.

1.2.3 Sub aim

To determine, address and describe the challenges of artists taking part in student theatre festivals, as well as the advantages presented to them.

1.2.4 Sub aim

To determine, address and describe the challenges that festival organisers experience when planning and organising student theatre festivals, as well as the advantages presented to them.

1.2.5 Sub aim

To determine, address and describe the different functions an arts festival, or in this case a student theatre festival, can play in a community.

1.3 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

If one considers and addresses all the challenges that artists face when they (want to) take part in an arts festival, the challenges of festival organisers and the advantages and disadvantages of arts festivals for a community, one can create an effective outline, or model, to plan and organise a theatre festival for student performers so that it most effectively addresses these challenges and enhances the advantages.

1.4 MATERIAL

As part of the literature study journal articles, Internet articles and books on the subject of arts festivals were consulted. These sources were consulted for views and opinions on arts festivals.

Informal written interviews were conducted with festival organisers across the world. Written interviews were also conducted with South African artists who have taken part in arts festivals. These findings are discussed.

In this dissertation the University of Pretoria's Krêkvars arts festival is examined as a case study. The documentation of the first two years' festivals (2001 & 2002) was studied. These documents include reports of the two festivals, various publicity items, minutes of meetings, schedules, entry forms, as well as the statistics drawn up about these two festivals.

1.5 STUDY METHODS

1.5.1 Study methods and design

From the above-mentioned materials, opinions about arts festivals from different artists, festival organisers and reporters were compared. The positive and negative aspects were weighed up and suggestions were formulated to plan and organise a theatre festival that would most effectively cater for the needs of student performers, organisers of student theatre festivals and festivalgoers.

For the purposes of this study three research methodologies were used. The first was a survey of scholarship. For this specific methodology articles and reports of arts festivals were studied. The second methodology used was structured and semi-structured interviews with artists and festival organisers. The data gathered from both these methodologies are described in chapter 2.

The third methodology used for this dissertation was action research. Firstly a strategy was planned for organising a student theatre festival, based on the survey of scholarship and experience. The strategy was then implemented by organising the first Krêkvars arts festival in 2001. Thereafter the strategy was

reflected upon, indicating what had worked and what had not, and a new strategy was planned for organising a student theatre festival. This new strategy was then implemented and, after completion, reflected upon again. This process is described in chapter 3, which is a case study of the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals.

In chapter 4, which provides guidelines for planning and organising a student theatre festival, a new strategy is planned for organising such a festival. The strong and weak points of the organisation process, as outlined in chapter 3, are considered and suggestions and recommendations are formulated.

1.5.2. Data gathering

The interviews that were conducted with artists and festival organisers were done in writing and over the Internet. The questionnaires were drawn up with the help of my previous study leader.¹⁰ Then e-mails were sent to the prospective participants, asking their permission to forward the questions.

Once they agreed to take part in the study, the questionnaires were forwarded. The completed questionnaires were printed out and filed for further academic use (for the purposes of this study only).

After each of the Krêkvars arts festivals, I (the festival organiser) compiled statistics about these festivals. These statistics describe the attendance of each individual production, day and time slot. They also describe the income of each production, day and time slot. From these statistics, graphs and pie charts were drawn up. For the purposes of this dissertation the income of each specific production is not discussed in detail. The average income of the

¹⁰ Because of certain changes that took place at the Department Drama at the University of Pretoria, it became necessary to appoint a new study leader for this project. The questionnaires were drawn up with the assistance of my first study leader and they were sent out (and returned) before my current study leader was appointed.

combined productions is discussed with references to the top earning, as well as the lowest earning productions.

Other documentation, such as entry forms, publicity items and correspondence were saved in electronic format.

1.5.3 Validity and trustworthiness

As many opinions as possible were collected from artists, festival organisers and reporters in the attempt to create a profile of a student theatre festival that is as objective as possible.

Where the sources, especially the artists and festival organisers that were interviewed, have contrasting opinions, these opinions are presented as statistics, in percentage form. (For example, “70% of the artists interviewed said that...”)

The statistics of the first two Krêkvars arts festivals are also used to support and interrogate these opinions. These statistics include audience numbers, box office takings, the number of productions, scheduling of productions, the amount of performances per production and production times. These statistics are compared and, given the differences in the planning and organising of the two festivals, conclusions are drawn and suggestions are formulated.

1.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Once all the data had been collected, they were examined and opinions were gathered. The journals, Internet articles and interviews were consulted to identify the positive and negative aspects of arts festivals in a community, as well as the challenges experienced by artists (especially student performers), festival organisers (specifically those responsible for organising student

theatre festivals) and festivalgoers. These sources were also consulted to find opinions about what festivalgoers, artists and festival organisers would ideally expect from an arts festival, as well as suggestions how to achieve this.

The reports and statistics of the first two Krêkvars arts festivals are examined, in order to identify possible patterns. The strong, as well as the weak points are examined and the differences in the planning and organising of the two festivals are compared and contrasted. Conclusions are drawn from this and suggestions are formulated, in order to draw up the most effective outline for planning and organising a student theatre festival.

1.7 BRIEF CHAPTER OUTLINE

The following section will include a brief outline of what the reader can expect from each of the chapters in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2: This chapter consists of a literature study. The challenges faced by artists taking part in arts festivals, as well as the challenges faced by festival organisers, especially those responsible for organising student theatre festivals, are discussed. There is also a discussion of the positive and negative aspects (functions) of arts festivals in the communities that they take place in as well as the advantages and disadvantages they present for artists and festival organisers. The chapter concludes by providing a working definition of a student theatre festival.

CHAPTER 3: This chapter consists of a case study of a student theatre festival. The reports of the first two Krêkvars arts festivals are examined. The conclusions drawn from this data are compared and discussed. The statistics and the methods of planning and organisation are also compared and discussed. Conclusions are drawn indicating the most effective methods of

planning and organising a student theatre festival and suggestions are made in this regard.

CHAPTER 4: In this chapter guidelines are presented, aiding potential festival organisers step-by-step in effectively planning and organising a student theatre festival. A rough guide is outlined to assist future organisers of student theatre festivals to plan and organise festivals that will most effectively combat the aforementioned challenges and enhance the advantages of arts festivals.

CHAPTER 5: The final chapter of this dissertation consists of conclusions drawn from the discussions in the foregoing chapters. Recommendations are also made to aid future festival organisers in the effective planning and organising of a student theatre festival. In this chapter a summary is given of the need to effectively plan and organise a student theatre festival, as well as a summary of the main issues that need to be considered when doing so.

1.8 ETHICS

Every effort has been made to preserve the anonymity and dignity of the respondents to the questionnaires. The interviews were conducted informally (via e-mail) and all participants were assured that the answers would be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes. (Copies of the questionnaires are included at the end of this dissertation, as appendices.)¹¹

The other data regarding the two Krêkvars festivals were printed and are kept at the Department Drama of the University of Pretoria. Written permission had been obtained from the Head of the Department to quote from this data.

¹¹ The interviews are kept in a safe to which only the researcher and selected individuals have access. They will be preserved for three years upon completion of the dissertation, after which the originals will be destroyed. These documents will only be shown to interested parties, who have read the research project, after signing a declaration of confidentiality.

1.9 CONCLUSION

In the next chapter the above-mentioned advantages and challenges presented by arts festivals are elaborated on. The specific advantages and challenges for festivalgoers, participants and festival organisers of student theatre festivals are highlighted. From these discussions conclusions are drawn regarding the importance of effective planning and organising for such a festival. The aspects to consider when doing so, as well as the challenges that might arise, are also examined and discussed.

CHAPTER 2

SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP

2.1 THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF AN ARTS FESTIVAL

In this chapter a detailed description will be given of the nature and function of arts festivals in general and of a student theatre festival in particular. The differences between the two will be outlined to provide a working definition of a student theatre festival.

The advantages and challenges for those involved with arts festivals, specifically the artists, the organisers and staff and the communities that they take place in, will be discussed. (The concept of community will be discussed in greater detail in 2.1.2.) This will provide the rationale for the occurrence and function of an arts festival. It will also provide an outline of the aspects that one should consider when planning and organising such an event.

One of the aspects to be considered is the concept of culture. There are various definitions of this concept (which will be discussed in greater detail in 2.1.1) and it is necessary, for the purposes of this study, to have a clear idea in one's mind exactly what is meant when the word "culture" is mentioned.

2.1.1 Culture

In the various definitions and descriptions of arts festivals, the word "culture" features regularly. The organisers of the PAS (PAS: A Brief..., 2002), for example, state that "PAS offers the community access to diverse cultural arts

programming.” The organisers of the Prescott Park arts festival¹ (About, 2002) also state that their mission is, “To produce an artistic, emotional and intellectual outlet which best serves the needs of a multi-cultural area.”

For this reason, and for the purposes of this study, it is important to first explain the meaning(s) of this word, in order to effectively formulate a working definition of a student theatre festival. These definitions will also become relevant later on, when the advantages and challenges presented by arts festivals and the aspects to consider when planning and organising a student theatre festival are discussed.

The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1996:206) describes the word “culture” as follows, “**1a** intellectual and artistic achievement and expression (*city lacking in culture*). **b** refined appreciation of the arts, etc. (*person of culture*).”

Definitions 1a and 1b suggest that persons expressing themselves artistically and possessing an appreciation of the arts are persons (or communities) of culture. Therefore an arts festival, where ideas and themes are expressed artistically and the main concern of the event is the arts, can be labelled a cultural event. The individuals taking part in the festivals and expressing their ideas through their art are also then engaging in cultural activities.

A second definition of the word “culture,” according to The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1996:206) is as follows, “**2** customs, achievements, etc. of a particular civilisation or group (*Chinese culture*).”

In accordance with this definition, the International Encyclopedia of Sociology, (Marvin, 1995:279) defines “culture” as follows, “CULTURE: the shared

¹ In March 1975, the first Prescott Park arts festival was presented in Portsmouth, on the request of Paul McEachern. The first full-scale production offered was Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Carousel (About, 2002).

knowledge, values, beliefs, norms, and sanctions of a particular group of people.”

Marvin (1995:279) further explains the term “norms,” which features in the above-mentioned definition, as follows, “Cultural norms are rules or expectations regarding how people should behave.”

In South Africa, a country with eleven different official languages, there are many different ethnic groups. Each group has their own norms and customs, of which their language is only one. Each group also has their own set of moral and social values, beliefs, traditions and achievements. According to definition 2 of The Oxford Dictionary of Current English and Marvin’s definition, then, each of these ethnic groups could be labelled as belonging to their own separate culture.

As mentioned earlier, the organisers of the Prescott Park arts festival (About, 2002) label Portsmouth, the city in which the festival takes place, as a “multi-cultural area.” Marvin (1995:279) defines “multi-cultural” as “the cultural diversity within a society.” Since the population of South Africa also consists of many diverse cultures, this country can also be labelled as “multi-cultural.”

These three definitions of “culture” are implied regularly in descriptions and mission statements of arts festivals. The patrons of the Hong Kong Arts Festival² (About us, 2002), for example, state, “Our mission is to present an annual international festival of the highest standard for the enrichment of cultural life in Hong Kong.” In this case, since the authors are affiliated to an arts festival and the subject of interest is the arts, one could assume that the word “culture” refers to “artistic achievement and expression” in Hong Kong.

² “In 1972 a group of individuals decided that Hong Kong, as a fast-growing, vibrant metropolis, should have an arts festival. Together they formed the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society Limited, a non-profit-making institution, which launched the first Hong Kong Arts Festival in 1973” (About us, 2002).

The mission of the festival would then be to stimulate and develop artistic achievement and expression in this country.

Cultural life in Hong Kong would also be enriched by its inhabitants taking part in and attending the festival. By experiencing a wide variety of artistic productions and performances, their appreciation of the arts could become more refined. Since they would have seen and experienced a broad spectrum of artistic productions at the festival the people of Hong Kong would subsequently be able to compare any artistic productions that they have experienced in the past, or would experience in the future, to a wider repertoire of productions.

The mission of the Hong Kong Arts Festival further states that they strive to “arouse wider public interest in the arts and to encourage artistic dialogue and cultural exchange.” Here the second definition of “culture” according to The Oxford Dictionary of Current English, namely “customs, achievements, etc. of a particular civilisation or group,” and Marvin’s definition, namely “shared knowledge, values, beliefs, norms, and sanctions of a particular group of people,” would be more relevant.

The festival is an international event, which means that artists from different backgrounds and civilisations take part. Since these artists come from different countries, most of them will speak different languages. They will also have different customs, values, beliefs, norms and traditions. Each group will therefore belong to a different culture. The artists (and audience members) participating in the festival would have the opportunity to see and experience these different customs, values, beliefs, norms and achievements displayed and practised by people from different countries.

These two definitions of the word can also be easily confused. The first part of the Hong Kong Arts Festival’s mission statement could just as well refer to the

enrichment of the “customs, achievements, etc.” (definition 2) of the people of this country. The mission of the festival would then be to present an event that would enrich the customs and achievements of the people of Hong Kong. These achievements would most likely include “artistic achievement” (definition 1a) and “refined appreciation of the arts” (definition 1b). If it were, for example, one of the customs of the people living in this country to take part in artistic events, the cultural life in Hong Kong would then be enriched by increasing the occurrence or frequency of such events.

By the same token, the second part of the mission statement could refer to the exchange of different methods of “artistic expression” (definition 1a). This would mean that the artists of Hong Kong would be introduced to different methods of artistic expression, as practised by artists from different ethnic groups and backgrounds. They could then acquire the necessary skills to transform and adapt their own forms of artistic expression to those that they have learnt from their international counterparts, and vice versa.

For this reason it is important to draw a distinct line in one’s mind to determine exactly what one means when mentioning “culture.” Does the word in the context that it is being used refer to “intellectual and artistic achievement and expression” or does it refer to the “achievements, customs, etc. of a particular group or civilisation?”

Each individual group of people or civilisation that share a particular set of norms, customs and beliefs can be labelled not only as a separate culture, but also as a separate community. (See 2.1.2 for a more detailed discussion and explanation.) Since these two terms are closely related they can easily be confused. Therefore it is necessary, for the purposes of this study, to clearly define the term “community.”

2.1.2 Community

The Encyclopedia of Sociology (Almgren, 2000:362) states, “The definition of community has been problematic for several reasons.” These reasons include, as George Hillary (1955) states, that various sociologists have researched the subject and have offered varying perspectives. Hillary (1955) compares 94 different definitions of this term, as formulated by various sociologists. At the end of his paper he concludes, “When all of the definitions are viewed, beyond the concept that people are involved in a community, there is no complete agreement as to the nature of the community.”

For the purposes of this study, some of these perspectives will be compared and discussed and conclusions will be drawn to formulate a working definition of the term. Before these perspectives can be discussed and explained, however, certain keywords and concepts need to be defined. These words or concepts are: “communal,” “common” (or “in common”) and “community.”

The Encyclopedia of Sociology (Ellis-Lopez, 2000:201) defines the term “communal” as follows, “COMMUNAL: shared by the members of a community, both responsibilities such as labor (sic) and resources such as food or property can be communal.” In accordance with this definition, The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1996:166) defines the term “communal” as follows, “**1** shared between the members of a group or community.”

The term “community,” according to The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1996:167) refers to, “**1** body of people living in one place, district or country. **2** body of people having religion, ethnic origin, profession, etc. in common.”

The term “common,” in the context that it is mentioned in this definition, is defined by The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1996:166) as, “**2a** shared by.”

From the above definitions, it is clear that the word “community” is derived from the word “communal.” This term, in turn, derives from the word “common” (or the term “in common”), which means “shared” or “shared by.” This means, then, that a community is a group of people who share certain aspects, such as the area that they live in, religious beliefs, ethnic origin or profession.

When comparing the definitions of “culture” and “community,” one recognises some similarities. The definitions of both these terms indicate that reference is made to a particular group of people that share certain aspects. These aspects also overlap in the definitions. Marvin (1995:279), for example, states that “culture” refers to, amongst other things, “shared beliefs” of a group of people and The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1996:167) states that a community is a body of people having, for example, religion (or religious beliefs) in common.

The question arises what the fundamental differences between these two terms are and how one should distinguish between them. In order to arrive at an answer for this question, the various perspectives of sociologists on the concept of “community” have to be examined and discussed. These perspectives will then be compared to the discussion on “culture” to point out the differences and to formulate working definitions of both terms.

Almgren (2000:362) states,

According to the traditional concept of community, the requirements of community or communal existence can be met only in the context of a certain quality of human association occurring within the confines of a limited, shared physical territory.

This would then be in accordance with the first definition of “community” given by The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1996:167). This definition claims that “community” is a “body of people living in one place.”

Therefore, when the patrons of the KKNK (Klein Karoo National..., 2003), for example, state that the festival “is responsible for remarkable economic growth in the Klein Karoo and came to the rescue of the shaky local economy, resulting in the whole community benefiting,” it can be accepted that the term “community” refers to the local inhabitants of the town Oudtshoorn and the Little Karoo area.

The article further claims, to explain this opinion, that local schools have benefited financially by renting out their hostels, halls, grounds and furniture for the duration of the festival. Other parts of the Little Karoo area have also benefited because of the increased number of tourists visiting the area. The organisers of the festival (Klein Karoo National..., 2003) state, “Visitors are impressed not only by the artistic productions, but also by the unique food, wine and tourist attractions of this region.”

Some sociologists, however, argue that community can be achieved independently of territorial context where social networks exist sufficiently to sustain an intimate, familiar, sympathetic, mutually interdependent and reflective quality of interaction and association (Almgren, 2000:362-363). This would mean then, that the group of people referred to have a different aspect in common, and do not necessarily live in the same area. Almgren (2000:363) claims, in support of this opinion, that “territory is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition to define the existence of community.”

This is in accordance with the second definition of “community” given by The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1996:167), which suggests that the body of people referred to have some different aspects in common. These aspects could include religion, ethnic origin and profession.

In an Internet article on the Aardklop arts festival (Visie en missie, 2003), mention is made of the “artistic community” that is being supported by this

festival. It can then be accepted that the aspect that this body of people have in common is their profession, which is the arts. These artists do not necessarily reside in one region. According to an impact study on the festival (Feesstatistieke, 2003) artists from all over South Africa, as well as international artists, take part in this festival.

David McMillan and David Chavis (1986)³ agree that shared territory is not a requirement for the definition of a community. According to them, a community can be defined in either territorial terms or relational terms, as long as four important elements are present together. These elements are: membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connections.

In a student community, for example, these four elements would be present in the following ways (this definition and discussion will become relevant in 2.1.4 when the nature and function of student theatre festival is discussed):

Membership: persons belonging to this community would gain membership by enrolling in a scholarly institution such as a university or a technikon. In the mission statement of the University of Pretoria (UP) (About, 2003) this institution is described as a “scholarly institution that provides excellent education in a wide spectrum of academic disciplines” and “creates flexible, life-long learning opportunities.” Students, thus, are individuals who attend such an institution for the purpose of learning.

Influence: Members of a student community should be able to exercise a certain amount of influence within this community. On the website of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE) (Home, 2003), for example, it is stated that this tertiary institution provides an

³ McMillan, D. & Chavis, D. 1986. Sense of Community: a Definition and Theory. Journal of community psychology, vol.14, p.6-23 (Almgren, 2000:363).

intellectual home to any individual who has the potential and the interest to participate in the programmes that are offered. It is further stated that this university strives to encourage critical, independent and innovative thought within this climate. Criticism, independence and innovation suggest a certain amount of influence that the students are encouraged to exercise. According to the policy document of the UP Department Drama (Munro, 1999:4), the university and this department also encourage influence to be exercised by its students by electing Student Representatives (SR's) to act as spokespersons for the group they represent.

Integration and fulfilment of needs: It can be accepted that the key need of a student enrolled in a tertiary institution is to learn. The PU for CHE (Home, 2003) offers three reasons for this need. These reasons are to improve one's career prospects, to have research done to improve one's business, or to pursue a new area of interest. Whichever one of these reasons prompts a student to study at this university, PU for CHE state that they are committed to relevant and quality teaching and research, which means that they aim to fulfil the students' need for learning.

Shared emotional connections: Gordon (2000:3067-3068) explains that tertiary institutions remove students from familial and kinship settings, as well as the pressures of later occupational positions. These students are placed in a peer-related situation where the emotional connections of neither their families, nor the future working communities that they will become a part of, play a part. This lack of kinship and occupational ties that the students have in common creates an emotional connection, or a bond, between the students. Gordon speculates that this emotional connection could be a reason for the occurrence of student protest movements.

When one considers the various definitions of the term "community," it becomes clear that one might encounter overlapping communities. The

population of a town, for example Oudtshoorn, can be labelled a community, since the people all live in one specific area. But there are smaller groups within this larger community that have different aspects in common and can be labelled a community on their own. The common denominator, for example, could be their ethnic origin and background.

Deon Opperman (2003) describes this phenomenon in his article about discrimination at the three major South African arts festivals. He explains that within the community of Oudtshoorn, three smaller communities exist. They are: a large brown Afrikaans speaking community, a dominant white Afrikaans speaking community, and a very small English speaking community. He further claims that certain social areas in the town are known as “liberal” areas. In these social areas, members of the different communities mingle and socialise freely amongst each other. Other areas, however, are seen as “conservative” and are “protected” from the members of the brown and black communities.

As mentioned in 2.1.1, the members of each different ethnic group have their own customs, traditions, language, etc. and belong to a separate culture. From the discussions on “culture” (see 2.1.1) and “community” one can now conclude that the term “culture” refers to the *norms, beliefs, customs, etc. (aspects)* that are shared by a group of people. While the term “community” refers to the *group of people* that share those aspects.

Since there is more than one interpretation of the term “community,” as with the term “culture,” it is important to define exactly what aspect it is that the specific group of people have in common, in order to correctly define which community one is referring to.

2.1.3 The nature and function of arts festivals in general

Arts festivals are usually described as events where a variety of artistic productions are showcased for others to observe and experience. Arts festivals also aim to entertain their festivalgoers with both the productions and other festival attractions, such as flea markets and other activities like discussions and workshops. On the website of the Prescott Park festival, for example, it is stated, “In the 28 years, the arts festival has entertained more than 3 million people in more than 9,000 productions. Variety is truly the spice of life at the arts festival where classical ballet is presented right alongside rock ‘n roll” (About, 2002).

Anita Freedman, former president of the Prescott Park arts festival also states, “Where could you get more pleasure in Portsmouth than to be in Prescott Park where you can see people of all ages enjoy all the wonderful talent that we have here on the Seacoast?” This festival, then, aims to entertain its festivalgoers with a wide variety of artistic performances and artistic talent.

Karen Meiring (2003), organiser of KKNK, also says about her festival that they have always strived to “present a wide spectrum of art and entertainment and to act as a showcase for the country’s top artists.” Meiring seems to be making a differentiation here between “art” and “entertainment.” Since the KKNK is labelled as an arts festival and not an entertainment festival, it can be accepted that the entered productions are categorised as “art.”

There are also other attractions at the festival (which will be discussed in greater detail further on in this section) that are not artistic in nature. One such example is the “Witblits-stall” that Koos Kombuis (2003) mentions in an article on the festival. These attractions serve to entertain the festivalgoers by offering them a different form of amusement. This does not mean, however, that the artistic productions are not, or should not be, entertaining (as stated

above by the organisers of the Prescott Park arts festival). It rather indicates that different forms of entertainment are offered.

These artistic productions usually include “performances of music and drama,” as is the case at the Salzburg Festival⁴ (The Columbia Encyclopedia..., 2002). Some festivals, however describe these artistic events in much more detail in an attempt to cater for a wider variety of genres. One such festival is the KKNK. In an article about the festival (Klein Karoo National..., 2003) it is stated that the KKNK presents artistic productions “in genres such as dance and movement, cabaret, musical theatre, drama, comedy and poetry.”

The Hong Kong Arts Festival (About us, 2002) also strives to present a wide spectrum of programmes. These programmes range “from classical fare to other innovative and stimulating art forms.” Here again, this arts festival aims to present a wide variety of artistic entertainment to cater for the different needs and expectations of their festivalgoers. This is necessary because, as Koos Kombuis (2003) states, “Art is a wonderful thing, but taste differs.”

In their mission statements many of the aforementioned arts festivals justify their reasons for this wide array of artistic activity. In an interview with Jean Meiring (2003), Doks Briers, organiser of the Volksblad arts festival, states that this festival strives to promote Afrikaans and the arts. She adds that another aim of the festival is to stimulate the culture of theatre attendance in central South Africa.

In this context, the term “culture” (see 2.1.1) refers to the customs of the people living in central South Africa. The festival, then, aims to stimulate this

⁴ “The festival may be considered a descendant of the Salzburg Music Festival Weeks that the Vienna Philharmonic gave irregularly between 1877 and 1910. After World War I several leading German-speaking cultural figures developed the idea for an annual summer cultural festival to be held in Salzburg. The modern series of festivals began on Aug. 22, 1920, when Hofmannsthal’s adaptation of the medieval English morality play Everyman was given in production by Reinhardt in the cathedral square” (The Columbia Encyclopedia..., 2002).

custom, or practice, of theatre attendance, by motivating people to do so more often.

The organisers of another South African arts festival, Aardklop (Visie en missie, 2003), state more reasons for this occurrence of artistic activity. This festival, according to them, was started to satisfy the hunger for culture, or artistic expression (see 2.1.1 for a more detailed discussion) in the northern parts of the country. This festival, then, aims to satisfy the needs of South Africans living in that part of the country to witness and experience artistic productions and expressions. The organisers also state that the festival strives to “protect and promote our (South African) cultural assets.”

One way in which arts festivals aim to protect and promote the cultural assets of their communities, is to encourage the creation of new work. Steve Hofmeyr (2003) states that arts festivals should, amongst other things, be a “platform for ‘fresh ideas’ and ‘courageous creation.’” Karen Meiring (2003) also supports this notion in a letter to the newspaper Beeld, where she states that the KKNK encourages the creation of new work. This is done, as she further states, by encouraging members of the artist community to create, or write, new artistic productions, and enter them for the festival. If new works were presented for audiences to see and enjoy at a festival it would promote the artistic assets of South Africa, by increasing the numbers thereof. It would also promote the custom or practice of theatre attendance, since audiences would be more likely to watch new productions, than ones they have already seen.

Another arts festival that supports the idea of renewal in the arts is Aardklop. The organisers say that this festival aims to be a platform for the creation of new artistic works and for the development of the talent of local artists (Visie en missie, 2003). The mission statement further argues, “Aardklop makes a constructive contribution to the development of the arts.”

Although the performance and production of the arts are at the foreground, these are not the only activities to be found at arts festivals. The Hong Kong Arts Festival, for example includes “talks, demonstrations and workshops” in their programme, for festivalgoers to take part in (About us, 2002). The Prescott Park festival also includes workshops and classes and it is stated that, “learning has almost always been a part of the festival’s history” (About, 2002).

Another festival, of which learning is an integral part, is the PAS in San José, California. At this festival groups that are selected into the programme “receive training and support in areas of publicity, promotion, tickets sales, volunteer coordination and box office management” (PAS: A Brief..., 2002). These training sessions will not only teach the participants how to be successful at an arts festival, but also in the entertainment industry as a whole.

There is, however, more to arts festivals than formal artistic performances and learning about the arts. At the KKNK, for example, “open-air concerts is one of the trademarks.” There are also craft markets, street markets and various food courts, where people can buy food and beverages, for the festivalgoers to visit and enjoy (Klein Karoo National..., 2003).

Of these above-mentioned aspects, the one that has caused quite few debates is the last; the food courts. There are some who believe that arts festivals are becoming more and more like “church bazaars,” as Koos Kombuis (2003) states in his article, lets vir almal by die KKNK. According to Kombuis accusations have been thrown in the direction of festival organisers, for quite some time now, that arts festivals are not primarily about the arts anymore, but that the emphasis has shifted more towards the “party atmosphere.” But, states Kombuis, KKNK “is probably one of the biggest parties in the southern hemisphere.”

He agrees that the festival should be a place where artists can experiment and create art. That is, after all, what the artists (and many of the festivalgoers) are there for. But, he continues, one should not exclude the people who attend arts festivals merely for the party. These parties are, according to Kombuis, a wonderful method of luring supporters to the festivals. Because, once they are at the event, they might even decide to take in a show or two. And this, he states, is not only good for the “cultural education of the masses,” it also brings money into “the pockets of the artists and the festival organisers.”

This is at least true or relevant for arts festivals, such as Deon Opperman’s proposed Profees in George (Nieuwoudt, 2003) where the object of the festival is to make a profit. Although it is important to earn enough money to cover the expenses of an arts festival, making money is not necessarily always the main aim. At a student festival, for example, education and performing opportunities might play a bigger part. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter, which explains the nature and function of student theatre festivals.

It is true, when reading the above-mentioned opinions, that there are many different aspects to an arts festival. It is also true that, as Kobus Burger (2003c) states, as with anything, everyone uses an arts festival for his or her own reasons. For this reason, it is important to first consider all these aspects and to decide which are relevant and important for the success of the specific festival, before planning and organising such an event. Because, as Koos Kombuis rightly remarks, these different and extreme aspects are exactly what makes an arts festival “diverse and interesting.”

2.1.4 The nature and function of a student theatre festival

There are two key differences between a general arts festival and a student theatre festival. The first difference is the type of people that participate in the

event. The second, which will be discussed in more detail later, is the type of work that is presented.

As the name suggests, the majority of the participants in this type of festival are not professional or well-known artists, but students. The National Student Drama Festival⁵ (NSDF) in Scarborough state on their official website (Patron and Artistic..., 2002) that the festival originated as a competition for university drama societies, competing for the Sunday Times Trophy. Later the trend changed from being “the preserve of Higher Education Institutions” and in 1983 “almost 10% of entered shows were from schools and youth groups.” A few years later, in 1991, six of the selected sixteen productions were from youth theatres and school groups.

For the purposes of this study, the focus will fall mostly on students enrolled in tertiary institutions, such as universities and technikons. The concepts of student artists, as well as student audiences, will be examined and discussed. Since such a festival is presented specifically for students to take part in, this specific group of people has to be examined both in terms of their culture and the community that they belong to.

As mentioned in 2.1.1, there are two main definitions of the term “culture.” The first refers to intellectual and artistic expression and the second refers to the customs, traditions, knowledge and achievements shared by a particular group or community. “Community” (see 2.1.2) refers to the specific group that share these various aspects. In this case it refers to students.

The University of Pretoria (About, 2003) state that their mission is to encourage students to take part in and excel in sport, cultural and artistic activities. In this context, the term “culture” refers to intellectual expression that

⁵ The NSDF first took place in 1956 in Bristol and was initially a competition run in the Christmas vacation (Patron and Artistic..., 2002).

is not necessarily related to academic work or the arts, since each of these terms are mentioned separately in the body of the mission statement. But since culture could include artistic expression, one could conclude that this kind of cultural activity is also encouraged by UP. At a student theatre festival, then, students are given the opportunity to engage in this kind of cultural activity.

For drama and theatre students intellectual expression would most likely include the arts, since it is their chosen academic field of study. A student theatre festival would then present them with an opportunity to display their artistic skills. These skills could include acting, directing, writing, or any of the proposed package outcomes of the degree or diploma that they are enrolled for. The UP Department Drama supports this idea of the presentation of skills. In the policy document of this department (Munro, 1999:3) it is stated that “students need to argue the case that they wish to make and to present their findings either in artistic or academic format.”

The second definition of “culture” refers to the customs and traditions of a particular group or community. As mentioned in 2.1.2 in the discussion on a student community, acquiring knowledge and developing skills are two of the key customs of this community. The University of Pretoria, as well as the UP Department Drama, supports this mission and aims to promote this learning process. The policy document of UP Drama (Munro, 1999:2) states,

In keeping with the university principles of life-long learning, this department is determined to provide the students with the skills to pursue knowledge, creative freedom of expression, artistic development, and entrepreneurial skills in his or her chosen field, for the rest of his or her life.

A student theatre festival can aid in this tradition of learning by allowing students to take part, either as artists or as audience members. By witnessing and experiencing artistic productions students can gain knowledge of those

productions, as well as different genres or methods of artistic expression that they might not have been familiar with, or have known little about beforehand. Artists are also given the opportunity to express themselves creatively and to develop their artistic and entrepreneurial skills, by writing and performing in their own productions.

On the official website of the NSDF (Patron and Artistic..., 2002) it is also stated that some of the artists who presented productions at the festival were professionals in the industry, who were invited to present their work. This was also the case at the Krêkvars arts festivals. At the 2002 Krêkvars arts festival, for example, the singer Ashton Nyte was invited to perform.

These participants, however, do not only include the artists but also some of the staff. The NSDF (Patron and Artistic..., 2002) state that in 2001 there were 100 students working on the festival and about 50 professional staff.

This was also the case with the two Krêkvars arts festivals in 2001 and 2002. The artists that took part in the festival were mostly university students. Not all of them were from the Department Drama, but many came from different academic disciplines. The staff was also made up of a number of students, but those students were from the drama department.

Aside from a few administrative staff members who were employed by the University of Pretoria, (these were the festival organiser, the production manager and theatre personnel) the festival staff consisted of drama students studying at the University of Pretoria. The technical crews were made up entirely of first-year drama students (with the exception of one third-year student volunteering in 2001 to do technical work at the festival). The reason for this is that it is the policy of the UP Department Drama that first-year students handle the technical tasks, such as lighting and sound control, stage management, properties and wardrobe management, on the departmental

productions. The policy document of the UP Department Drama (Munro, 1999) states, “Practical classes are an integral part of the training process” and although taking part in the festival was not seen as a class, it was considered a part of the students’ training.

A number of other drama students also had the opportunity to take part in the festival as a part of their training. The honours directing students, for example, had the opportunity to direct a theatre play that would be evaluated and counted towards their marks in this subject. There were also a few students who acted in plays that were evaluated and the marks counted towards their acting marks for the semester.

Formal learning, however, is not the only type of learning encouraged at student festivals. At the NSDF (Patron and Artistic..., 2002), for example, the programme not only includes performances and rehearsals, but also talks, masterclasses and workshops. Since the participants of this festival do not all attend the same learning institution, it can be accepted that the content of these talks, workshops and masterclasses are not only relevant to one specific academic curriculum.

The second key difference between a general arts festival and a student theatre festival is the type of work that is presented. In the case of the first two Krêkvars arts festivals the venues that were used for the performances were the theatres of the UP Department Drama. The performances that were entered all took place on the stage of a theatre and therefore the festival can be labelled a “theatre festival.”⁶

As with general arts festivals, the emphasis of the work that is presented is on new and “fresh” ideas. This, after all, was one of the original ideas behind the

⁶ Other arts departments from the university, such as the visual arts and music departments, were also invited to perform at the festival but they did not respond to the invitation.

Krêkvars arts festival and that is what the name Krêkvars means. (See chapter 1 for more detailed information.) It is also in accordance with the policy of the UP Department Drama, which states, “With curiosity we push the bounds of knowledge, understanding and art” (Munro, 1999:1).

The NSDF also encourages the creation of new work and the implementation of new artistic ideas. In 1969, for example, all the works that were entered had to be “new works” In 1971, when the festival was no longer run as a competition, the criteria for the works that were entered was that “all plays had to be ‘original, or originally directed.’” The next year, however, the criteria was not quite as strict and the works that were performed were “new or rarely-seen works only” (Patron and Artistic..., 2002).

To support this idea of new works, the patrons of the NSDF state, “There has long been a strong emphasis on new writing at the festival, and there has been a number of different awards made to reflect that emphasis” (Patron and Artistic..., 2002).

At the Krêkvars arts festival, however, the approach was somewhat different. Because the festival was seen as a part of the students’ training, it was decided that no awards would be handed out. The students’ rewards were rather the opportunity to write, direct and produce their own plays and to have a “trial run” of what the entertainment industry is like outside the safety of the drama department. This is in accordance to one of the key missions of the Department Drama, which is to teach its students “that which is necessary to be effective in a competitive and artistic world” (Munro, 1999:1).

Although art, theatre and training are central to student theatre festivals, as with general arts festivals, these are not the only activities associated with such an event. At the Krêkvars festivals one of the biggest attractions of the week was the food court. In one of the smaller theatres (and outside under the

trees) tables and chairs were arranged to create a restaurant-like atmosphere where people could go to have something to eat and to drink. This was also the place where relatives and friends could speak to the cast and crew of each production and where other audience members, who had seen the productions, could meet and congratulate the artists.

This food court was one of the most effective marketing tools of the entire festival, for this is where the so-called word-of-mouth publicity worked at its best. Many students who had gone there only for a drink between classes or to talk to some of their friends in a relaxed atmosphere were confronted with excited students coming out of shows and convincing them to see it the next time it was performed.

As with general arts festivals, there are many aspects to consider when planning and organising a student theatre festival. The artists and the type of productions that are presented may differ from those at other arts festivals, but each aspect should be carefully considered in order to present a festival that most effectively caters for the needs of the participants and festivalgoers.

2.2 ADVANTAGES OF ARTS FESTIVALS

An artist in the mainstream South African entertainment industry (Interview 3, 2002) states, “Festivals are springing up over the whole SA.” This prompts one to investigate the reasons for this phenomenon, since it is only logical to assume that these festivals are taking place because they present some advantages for the people involved.

In the next section of this chapter the advantages presented to the artists, festival organisers and the communities that they take place in will be examined. It will also provide the rationale for the occurrence of arts festivals, which is important for the purposes of this study.

2.2.1 Advantages for the artists

2.2.1.1 *Opportunities and exposure*

In an article titled, “State of the performing arts” (Fourie, 2003) the playwright Charles J. Fourie describes the battle that artists have to face today to find a theatre and the opportunity to perform their art. He mentions the “chaos at the State Theatre” and also several other theatres in the country that have been engaged in battles for their survival. When these theatres close down it inevitably means that the artists’ opportunities and spaces in which to perform are reduced.

Fourie (2003) mentions, though, that “arts festivals like the KKNK in Oudtshoorn, the Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, the Aardklop festival in Potchefstroom and other fringe festivals offer some relief for independent theatre groups to stage their work.” These festivals present artists with an opportunity to perform their work and to express themselves artistically. It also provides them with a space in which to perform.

Eighty percent of the interviewed South African artists also agree that arts festivals are an effective method for artists to find an opportunity to perform and to present their work. One artist (Interview 3, 2002) states, “It (arts festivals) provides a platform to showcase your talents by either putting on your own show or by playing in an established group’s production.”

This providing of a platform for artists to perform their work is also one of the key missions of many of the South African arts festivals. Doks Briers, organiser of the Volksblad arts festival in Bloemfontein says in an interview with Jean Meiring (2003) that one of the main functions of this festival is to provide artists with additional opportunities to perform. The organisers of the Hadedā arts festival in Tzaneen also state that their festival “wants to create a

platform for the exposure and development of the Performing and Visual arts” (Give flight to..., 2002).

This lack of performing opportunities not only affects established or professional artists. Thomas Mulready, founding director of the Performance Art Festival, claims in an interview with Leslie Hill and Helen Paris (2002) that the organisers of this festival “knew that some of the ‘best’ works were done by regional and local artists who had no resume, no clips, no reputation.”

Eighty percent of the interviewed artists also claim that the biggest challenge facing unknown artists in South Africa, which prevents them from breaking into the mainstream entertainment industry, is the limited opportunities to perform. They all are of the opinion, though, that arts festivals can be used as a method of circumventing this challenge. One artist claims, “Chances of getting a role in a production for a festival is (sic) good, because budgets are small and production companies then use new faces / unknowns to keep production costs low” (Interview 3, 2002).

Another way in which arts festivals can aid unestablished artists in breaking into the mainstream entertainment industry is by helping them to establish “a box office name” (Interview 4, 2002). In a letter to the newspaper Beeld Andries Vrey (2003) also claims that arts festivals, specifically KKNK, has always been a golden opportunity for him to expose his talents as young playwright and actor.

Kobus Burger (2003a) states in a report on the 2003 KKNK festival that audiences like to attend productions that sport “big, well-known” names and that leads one to believe that unknown artists and productions do not fare equally as well. An interviewed artist (Interview 3, 2002) supports this by saying, “it is hard to get an audience / producers to attend your show when you do it alone and you are unknown.”

Not all artists, or festival organisers, feel that this is such a big challenge at arts festivals, though. An organiser of an international arts festival (Interview 1, 2002) states that one of the most rewarding aspects of his work has been that “emerging local artists” are well supported and “not simply ‘big name’ imports.” A South African artist (Interview 6, 2003) also claims that “new, unknown actors annually perform at festivals and are seen.” These festivals, then, do play a role in helping young artists to establish a name for themselves in the entertainment industry, which will eventually, considering Burger’s (2003a) remark, help to attract audiences to their shows.

According to Katherine B. Free (1985: 159) this recognition of artists at arts festivals is something that happens all over the world. In her report on the 1984 Olympic Festival of the Arts in Los Angeles she states that “many influential Los Angeles theatre producers, directors and actors saw this festival” and that the critics praised what they had seen. This then leads one to believe that arts festivals can and do play a major part, not only in offering artists opportunities to perform, but also in getting them the recognition that they desire.

2.2.1.2 Financial advantages

Arts festivals do not only provide artists with additional opportunities to perform. According to Doks Briers (J. Meiring, 2003) the Volksblad arts festival also aims to provide artists with an additional income. Wilhelm Disbergen (2002) even states in an article on the KKNK that “artists are using the festivals as pit-stops to financial riches.” But this is not the only financial advantage for an artist taking part in an arts festival.

In his report on the “state of the performing arts” Charles J. Fourie (2003) mentions that it is very difficult for an independent producer to stage a play in an established theatre, due to high rental and advertising costs. At an arts

festival, however, these costs are not as impossibly high because they are shared by more than one group of artists.

In the case of the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals, for example, the rental and entry fees were kept to a minimum to encourage more artists to enter and take part in the festival. It was one of the missions of the festival to help artists to keep their production budgets as low as possible to minimise the possibility of financial losses.

As far as advertising costs are concerned, the load on each individual production is also notably lighter than when staging a production in an independent theatre. This is because the festivals do their own advertising to market the festival itself and to draw the potential audience members to the place where the productions will take place. Once the festivalgoers are at the festival, they only have to acquire a program (which is also sponsored by the festival) to decide which productions they want to attend. The artists then only have to do a minimal amount of advertising (usually with posters and flyers) to help these potential audience members to make up their minds regarding which productions to attend.

This was exactly the case at the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals. A large section of the festival budget was spent on advertising the festival itself and the artists only had to print a small amount of posters and flyers to put up and hand out around the theatres. This, together with the small rental and entry fees, helped to keep their budgets very low.

The Krêkvars arts festival, however, is not the only festival that aims to keep the artists' spending at a minimum. The organisers of the Prescott Park arts festival (About, 2002) also state that they aim to provide a "financially accessible" festival. A South African artist (Interview 3, 2002) supports this idea by stating that the production budgets for festival productions are usually

very small. Therefore one can conclude that, since obtaining financing for theatre productions is rather difficult (see 2.3.1 for a more detailed description of this challenge), it is financially speaking easier to take part in a festival than putting on a play in an established, independent theatre.

2.2.1.3 *New and old ideas*

It has been mentioned before that arts festivals encourage the creation of new works. In accordance with this Thomas Mulready (Hill & Paris, 2002) states that the Performance Art Festival aims to “encourage the creation of new work and give our Festival a chance to sniff out work that would normally fall between the cracks.”

South African arts festivals, such as Aardklop, also claim that they aim to develop the arts in this country by “specifically requesting and supporting new works and productions” (Impakstudie, 2002). By requesting and supporting these works and productions, the festival encourages artists to create and perform new works and to develop their talents.

The KKNK also support this mission and they go even further by saying that “The KKNK is known within the entertainment industry as a testing ground for new productions, which are then performed elsewhere in South Africa during the rest of the year” (Klein Karoo National..., 2003). At this festival the artists have the opportunity to judge how well their works are received and supported by the audiences and they can adjust them accordingly before the productions are performed elsewhere.

Arts festivals, however, do not cater exclusively for new artists and new ideas. Sometimes, as Katherine B. Free (1985:159) claims, the artists do not seem so startling in their newness “as in their evocation of traditional forms in new

ways.” An old idea can be just as effective, and sometimes even more so, when it is presented in a new and different way.

One of the “old ideas” in South Africa that has found its way into the theatre on many occasions is the political situation(s) in this country. According to Stephanie Marlin-Curiel (1999:80) the South African arts festival where this is most regularly observed, is the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. She states, “The Grahamstown Festival reflects the South African political and artistic climate as well as its theatre.”

These political situations and the productions created thereof do not necessarily concern “The Struggle” anymore, as they used to when protest theatre was at its height. Loren Kruger (1995: 123) states in her report on the 1994 Standard Bank National Arts Festival,

While political platitudes about The Struggle may have played themselves out, clearly focused and finely performed political theatre is very much alive. Satiric treatment of ongoing violence and suffering may seem tasteless to outsiders, but it is clear that these shows, as well as the rare black community performance in a similar vein, ... resonate far more with local audiences than the solemn mantras of protest theatre.

It is true then that the political theme is not a new idea in South African theatre. But it also true that new themes, such as the above-mentioned quote states, can come out of the old and be presented in a new way.

Although these politically themed performances are not written and performed to be “protest theatre” as such, they do, however, serve a purpose. The organisers of KKNK (Klein Karoo National..., 2003) claim that their festival “gives each South African a platform to perform while at the same time rid them of baggage of the past.”

A South African artist (Interview 6, 2003) supports this claim by stating that arts festivals provide artists with an opportunity to express themselves in the medium of their choice. Whether the idea is old or new, and whether the presentation is old or new, arts festivals can provide artists with the platform and the opportunity to express themselves and to speak their minds (in an artistic way).

2.2.1.4 Training / learning

Much has already been said about the idea of using an arts festival as a method of practical training for artists. (See 2.1.3 and 2.1.4.) This is not only true for students studying drama and theatre, though. An organiser of an international arts festival (Interview 1, 2002) states that festivals are ‘necessary’ to “celebrate, investigate, challenge and present an excess of work from which to grow and show audiences.”

Every artist taking part in an arts festival is given the opportunity to experience first-hand what the entertainment industry is like and to learn from their (and others’) mistakes and experiences. By writing, directing, producing and performing in their own productions, these artists have the opportunity to determine which marketing strategies and performance styles are successful and which are not.

2.2.1.5 Exchanging ideas

An organiser of an international student drama festival states in an interview (Interview 2, 2002) that, in her opinion, arts festivals are valuable opportunities to bring together “students with leading theatre and media professionals.” At these festivals the students (and other artists) have the opportunity to talk to and learn from people who are involved in the entertainment industry. They

also have an opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions from which to build their work.

Not only is this an opportunity to learn, but also to meet new people who are interested in the same subject, namely theatre. The festival organiser further states, “It’s a time to meet like-minded people and make new contacts: passionate, opinion forming and a hotbed of ideas.”

Another interviewee, a South African artist, is also of the opinion that these festivals are not only an opportunity to meet directors and producers (the people who can give you a job) but also to meet fellow artists with whom one can exchange ideas. She states, “Arts festivals bond actors and create opportunities for ‘networking.’”

At these festivals artists can meet others in the same profession who might be able to assist them in furthering their careers. These theatre practitioners might also have the necessary contacts to help them to produce and stage, or simply complete, a work in progress.

2.2.2 Advantages for festival organisers

Besides the financial advantages (getting paid for the job you do) there are various other advantages to being a festival organiser. An organiser of an international student drama festival (Interview 2, 2002) states that the most rewarding aspect of her job “is seeing the hundreds / thousands of young people coming together in one place to share, debate experience, contribute and most importantly enjoy theatre / drama / performance.”

This was also the case with the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals. The “job satisfaction” lay in the fact that a multitude of students and other artists came together to experience and celebrate the arts and make the most of the

opportunities. Many artists used the opportunity to learn about the entertainment industry, exchange ideas, try out new ideas and to make new contacts.

Another rewarding aspect for the organisers of arts festivals is the possibility that a young unknown artist may be seen at the festival by someone in the industry and given the opportunity to perform professionally. Thomas Mulready confirms this statement in an interview with Hill and Paris (2002). When asked what aspect of running the Performance Art Festival he enjoyed the most, he states that it is “the prospect of finding that diamond in the rough.”

Festival organisers are in the fortunate position of helping to create an event where young talented artists are given a platform to perform and the opportunity to create new work and express new innovative ideas. They also have the advantage of witnessing these new works and ideas taking shape and being presented to audiences.

It is a wonderful experience to be a part of this creative process, but the most satisfactory aspect is when those involved enjoyed the experience and made use of the opportunities given to them.

2.2.3 Advantages for the community

Festivals present several advantages for the communities that they take place in. It has already been mentioned that certain festivals, such as the Volksblad festival in Bloemfontein and the Aardklop festival in Potchefstroom, were originally started to stimulate and satisfy the theatre culture in those areas.

There are, however, more advantages for these communities. In the next section of this chapter, a closer look will be taken at the advantages that arts

festivals present for the areas that they are held in and the people living in those areas.

2.2.3.1 *Advantages for the festivalgoers*

The organisers of the Hong Kong Arts Festival (About us, 2002) state that their festival “serves as a catalyst to arouse wider public interest in the arts.” They further state that the festival “provides a broad spectrum of programmes, ranging from classical fare to other innovative and stimulating art forms.” This festival, as well as many others around the world, provides their festivalgoers with the opportunity to observe a wide variety of different arts forms, all presented in one place. And, as Yvonne Singh (1997:69) states in her report on the 1996 Olympic Arts Festival in Atlanta Georgia, the “emphasis” is always on entertainment.

Koos Kombuis (2003) supports this statement in an article about the 2003 KKNK. He claims that one of the biggest attractions of the festival is the surprises that await the festivalgoers each year. He states that the “greatest silliness and the deepest creativity of the (South African) people” can be observed there.

Observing the arts is not the only advantage that arts festivals present to their audiences, though. An organiser of an international student drama festival (Interview 2, 2002) states that their festival “offers festivalgoers the chance to take part in a wide ranging and intensive programme of master classes and workshops as well as contributing to forums for debate and discussion.” These festivalgoers also have the opportunity to experience the arts first-hand by airing their opinions and exchanging their ideas. The discussions and workshops provide the audiences with a platform to question and investigate the arts and to challenge the artists.

Thomas Mulready (Hill & Paris, 2002) is of the opinion that the Performance Art Festival was such a success because of this reason. He states,

Audiences loved the festival because it was so *different* from anything else – that ‘anything goes’ atmosphere is positively addictive. And since we hosted a discussion between artists and audience after every performance, audiences felt more comfortable to raise questions, express their confusion and connect directly in a way that other art forms don’t allow.

One way in which theatre allows the audience to connect with the arts is by the themes presented in the works. Megan Lewis mentions in an article on the 1997 Standard Bank National Arts Festival (1998:105) that, whilst South Africa was “in the midst of enormous social change” many of the plays presented at the festival that year “explored the meaning(s) of reconciliation for South Africans.”

As mentioned in 2.2.1.3 these performances allow the artists to “rid them (sic) of baggage of the past” (Klein Karoo National..., 2003). By the same token the observers of these works (and those who take part in discussions on the themes) have the opportunity to work through their own “baggage” because of what Lewis (2002:283) calls “small but life-changing triumphs of individuals who reach across seemingly impossible obstacles to express their humanity to one another.”

These performances, or “reconciliation events,” as Loren Kruger (1995: 124) calls them, play an important part in the development of a country’s political and social well-being. They are a method of portraying the issues from the past and the emotions that go with them, because, as Kruger (1995:123) states, drama has “the aura of key witness to a country’s turmoil.”

Besides the issues of the past and present being dealt with and the entertainment of the masses, there is another advantage to arts festivals for its

attendants. That advantage is the attempt to keep ticket prices at festivals as low as possible for the festivalgoers. Doks Briers, organiser of the Volksblad arts festival, states in an interview with Gert Coetzee (2002) that the aim of this particular festival is to make it accessible and affordable for the public by keeping the ticket prices “much lower” than the price of other theatre tickets in the market. This will ensure that festivalgoers can be entertained by and take part in a variety of arts forms in a cost-effective way.

2.2.3.2 Advantages for the area and its people

Probably the greatest advantage for the area in which an arts festival takes place is the financial way in which it benefits. In support of this, Carklin & Alcock (1997:53) state, “Grahamstown depends on the National Arts Festival for a significant part of its annual revenue.”

There are many ways in which an arts festival can contribute to the finances of the area that it takes place in. One such way is the exposure that the corporate sponsors receive due to their involvement. In an article on the Aardklop festival (Feesstatistieke, 2003) in Potchefstroom it is stated that many “top-companies” contributed to the festival by way of sponsorships and benefited greatly from this exposure.

In a different article on the same festival (Impakstudie, 2002) the statistics of this recognition are discussed. It is stated that the four main sponsors were recognised as such by more than 70% of the festivalgoers, two of them by more than 80%. The other senior sponsors were also recognised by more than 70% of the festivalgoers.

The organisers of the Aardklop festival (Impakstudie, 2002) are of the opinion that the exposure of trade and brand names and the festivalgoers’ observation thereof is very important to the sponsors. This is because they believe that if

the festivalgoers are positive about the festival they will also be positive about the sponsors and their products.

Another way in which an arts festival can contribute to the economy of an area is the increase in the number of tourists to the area. The organisers of KKNK (Klein Karoo National..., 2003) state that since the start of the festival in 1994 “there has been an emphasis on the overall experience. Visitors are impressed not only by the artistic productions, but also by the unique food, wine and tourist attractions of this region.”

In a study on the impact of the Aardklop festival (Impakstudie, 2002) on the local economy, it is stated that tourism in this part of the country has increased, even outside the festival period. This could be attributed to the fact that many people from all over the country visit the area while the festival takes place and then realise that there are many attractions that they would like to visit again.

Because of this increase in the number of visitors to an area where an arts festival takes place, it could sometimes be a challenge for all of them to find a place to stay. Koos Kombuis (2003) states in an article that it is “very difficult” to find a place to stay in Oudtshoorn, while KKNK is running. This challenge, however, also presents a method for some of the inhabitants of the area to earn some extra money. There are many local people who rent out rooms in their houses to festivalgoers and guesthouses are usually filled to capacity.

Some schools also rent out their hostels, as is the case in Oudtshoorn. In an impact study on the KKNK (Klein Karoo National..., 2003) it is stated, “ Local schools like Bridgton Senior and Junior Secondary who previously had no additional financial support, now have the opportunity of renting out their hostels, halls, grounds, furniture, etc. for the duration of the festival.”

There are also other ways in which an area can benefit financially from an arts festival. In an impact study on the Aardklop festival (Impakstudie, 2002) it is stated,

The Potchefstroom University shows a significant increase in first-year students, which can be attributed to the parents and children that visit Aardklop and decide on Potch as the university of their choice.

The Potchefstroom city council reports that many people choose the town as a retirement destination and decide to live there after they have visited Aardklop. This brings new money into the town and supports established economic activities.

These students who register at PU for CHE and the people who decide to retire in Potchefstroom, after becoming acquainted with the town during the festival, not only contribute financially to the university and the retirement homes but also the town itself. They still have day-to-day living expenses, but these will now be taken care of by the community and suppliers in Potchefstroom, which adds to the economy of this town.

The organisers of the Hadedā arts festival in Tzaneen state on their website (Give flight to..., 2002) that the festival “is planned as a regional festival to introduce the area to the north and northeast of the escarpment in the Northern Province.” The visitors to this festival will have the opportunity to explore this area and its tourist attractions. They will be introduced to its people, businesses and traditions. And whether they decide to move to the area or not, they will have experienced and learnt about a part of the country that they might otherwise not have visited. Paul McEachern, one of the key players in the creation of the Prescott Park arts festival supports this by saying, “I am convinced that the reason Portsmouth is as vital as it is because of the arts. Portsmouth has become a destination because of the arts” (About, 2002).

2.2.3.3 *Outreach projects*

Although, as a South African artist (Interview 3, 2002) states, “most festivals work on a box-office return,” money is not the only objective. Many arts festivals around the world use the money from their ticket sales for charitable causes and to take the arts to the people who cannot attend the festivals.

One such festival is the Hong Kong Arts Festival. This festival sponsors an outreach project called Festival Plus, which “offers a variety of activities, such as slide and video previews of performances, masterclasses, seminars, meet-the-artist sessions, free performances in shopping centres and other events” (About us, 2002).

The KKNK also sponsors an outreach project, which takes place ahead of the festival itself in smaller towns of the Little Karoo. “It is a miniature reproduction of the festival itself and consists of music, drama, workshops and productions for children. Artists from all over South Africa as well as those from the local community take part in this project” (Klein Karoo National..., 2003).

Another project sponsored by the KKNK is the Book Project. The aim of this project is to educate rather than to entertain. The organisers (Klein Karoo National..., 2003) state,

Books, which are especially for children and youth, are collected from all over South Africa and given to schools that have a book shortage. Since the project started in March 1999 more than 500 000 books have already been collected and distributed amongst schools, jails and shelters. These books are classified by educationalists, to ensure that only books of quality are distributed.

By distributing these books and by taking theatre to those who don't have the means to attend the theatre themselves, these outreach projects of the various

arts festivals support the cultural and educational development of their surrounding communities.

2.3 CHALLENGES OF ARTS FESTIVALS

As with most things in life, arts festivals do not only present advantages to those concerned. There are also challenges that have to be overcome for them to be rewarding and worthwhile experiences. In the next part of this chapter some of these challenges for the artists, organisers and the communities that they take place in, will be more closely examined.

2.3.1 Challenges for the artists

2.3.1.1 *Financial and related challenges*

There are various challenges that artists have to overcome before they can take part in arts festivals and make them worthwhile experiences for themselves. One of the biggest challenges is the financial aspect. Sixty percent of the interviewed artists stated that this is the greatest challenge.

One of the artists (Interview 3, 2002) states, “Seeing that most festivals work on a box-office return only – you have to carry the production financially until the festival pays out (eg (sic) rehearsal space and fees, costumes, décor, accommodation, transport, S&T).”

One way of circumventing this challenge is by finding a sponsor that will pay for all these aspects, so that the artists don't have to. But this in itself is another challenge for both established and unestablished artists. Thomas Mulready states in an interview with Hill & Paris (2002) that finding sponsorship for controversial art is never easy and 80% of the interviewed

artists agree. They are of the opinion that finding sponsors for productions is very difficult.

One reason for this is, as another artist (Interview 4, 2002) states, that “they don’t get sponsorships for productions with unknown names.” This can be attributed to the fact that sponsors rely on a large number of people to see and recognise their logos and trade names on the posters and other marketing materials. But, as mentioned earlier, this is not always the case when a young unknown artist performs.

Andries Vrey (2003) mentions a possible reason for this in his letter to the newspaper Beeld. He states that the festivalgoers are there to see the well-known artists and that it is the “famous and infamous” that draw the masses to the festivals. Another South African artist (Interview 3, 2002) supports this by saying that unknown artists “inevitably compete with established names.”

This is not only a challenge for the artists wishing to break into the mainstream entertainment industry, but also for the industry itself. Eighty percent of the interviewed artists are of the opinion that the entertainment industry in South Africa needs to import “new blood” into all its disciplines. According to Kobus Burger (2003d) there is a large group of exciting young playwrights waiting to be discovered. Without the sponsorships and the audiences, though, this might not happen.

This then creates a “vicious circle.” The unknown artists have to compete with well-known names not only for sponsorships but also for audiences. But without the sponsorships they can’t produce their shows to draw the audiences. And without the audiences, they will not be able to establish their names in the entertainment industry, which comes back to the challenge of finding a sponsor for a production with unknown names.

Another challenge, which contributes to this circle, is the opinion that many young artists don't know how to market their productions and draw the attention of sponsors and audiences. One of the interviewed artists (Interview 4, 2002) states, "They do not sell their product."

Another artist (Interview 3, 2002) agrees with this and offers a solution. He states, "Students should be taught HOW to get sponsors, seek financing, market and get an audience into a show." If students who wish to be a part of the entertainment industry professionally are taught how to "sell their product" they will possess the skills to overcome these challenges and make a success of their festival productions and their careers.

There is another side to this "financial challenge" coin, though. On the other side the artists have to generate enough money from their productions to make it financially viable for them to take part in the festivals. If they can't get the paying audiences into their shows, they might not be able to cover their expenses. But this aspect presents yet another challenge.

Theatre critics like Kobus Burger (2003e) feel that there is a necessity for innovation when it comes to festival productions. He states that arts festivals should not only be a source of income for the artists but also a breeding ground for new ideas, artists and forms of expression. Many artists share this opinion but are caught in a battle for survival where they have to choose between their artistic ideals and a financial success.

In order to earn enough money from a production to make it a financially viable venture, artists sometimes have to give the public what they want in order to get them into the shows. Wilhelm Disbergen (2002) claims that many artists are "forsaking the innovative and artistic for the commercial and mundane" in order to achieve an acceptable box-office return. To further prove this point he

states, “The commercial approach in terms of revenue seems to have worked, drastically increasing the feet count at the (KKNK) festival.”

2.3.1.2 *Other challenges*

Once the artists are at the festivals where they will perform, having overcome the financial challenges, they might experience some other difficulties. A South African artist (Interview 4, 2002) claims that some of the biggest challenges she has had to face at arts festivals, besides the finances, were “organisatory problems” and “insufficient technical backup.” Another artist (Interview 5, 2003) also states that he has experienced difficulties during arts festivals with “unequipped technical staff.”

Lize Beekman, a South African singer, expresses her concern about this problem in an article by Kobus Burger (2003c). She claims that technical problems can cause a production, on which an artist has rehearsed for months, to fail. She further states that “technical gremlins pull your world out from under you. Your whole investment goes up in smoke, because you lose your audience. You don’t present your audience with the product that you have prepared for.”

Since many young artists rely on arts festivals as a method of breaking into the entertainment industry and earning recognition, these aforementioned challenges and problems can hamper this process. A South African artist (Interview 6, 2003) confirms this when she states, “ It (an arts festival) is a good place to start if you haven’t done anything in the industry yet. It can also be dangerous if the production that you are performing in is a disaster, because then you are likely not to get work again.”

2.3.2 Challenges for festival organisers and their staff

In an interview with Gert Coetzee (2002), Doks Briers claims that organising an arts festival can sometimes be a “painful” experience because it a learning process and is never without “mistakes and mishaps.” There are several challenges that these organisers and their staff have to face in order for their festival to be a success. In the next part of this chapter these challenges will be examined and discussed.

2.3.2.1 Financial challenges

All of the interviewed festival organisers agreed that one of the biggest challenges that they have to face is the financial challenge. There are a multitude of expenses that have to be covered in order for such a festival to take place. An organiser of an international arts festival (Interview 1, 2002) claims that the cost of presenting work and the prohibitive cost of venues are only two of these expenses.

In an article about the Prescott Park arts festival (About, 2002) it is explained why these costs rise steadily, putting more and more strain on the festival direction and the festival’s funders. It is stated that production costs increased “due to the festival’s productions becoming larger and more lavish.” This prompted the trustees of the festival to seek “the financial support necessary to run the Arts Festival.”

An organiser of an international student drama festival (Interview 2, 2002) claims that the festival “has always been dependant upon the financial support of key sponsors.” “Obtaining and retaining funding,” however is not always easy. In fact, this is the greatest challenge that she has had to face when organising the festival.

Thomas Mulready, founding director of the Performance Art Festival in Ohio, supports this opinion in an interview with Hill and Paris (2002), when asked how much of a problem it has been getting the festival funded over the years. He states, “For the most part, however, it is a challenge getting funding for controversial live performance art in this part of the world, although I wonder how easy it is anywhere.” He continues to say that “the entire paradigm of how the arts are funded probably needs to be re-examined and overhauled.”

Mulready doesn't just leave this statement there, though. He offers a suggestion when he discusses one of the innovative methods employed by the Performance Art Festival to obtain sponsorship. He states, “In the early 90's we were among the first to offer corporate sponsors logo and ad placement *in trade* for airline tickets and hotel rooms.” This form of sponsorship not only serves to lower the expenses for a festival, it also creates an atmosphere of friendly cooperation between the festival direction and the sponsor.

In an article entitled “State of the performing arts,” playwright Charles J. Fourie (2003) also supports the opinion that funding of the arts needs to be re-examined. In this article he describes the decline of the performing arts in South Africa due largely to the retraction of government subsidies and other sponsorships. He names, as an example, the withdrawal of Standard Bank as the main sponsor of the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown after 25 years. He further states that he “fears the worst for the lifespan” of arts festivals such as this.

It becomes clear then, that without proper funding the performing arts and arts festivals could face further decline. Fourie (2003) states that “corporate funding is important to sustain the arts,” but he is of the opinion that the government has a much “bigger responsibility towards the performing arts.” He goes further to offer a suggestion that could spur sponsors and potential sponsors on to invest in the arts. He states,

Government should by now have offered tax breaks and other incentives to those interested in sponsoring the performing arts, and not only to corporates, but also to individuals who will gladly sponsor the performing arts to relieve their own personal tax burdens.

If this were to happen, sponsors and prospective sponsors would have more beneficial reasons to invest in the arts than merely the advertising of their companies and / or products and the satisfaction of supporting a good cause. If there were added incentives, more people would probably take advantage of the opportunity to invest, because it would be less of a financial risk. Bernie Louw (2003) supports this opinion in an article on what he calls the “tyrants” of the art world. He states that, if potential sponsors perceive a production as financially risky, the chances are slim that a sponsorship will be awarded.

This lack of sponsorships not only affects the festival itself, but also the direction and the rest of the staff. Thomas Mulready (Hill & Paris, 2002) names one more expense to an arts festival, which directly affects the staff of the festival and which is greatly aggravated by the lack of funding. He states,

It's a common situation that a lot of arts organisations find themselves in – the need for experienced professionals to manage the venture to its potential, versus the budget to pay only younger, inexperienced administrators or people of independent means.

This means that not only does the festival itself struggle to fund its productions, venues and other technical aspects, but they also have insufficient funds to pay the members of the staff. The lack of funds could in turn have two possible effects on the festival. Firstly the number of staff members could be reduced, which will inevitably affect the number of productions that can be accommodated. Secondly, younger, less experienced staff members could be employed, which will affect the quality of the productions, since they might not have the expertise to do the job as well as their more experienced counterparts.

Now the question arises what festival organisers and their staff should do in order to obtain and retain funding from corporate and other sponsors. A South African artist (Interview 4, 2002) claims that the festival directors should “sell their product,” which translates to better publicity. She further states in the interview, to support this opinion, that festivals should improve their publicity.

According to Mulready (Hill & Paris, 2002) this was what ensured funding for the second Performance Art Festival. He states, “After the excitement and media attention of the first year, it was easy to raise money for a second festival.” He further claims that “corporate funders loved it for all the attention it received.”

2.3.2.2 Marketing and publicity

Sufficient marketing and publicity could increase the quality and attendance at arts festivals. The attendance would increase because more members of the public will be aware of the festival, the productions offered and the location. The quality would increase because corporate sponsors would consider the investment financially viable if there are a multitude of festivalgoers taking note of and responding to their companies. Kobus Burger (2003c) supports this opinion by saying that “sponsors love feet in their tents.” This would result in greater sponsorships, which could lead to the presentation of more works of better quality and the upgrading of facilities.

There are many methods, some more effective than others, which festival organisers employ to market their festivals. An organiser of an international arts festival names a few of these methods in an interview (Interview 1, 2002). They are; inserting the Programme Guide into a daily metro newspaper, advertising through print, radio, television and outdoor advertising, direct mail and publicity.

An organiser of an international student drama festival (Interview 2, 2002) also mentions some of the publicity and marketing methods that the direction of this festival employs. They include mailshots, leaflets, flyers, visits to and contact with schools and universities, press releases, PR (public relations) and their website.

The method that has proven the most popular and effective, is advertising in the media, whether it is printed or audiovisual media. The organisers of the Aardklop festival in Potchefstroom (Impakstudie, 2002) support this opinion in an impact study that was conducted about the 2002 festival. They state that a large percentage of the festivalgoers indicated that they heard about the festival through national reporting and advertising on radio and television.

Inserting the daily programme of the festival into a newspaper proved to be a very successful method of advertising for the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals. The reason for this is that it was a convenient method for the potential audience members to find out what productions were showing that day, where and when they were showing and what they were about. These potential audience members didn't have to drive to the university especially to buy a programme. They could simply pick up the newspaper, or buy one from the nearest news agent, and decide whether they wanted to drive to the university that day to attend a production or not.

The artists also rely on the media, specifically printed media, to advertise their productions. In a report on the 2003 KKNK Kobus Burger (2003a) states that artists, wishing to draw more audience members into their shows, rushed to the festival newspaper Krit to insert advertisements.

Both the festival organisers mentioned earlier (Interview 1, 2002 & Interview 2, 2002) stated, when asked how they had gone about marketing their festivals, that they sent information about the festivals to interested people through the

mail, whether it was direct mail or mailshots. In the modern age of computers and Internet, however, direct mail seems to have taken a backseat to e-mail, which is much faster and more convenient.

In the case of the Krêkvars arts festivals this was one of the most convenient and effective tools used for marketing. A list was drawn up, containing the names and e-mail addresses of potential audience members, and information and invitations were sent out them. Many of the recipients indicated, also via e-mail, that they were interested in attending the festival and requested more information.

Letters and invitations were also sent out in hard copy to a number of potential festivalgoers. This was greatly due to the fact their e-mail addresses were not known to the organisers. But since an e-mail address was provided through which these parties could contact the festival direction, not many replies were received in hard copy, but rather in electronic format.

The greatest advantages to electronic correspondence are the time and the money that one saves. At the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals, for example, press releases and photographs were sent electronically to all the major newspapers in the city and these appeared in the press the very next day. It also proved a much more financially viable option than direct mail, since letters and photographs didn't have to be printed and envelopes and stamps didn't have to be bought.

Modern technology presents some more advantages in the area of publicity and marketing. Many arts festivals across the world have websites providing information about their festivals. This information includes programme information, sponsors, information about the artists and the festival direction, booking facilities and many more. It is also a very convenient method of publicity, since anyone who has access to the Internet, can access the

websites in their own homes and in their own time to get the information that they require.

Another method of marketing, and one that the festival organisers and their staff do not have much control over, is word-of-mouth advertising. This is when festivalgoers recommend productions to their friends or families. Doks Briers states in an article by Gert Coetzee (2002) that she believes that this is the most effective way of selling tickets at the Volksblad festival. This was also a very effective method of marketing at the Krêkvars arts festival. After a production had finished, the audience members and artists gathered outside the theatres and exchanged their opinions on the production they had just seen. They also talked to their friends and others sitting outside the theatres, waiting to attend different productions, and made their recommendations.

Unfortunately, the recommendations were not always positive. Some productions failed to attract the attention of large audiences, greatly due to the negative reactions that they received from the people who had already seen them. From this then one can conclude that the subject matter has to be of some interest to the potential audiences in order for them to attend the productions.

This also rings true for publicity created by other means. In 2002 a large colourful picture of one of the productions presented at the Krêkvars arts festival appeared in the Beeld, a daily newspaper in the Pretoria region. During that day the phone in the festival office rang almost non-stop with people asking for more information about the production and some others booking seats to see it. When the callers were asked why they were inquiring about the specific production, they responded by saying that they had seen the photograph in the newspaper and they thought it might be interesting.

It is not only at arts festivals that this phenomenon has occurred, though. Thomas Mulready states in an interview (Hill & Paris, 2002) that a similar effect was achieved with some of the productions with which he was involved. He states, “When we toured with ‘Best of the Fest’ in 1990, we got a photo in the Village Voice and a large article and a photo in the Chicago Tribune, and we had good crowds.”

This then leads one to conclude that arts festivals and the productions presented should be advertised in a way that will evoke the public’s interest. But, in order for the media to take an interest in the festival and its productions, the advertising material should also be interesting and creative.

Thomas Mulready supports this opinion in an interview with Hill and Paris (2002). When asked why he thinks the Performance Art Festival was such a success, he states, “The media loved it because it was visual, it was different, it was outrageous, it was colourful, it was controversial, it was *courageous*.”

It is true then, that sufficient and effective marketing and advertising can aid in the success of an arts festival. It can, just as with any other advertised item or company, sell the product, which in this case is the arts. And from the above-mentioned quote, one can conclude that the more creative the marketing strategy is, the more positively the media and the public will respond.

2.3.2.3 *Infrastructure*

The aspects that have to be considered when referring to the infrastructure of a festival include the staff, equipment, venues and other facilities, such as storage space for furniture and props. If these factors are not taken into consideration, the festival might not be able to achieve its goals and many artists and staff members might be disappointed in the outcome. It has already been mentioned (see 2.3.1.2) that ill-equipped technical staff can cause a production to fail. It would then be an even greater problem if there were not

enough technical staff members to accommodate the number of productions presented in the festival.

This was the case at the 2002 Krêkvars arts festival. The first-year students were appointed to handle the technical tasks, such as lighting and sound control, venue management, front-of-house management, and wardrobe and props management. This means that there were a great number of technical tasks to be dealt with, but since no one was obliged to take part in the festival, as artists or as staff, many of the volunteers had to work double shifts. This created a further problem in the sense that the technical staff had very little time to rest, which affected their concentration and the quality of their work.

One of the interviewed artists (Interview 5, 2003), who had taken part in both Krêkvars arts festivals in 2001 and 2002, stated that this was one of the major challenges that he had to face at these festivals. He claims that the technical staff were “unequipped” and that the Krêkvars arts festival presented too many productions. Since there was also no selection process at either of the Krêkvars arts festivals large numbers of productions were presented, which created a further problem; there were only three available theatres in which to perform and too many productions competing for the space.

Another aspect of the spatial issue that needs to be taken into consideration is the fact that theatres might be too small or too large for the productions that are presented. A South African artist (Interview 7, 2003) claims that one of the biggest challenges that he has had to face at arts festivals is the spatial limitations of the theatres where he had to perform. Since there is only a limited number of theatres available and usually a large number of productions that need to be accommodated, the artists often have to adapt their productions to suit the space. The artist (Interview 7, 2003) supports this opinion and states that this challenge was overcome by “adapting.”

Another spatial challenge at the Krêkvars arts festival was the amount of space available in which to store décor, costumes and props. The majority of these were stored in the dressing rooms and on the side stages of the theatres, but this aspect created problems of its own. The dressing rooms were crowded and there was very little space available for artists to warm up and prepare before their productions, especially where productions with large casts were concerned.

The furniture and props on the side stages served as obstacles for actors who had to move on and off the stage during their productions. And since the theatres were dark during these productions, it served as a safety hazard as well.

The amount and the type of equipment available for use at an arts festival can present yet another challenge. If there is not enough equipment (including lights, sound equipment, cables, strobe lights and smoke machines) to cater for the needs of each production, the artists and the audience might be dissatisfied with the outcome thereof.

This was not so much a challenge at the Krêkvars arts festivals, as the fact that artists entered productions, which made too many technical demands on the staff and the available equipment. It was clearly stated in the entry form that the productions had to be kept minimalistic, a list of the available equipment in each venue was given and it was stated that the lighting would be designed to accommodate all the productions presented in the specific venue.

This, however, did not deter some of the artists from requesting additional equipment, and making impossible demands on the technical staff. Since the technical teams consisted of first-year students, who were still in the process of learning how the equipment works, one would expect allowances, especially

since this was a student festival, and not a professional festival, and the students were still in the process of being trained.

From what has been discussed in this section of the chapter, it becomes clear that the available infrastructure needs some careful consideration when an arts festival is planned and organised. If there are not enough venues, staff members, equipment, and storage space available for the number of productions to be presented, it might be problematic for the organisers as well as the artists. A South African artist (Interview 5, 2003), who had taken part in both the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals, states that he did not encounter many of the above-mentioned challenges at other festivals in the country, “simply because they had the infrastructure to deal with the amount of plays.”

2.3.2.4 *Selection*

There are many factors influencing the productions selected to be presented at an arts festival. These factors include the available infrastructure of the festival (see 2.3.2.3 for more detail), the budget and financing (see 2.3.2.1 for more detail), the quality of the work to be presented and many other factors that will be more closely examined and discussed in this section of the chapter.

Thomas Mulready (Hill & Paris, 2002) describes one of the challenges that the direction of the Performance Art Festival had to face before a selection process was implemented. He states, “Since we had an open application process where any artist from around the world could apply, we soon had more applications than space / time / money to present them all.” From this it becomes clear that a selection process is necessary if one wants an arts festival to succeed.

In support of this statement, Karen Meiring (2003) claims in a letter to the newspaper Beeld that it is never pleasant to turn down an application for the festival, but that it is necessary, since the festival does not have enough funds or the available infrastructure to become an unlimited festival. Doks Briers supports this idea in an interview with Jean Meiring (2003) where she states that the number of productions that can be accommodated in the programme depends on the available infrastructure.

Another very important factor that affects the selection process at an arts festival is the quality of the productions. It is important to present work of high quality so that the audiences are not disappointed with the product that they paid to see. A South African artist (Interview 3, 2002) supports this idea and states,

If we are not careful and we don't monitor the standard of productions on these festivals we will start annoying audiences who pay to see a certain quality. If they are disappointed once too often they might seize (sic) to support festivals or go there simply for the "jol" and not the shows which will spiral out of control and kill festivals in the long run.

To prevent this from happening, many arts festivals aim to present the highest quality artistic productions. One such festival is the Aardklop festival in Potchefstroom. The organisers state in an impact study (Impakstudie, 2002) that the festival "strives for quality rather than size."

Finding a balance between work of high artistic quality and commercial quality is not as easy as it sounds though. It has already been mentioned in 2.3.1.1 that the artists are fighting an ongoing battle between creativity and commercial success. This presents a challenge for the festival organisers as well, especially where the selection of productions is concerned.

Some artists, such as a South African actress, playwright, director and producer (Interview 4, 2002) are of the opinion that the organisers of arts

festivals tend to “opt for the commercial, not the creative.” Commercially oriented productions, however, are often what the audiences want, as Wilhelm Disbergen (2002) states in an article entitled “KKNK – marvellous or mundane,” because this is what many of the festivalgoers are there to see. Now the selectors and organisers have to make a choice between what the artists want to present, which is creative and challenging new works, and what the audiences want to see, which is, as Charles J. Fourie (2003) calls it, commercial “slappap.”⁷

There is another dimension to this challenge, though, and that is that fact that audiences in different parts of the country want to see different kinds of commercial entertainment, because they are from different cultures and backgrounds. Kobus Burger (2003f) supports this idea and states in a report on the 2003 KKNK that “it is clear that theatre audiences in the Cape differ from their counterparts in the north.”

If the festival organisers and selectors are then intent on giving the audiences what they want, they will first have to establish what their audiences will be like; what are their likes and dislikes, as far as commercial entertainment goes. Burger (2003f) is of the opinion that the festival direction of the KKNK needs to ask itself some questions to establish what will ensure another ten years of success for this festival. Amongst these questions they have to ask is, “What does the average festivalgoer look like?” He states that the festival direction has to decide whether they want to cater for tastes of the festivalgoers who are there for the party (and the commercial “slappap”) or if they want to cater for the tastes of the theatre lovers.

Many festivals, however, aim to stimulate the creation of new and challenging works and consider this as part of their selection criteria. The KKNK is an

⁷ “Slappap” is the Afrikaans term for porridge that is made with a lot of water and is very runny. Fourie implies that this kind of entertainment is easier for the audiences to “digest” since it is not really challenging and they do not have to think about it. They can just sit back and watch.

example of such a festival. Karen Meiring states in an interview with Stephanie Nieuwoudt (2003) that arts festivals have “in a sense taken over the role of the arts councils” and have to “stimulate the creation of new works.” Dr. Neil le Roux, convenor of the arts cabinet responsible for the selection process at KKNK, supports this opinion and states in an article by Yvonne Beyers (2003) that “a set percentage of new plays has to be accommodated at the main festival and entries of established artists must therefore make way for less well-known artists.”

This aspect, in itself, creates yet another challenge that the selectors at arts festivals have to face, namely the dissatisfaction of well-known artists whose applications are turned down. Many of these artists are of the opinion that they should be allowed to perform at the festivals, and excused from filling out applications, simply because of their past achievements.

Yvonne Beyers (2003) reports on the “widespread dissatisfaction” that developed “among South Africa’s top artists” after many of them were turned down for the main event at the 2003 KKNK festival. She states that Deon Opperman said, “I have produced and directed 45 productions and have been compelled to stand begging in the queue to gain acceptance to the main festival. Surely one reaches a point where you no longer have to prove yourself.”

In response to this, Dr. Neil le Roux stated that “all plays were judged by the same standard and it was impossible to accommodate all the professional artists at the main festival.” From this one can conclude that it is quite a challenge for the selectors to strike a balance between the number of new productions and the number of professional productions to be presented.

Andries Vrey, a young South African actor and playwright, states in a letter to the newspaper Beeld (2003) that if he knows what the selection criteria for an

arts festival are, he can prepare himself, and the production to be entered, accordingly. Vrey states in the letter that, after his application for the 2002 KKNK was turned down, he is not sure anymore what the aim of the KKNK is and how trustworthy the selection process is. In the letter he asks the direction of the festival to explain their aims; whether they want the festival to be a showcase for South African art or to shove “commercial garbage” down the throats of their audiences.

Vrey, however, is not the only South African artist who has raised questions about this process and the aims of the selectors. There are some South African artists that are of the opinion that the organisers and selectors of these festivals (and also the decision makers in the rest of the performing arts world) do not make their decisions based on theatrical knowledge, since many of them do not possess the necessary expertise. Charles J. Fourie (2003) is one such artist. He claims, “What we as theatre practitioners were left with... is the same old bureaucratic institutions, with people seated in cosy management positions, who have little, if any, knowledge of the theatre.”

A South African artist (Interview 4, 2002) also supports this opinion regarding the selectors’ and organisers’ lack of theatrical knowledge. When asked what she considers to be the strong and weak points of arts festivals in South Africa, she claims, “The decision makers are not theatre practitioners.” This, it seems, leaves the artists, who want to produce and perform serious and challenging new works of art, at the mercy of decision makers who do not always know what theatre is about. The people in management positions have the power to decide which productions may be performed, and which may not, based on their own ideas and opinions of theatre.

According to Karen Meiring, this is not the case where the selection of productions for the KKNK is concerned. She states in a letter to the newspaper Beeld (2003), in answer to Andries Vrey’s questions,

The members of the arts cabinet are experts with years of experience. Some of them are (or were) artists themselves possessing an intimate knowledge of the industry. They only serve on the selection panel for a limited time. In every decision they are guided by an extensive policy document, prescribing administrative, as well as artistic guidelines, which must be strictly adhered to.

If it is true then that the decisions regarding the selection processes at some arts festivals are made by theatre practitioners, there is another, equally important aspect that the selectors have to keep in mind. That aspect is the fact that art is a subjective field. Not everyone likes the same types of art and entertainment and not everyone shares the same opinion on what is good art and what is not. Koos Kombuis (2003) supports this opinion in a report on the 2003 KKNK, where he states, “Art is art, but tastes differ.”

This then presents a challenge to the selectors in the sense that they have to set their own personal preferences aside when they have to decide which productions will be performed and which will not. There are, however, some artists that are of the opinion that many selectors at arts festivals are influenced by their personal preferences. In support of this opinion, a South African artist (Interview 4, 2002) states, “an enormous amount of nepotism has influenced their choice of shows.”

One organiser of an arts festival, who has had to face much criticism in this vein, is Karen Meiring. Stephanie Nieuwoudt (2003) reports that Meiring has been severely criticised for the fact that a female a-capella group, Cutt Glass, of which she has been a member for more than fifteen years, is rewarded a slot at the KKNK annually, while other artists have been turned down.

In her own defence, Meiring states that she has been honest about her interests as an artist from the beginning and that the festival direction has never complained about it. She continues to say that Cutt Glass has existed

for a longer period of time than the KKNK, which means that when the festival was started, everyone knew that she had other interests.

Meiring further states that she never makes a decision about a production with which she is involved as an artist. The decision of whether such a production will be selected for the festival or not, rests on the shoulders of the arts cabinet. She admits that the fact that she is the managing director of KKNK may tip the scale in her favour, but now the question arises how the quality of a production is measured and what the guidelines are for selecting productions for an arts festival.

In reply to Vrey's request, Karen Meiring (2003) explains the selection process of the KKNK and states that the festival can't give preferential treatment to any artists, whether they are amateur or professional theatre practitioners. She explains that the arts cabinet has to take many different factors into consideration when deciding which productions will be presented at the KKNK.

These factors include the following - as described by Karen Meiring (2003):

The cabinet has to take into consideration the type of theatre and entertainment that the public want. They have to evaluate the expectations of the audiences. Once this is done, they have to consider the applications and decide how much of what is offered can cater for these expectations.

The next consideration is the age and the history of the production. If the play was written by a well-known playwright and has been performed successfully in the past, chances are that it will be successful at the festival as well. If one or both of these criteria cannot be met, the production might fail, which will result in negative criticism and a financial loss on the part of both the artists and the festival.

The status of the performers also has to be taken into account when a production is considered by the selectors. This is important, since the festival aims to strike a balance between well-known names, less well-known performers and young, new, unknown artists.

The theme of the production and the content thereof also has to be considered by the arts cabinet. If too many plays with the same theme are presented, the audiences might get bored and not attend any other productions. It is, after all, as Karen Meiring (2003) states, one of the festival's aims to present a "broad spectrum" of art and entertainment.

Another aspect that needs to be considered is the cost of presenting the work. If the production cost of a play is too high, it might not be financially viable for the artists to perform. If such an expensive production is commissioned by the festival, there might be financial losses on the part of the festival itself.

Some artists enter more than one production into the festival, in the hope that they can earn enough money from their combined productions to make the experience financially viable. But this creates another challenge for the selectors. Consideration is given to the number of productions that an artist is involved with. If an artist takes part in too many productions, it might be quite difficult to schedule them all in slots that don't overlap (which was the case at the 2002 Krêkvars arts festival). There might also be dissatisfaction amongst the artists whose applications were turned down if others have a large number of productions playing at the festival and they have none. It seems more fair to give one more artist the opportunity to perform, rather than giving many time slots to one artist.

Dr. Neil le Roux, convenor of the arts cabinet, supports Meiring's explanation of the selection process and states in an article by Yvonne Beyers (2003),

“Artists’ submissions are gauged by their professionalism, entertainment value, story line and viability of the play.”

This process of selection is not an easy task, Meiring (2003) further explains. External factors can sometimes slow down the process and make the choice even tougher. She states that entry forms are sometimes incomplete or that the applicants are vague in their descriptions of the themes and content of their productions. This can present a challenge to the selectors, especially since the productions are judged by their themes and their content.

From what has been discussed and explained in this section of the chapter, one can conclude that selecting a limited number of productions to be performed at an arts festival is by no means an easy task. There are many aspects that the selectors have to take into account, such as the available infrastructure, the available budget, the percentage of new works that has to be accommodated and their personal preferences, to name a few. It is, however, important and necessary to do this if one wants the festival to be a success.

In support of this, Thomas Mulready, founding director of the Performance Art Festival explains that when the direction of his festival had to select the productions that would be performed, they “always looked for *evidence* that the artists could pull off what they were proposing” (Hill & Paris, 2002). This will ensure that the audiences are not disappointed with the products that they have paid to see.

2.3.2.5 Administration and communication

As with any other event that needs to be organised, the organisation of arts festivals also include many administrative tasks. These tasks include the scheduling of productions, marketing and publicity (see 2.3.2.2 for more

detail), the selection of productions (see 2.3.2.4 for more detail), and communication and correspondence with the artists and staff members, to name just a few.

Once the productions to be performed at an arts festival have been selected, a schedule has to be drawn up and time slots have to be allocated to each production. There are several factors that need to be taken into consideration when this is done.

The first aspect, which has already been mentioned in 2.3.2.4, is the number of productions that an artist is involved with. If an artist takes part in more than one production at an arts festival, the schedule has to be drawn up in such a way that the timeslots for these productions do not overlap.

This aspect created a challenge when drawing up the schedules for the Krêkvars arts festivals, especially the second festival in 2002. Many artists had commitments to more than one production, which complicated the scheduling task and eventually resulted in certain productions being awarded less time slots than others. It was suggested at a departmental post-festival feedback meeting that the artists should be limited the following year to taking part in no more than two productions.

Another important aspect to consider, especially when organising a student festival, is the starting and ending times of the productions. Since the students (artists and audience members) still have to attend classes during the day, it would be easier and more convenient for them to attend the festival if the productions started and ended at the same times as their classes. This would allow them to attend productions during their free periods.

It was one of the initial aims of the Krêkvars arts festival to present 45-minute productions that students could attend during their free periods. In 2002 the

scheduling of productions did not allow many students to attend the productions during the day. The reason for this was that the starting times of the productions did not coincide with the class times and many productions failed to draw large audiences as a result.

At the 2001 festival, however, the starting times for the productions did coincide with the class times of the university and many of the productions were well supported during the day by fellow students. This, unfortunately, only happened during the first three days of the festival, because another factor, regarding time, was not taken into consideration.

This factor was the fact that the fourth day of the festival was a public holiday. Because this holiday, National Women's Day, was on a Thursday, many of the students were either given the next day off, or they decided by themselves to take a day off and have a long weekend. As a result, the campus was nearly empty, except for a few students taking part in the Krêkvars arts festival and a few supporters.

For the above-mentioned reason, it is important for the direction of an arts festival to plan and organise a festival at a time of the year when they are certain of drawing audiences into the theatres. But this is not always up to the direction of the festival.

The KKNK, for example, takes place during the March / April school holidays and is one of the fastest growing arts festivals in the country (Klein Karoo National..., 2003). The 2003 festival, however, was quite a different festival to the one where productions are usually sold out and tickets are impossible to get hold of unless you book weeks in advance. Kobus Burger (2003a) states in his report on this festival that there were "less festivalgoers, emptier streets and half-full halls." He speculates that this could be as a result of the fact that

the Easter weekend did not fall within the KKNK-week, a factor that the management and direction of the festival had no control over.

Another administrative task that needs to be attended to by the festival direction, and one that will ensure a good working relationship between the festival and the artists, is the communication and correspondence with the artists. It is imperative that the artists are up to date with the developments regarding the selection and scheduling of their productions. On the other hand, it is equally as important that the artists can communicate their problems and challenges to the festival direction.

Charles J. Fourie (2003) states that this is not only a challenge at arts festivals, but also in the performance art community of South Africa as a whole. In an article entitled “State of the performing arts” he describes how difficult it has been for him to get in touch with the directors and the management of theatres where he intended to stage plays.

In an article by Kobus Burger (2003c), Karen Meiring admits that this is sometimes a challenge at arts festivals as well. She claims that the festival communicates well with its clients (the festivalgoers), but not with the artists. She continues to say that the festival direction and the artists usually communicate with each other through the media.

This is exactly what happened when the young South African actor and playwright, Andries Vrey, found that his application for the 2002 KKNK festival was turned down. Instead of voicing his complaints directly to the festival direction (which he may have done without getting a satisfactory answer) he wrote a letter to the newspaper (Vrey, 2003) in which he voiced his complaints. Thus he left himself open to be publicly contradicted by Karen Meiring (2003), the festival director.

Communicating with the artists taking part in a student festival is a little easier than with other festivals. This was the case at the Krêkvars arts festivals. Since the artists were students, and most of them studied at the same institution (in the case of the Krêkvars arts festival most of the artists studied at the University of Pretoria, the institution that was responsible for organising the festival) notices could be placed in a general location.

In the Policy Document (Munro, 1999:8) of the UP Department Drama it is stated that there are a number of notice boards around the main building of the drama department and that “these boards are the main communication channel other than the actual classroom situation, between lecturers and students.” It is also described, in this document, where these notice boards are situated and what information would be placed on each one. In 2001 one of these notice boards was allocated to the festival and all the information that needed to be communicated to the artists and technical teams was placed there.

For students and artists outside the drama department, this was also a convenient channel of communication. Since many of them were on the campus on a daily basis, attending classes in their respective departments and faculties, it was easy for them to walk to the drama department to get the information that they needed.

For those artists who needed to speak personally to someone involved with the organisation of the festival, it was easy to get in touch with the festival organiser, because the festival office was situated next to the notice board. Since everyone who wanted to take part in the festival had to collect their entry forms from the festival office, all the artists knew where it was situated.

To ensure that the channels of communication stayed open between the festival direction and the artists, even outside office hours, the contact

numbers of the festival organiser were printed on the entry forms and posters and were placed on the festival notice board as well. If the festival was going to be a success, it was important for the festival direction to be aware of the needs and challenges of the artists, in order for changes and adaptations to be made if it was necessary, and if it was possible.

Much of the information that the artists would need was also communicated to them in the entry forms. The first page of this document contained all the terms and conditions applicable to the festival. Since the festival first took place in 2001, there was no existing entry form and one had to be designed by the festival organiser. This was done by looking at examples of entry forms of other festivals (such as Aardklop, KKNK and the National Arts Festival) and adapting them to suit the specific needs of the Krêkvars arts festival. The Krêkvars arts festival was not the only festival that borrowed information from other festivals. Doks Briers, organiser of the Volksblad festival, states in an interview with Jean Meiring (2003) that when organising this festival “much was taken out of the books of other festivals.”

Information that had to be adapted on the entry forms of the Krêkvars festival included the dates of the festival, closing dates for entries, contact details of the festival organiser, the available venues, the equipment available in each venue, the specifications that each entered production had to adhere to and arrangements for the payment of fees to the artists.

The payment of fees by the artists is yet another administrative task that could be a challenge. In the case of the Krêkvars arts festival, the UP Department Drama and the festival direction decided to only charge the artists a minimal entry fee. No rental fees were charged for the venues, but rather a set percentage of the box office income was taken to cover their expenses. This was done to ensure that the productions that failed to draw large audiences, did not suffer large financial losses.

South African playwright, Charles J. Fourie (2003), describes in an article on the “State of the performing arts” how he had suffered “heavy financial losses with a production, with the total box-office income going to advertising and rental fees.” Since this seems to be a challenge for artists throughout the performance art community, festival organisers now face the challenge of rather keeping the fees at a minimum, so that their festivals can serve as an opportunity for artists to earn a residual income. Doks Briers supports this opinion and states in an interview with Jean Meiring (2003) that it is one of the aims of the Volksblad festival to provide artists with an opportunity to earn an extra income.

The payment to the artists of this extra income that they can earn at an arts festival is another administrative task that can prove to be a challenge to the organisers. At the Krêkvars arts festival, for example, the date of payment was agreed upon when the artists submitted their entry forms. Many of the artists, however, did not collect their money on the agreed upon date. This created extra administrative work for the organisers, since an alternative date had to be arranged.

From this section of the chapter it becomes clear that there are a multitude of administrative tasks to be handled by the organisers of an arts festival. If these tasks are not handled sufficiently, the productions, and by extension the festival, could fail. For example, if the communication channels between the festival direction and the artists are not open the artists cannot communicate their needs and challenges to the organisers. Also, if the artists do not adhere to the conditions set by the festival direction, it could create difficulties for the organisers, which could lead to the tasks not being dealt with satisfactorily.

2.3.3 Challenges for the community

When an arts festival takes place in a community on a yearly basis and hordes of people from all over the country come together in one area it could create some challenges for the area and for the people living there. Wilhelm Disbergen (2003) supports this opinion and claims in a report on the 2003 KKNK, “With more than 160 000 people having visited the festival this year, the burden on this little town has been enormous.”

Since people from all over the country support the festival (Disbergen claims further on in the report that people from Cape Town and Johannesburg drive to Oudtshoorn to visit the festival) there will be a large number of cars coming in and going out of the area. In a town where the infrastructure is not necessarily designed to handle such a large amount of cars, traffic problems will inevitably occur. This was exactly the case in Oudtshoorn in 2003 and Disbergen (2003) reports on “traffic jams and parking problems.”

These festivals also take place over a period of time. Aardklop, for example runs for five days (Feesstatistieke, 2003). The festivalgoers who wish to attend a number of productions will stay for a longer period of time and will need to find accommodation. In an impact study on the 2002 Aardklop festival in Potchefstroom (Impakstudie, 2002), it is stated that 50% of the festivalgoers stayed at the festival for 3-5 days.

Providing accommodation for a large number of tourists can also present a challenge for a community. Koos Kombuis (2003) states that it is almost impossible to find accommodation in Oudtshoorn when the KKNK takes place and Wilhelm Disbergen (2003) reports that private accommodation was booked in more than 140 bed-and-breakfast establishments in Oudtshoorn during the run of the 2003 festival. This does provide the owners of these

establishments with an additional income, but if there are more tourists than beds for them to sleep in, it could become problematic.

It seems that the greatest challenge for the inhabitants of a community where an arts festival takes place is the number of tourists that visit their area during that time. More tourists will surely bring more money into these towns, but if the infrastructure of such a town is not designed to handle all the tourists, it may become uncomfortable for the inhabitants.

2.4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When asked if she had any advice for future festival organisers, an organiser of an international student drama festival (Interview 2, 2002) stated, “Work hard and stay focused.” From the previous section of this chapter, it is clear that an organiser of an arts festival has many challenges to overcome. If one focuses on the task at hand a solution will be found to combat these challenges.

Pieter Fourie, a well-known South African playwright, supports this opinion. In an interview with Pieter Malan (2003) he states that arts festivals need more focus. A South African artist (Interview 7, 2003) also supports this opinion, but he goes even further and states that arts festivals need to do some “re-planning and setting of goals.”

When the direction and the organiser of an arts festival set the goals for the specific event, an important aspect to keep in mind is whom the festival is for. If they are sure of their target markets, including the artists and the audiences, they can plan their festival accordingly to best suit the needs of the persons involved. An organiser of an international student drama festival (Interview 2, 2002) supports this opinion. She states, when asked what the most important aspect is to remember when planning and organising an arts festival,

“Remembering what the particular festival is about and who it is for (its mission statement, aims, objectives, and target participants and audience).”

One of the most effective methods of ensuring that the festival direction knows what their participants and audience members expect from a festival, is by inviting them to voice their opinions and adapting the festival accordingly, where possible. This was done after the first Krêkvars arts festival in 2001. A questionnaire was sent out to the participants asking them for their opinions and suggestions. These questionnaires were considered and the following year the festival was adapted slightly to accommodate some of these opinions.

Karen Meiring supports this idea and claims in an interview with Stephanie Nieuwoudt (2003) that the opinions of artists and festivalgoers have helped to shape the goals of the KKNK. She states, “I believe that I have a democratic management style and I listen to criticism. We have arrived at many wonderful solutions, thanks to people who have written critical letters to us.”

Further on in the article Stephanie Nieuwoudt (2003) reports that when the programme for the 2003 festival was announced, Karen Meiring quoted and supported the opinion of the journalist, Robert Greig. Greig stated, “Every artists has the right to criticise – it is good for everybody. But few artists make use of that right. They rather grudgingly keep quiet.”

It is true, when reading the numerous articles and performance reviews published at the end of each festival, that the ones criticising and making suggestions are mostly the theatre critics. Artists, such as the South African singer-song writer, Lize Beekman, rather keep quiet and don't voice their opinions. Kobus Burger (2003c) quoted her saying that she “doesn't believe in pointing fingers and slinging mud. We have enough wars.”

Now the question arises of where one should draw the line between “slinging mud” and voicing genuine concerns, since these concerns, and the subsequent actions, are what can shape the goals of a festival. By listening to the criticism of festivalgoers and artists, it is possible to evaluate the current theatre trends. Doks Briers (J. Meiring, 2003) states, in support of this opinion, that the direction of the Volksblad festival aims to “keep a finger on the pulse of what happens on the theatre front during the year.” In this way, the festival direction will have a clearer idea of what their audiences want to see and which productions to present.

This then brings one back to the debate of commercialism versus creativity. As already stated, the commercial approach has proven successful in terms of revenue but it might prove to bore the audiences after a while if nothing creative and challenging is presented. Wilhelm Disbergen (2003) supports this opinion in his report on the 2003 KKNK. He states,

If the festival's aim is promoting popular culture, then it has surely succeeded. Greater attendance means greater sponsorship exposure and the continuation of the festival in successive years. But this approach could very well lead to the festival's descent into banality. In the resulting decline the national audience may be unwilling to travel from Cape Town or Johannesburg to Oudtshoorn, to dabble in the kind of culture they can catch on television.

In response to this debate Pieter Fourie (Malan, 2003) states that festivals should be put in “reverse gear,” because that is when they would be at their strongest. He is of the opinion that the aspect of supply and demand should be turned around. He states that, if the festivals offer art (as opposed to commercialism) the people who want to go to the festivals will go.

If the arts festivals aim to promote the development of the arts, as is stated in many of their mission statements, they should then present challenging and creative new productions. Once this happens the festivalgoers attending these

festivals will be those who support the arts, rather than the kind of “commercial garbage,” as Vrey calls it, that they can see on television.

Considering all the aforementioned challenges and suggestions, one can conclude that planning and organising an arts festival is by no means an easy task. There are many aspects to consider and many problems to solve. An organiser of an international arts festival (Interview 1, 2002) supports this opinion. When asked what the major pitfalls are that one should be aware of when planning and organising an arts festival, he simply states, “Thinking it is easy in any way.”

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY: KRÊKVARS 2001 AND 2002

In this chapter the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals will be examined as a case study. The advantages and challenges of such a festival for the organisers, artists and festivalgoers, as discussed in chapter 2, will also be considered and highlighted. It will be pointed out, where applicable, how these advantages were exploited and the challenges were faced and overcome.

Firstly the vision and mission of the festival will be explained. As it was never formally written down before, it will now be written from the experience and observations of the festival organiser. Regulations and policies set by the drama department, regarding the festival, will also be explained.

Thereafter the case study will be divided into three parts, showing how the direction of the festival attempted to fulfil the vision and mission of the festival. First the pre-festival planning and organisation will be examined. Then the reports and statistics of the actual festivals will be examined and discussed. Lastly the post-festival activities will be examined and discussed.

Each of these three categories will further be divided into two sections. These two sections will each consist of a brief discussion of the 2001 and 2002 festivals. In the section on the first festival the methods of organisation used for the 2001 festival will be discussed. From this discussion conclusions will be made, indicating which methods were effective and which were not. In the discussion on the second festival it will be indicated where and how these methods were adapted, if it was necessary. From this discussion conclusions will again be drawn to indicate which methods worked most effectively.

These conclusions will then form the basis of Chapter 4, which provides guidelines for planning and organising a student theatre festival. From these conclusions recommendations will be made to aid festival organisers in the effective planning and organisation of such a festival.

The discussions in this chapter outline the action research methodology used to collect the data. First a strategy was planned to organise a student theatre festival. Then the strategy was implemented, by organising the 2001 Krêkvars arts festival. After the festival had ended, the strategy and implementation thereof was reflected upon and the strong and weak points were identified. These strong and weak points were then considered and a new strategy was planned. This revised strategy was implemented by organising the second Krêkvars arts festival. The revised strategy and implementation was again reflected upon and this was used as a basis to formulate guidelines and suggestions for the effective planning and organisation of a student theatre festival, as discussed in the next chapter.

3.1 VISION AND MISSION OF KRÊKVARIS

It is the vision of the Krêkvars arts festival to present young unknown student artists with an opportunity to perform their art and to express new ideas in an artistic and theatrical format. The festival, presented by the Department Drama of the University of Pretoria, also aims to present young actors, writers, directors and theatrical artists-in-training with an opportunity to present works and to commit to technical tasks that can be evaluated as part of their practical training.

Student artists will also, as part of their training, have the opportunity to assist in the marketing of their own productions and the festival in general. Furthermore they will have the opportunity to handle the pre-production planning of their productions. This will include the design of lights, sound,

props, costumes and décor, as well as seeking sponsors and being responsible for the budgets of their productions.

Krêkvars also aims to present a wide variety of theatrical works for the students and staff of the University of Pretoria, as well as the general public, to experience and enjoy. The festival will also serve as an opportunity for students, especially drama students, to present their own theatre productions. This will allow them to write, direct and perform in productions of their choice and to gain first-hand experience of the entertainment industry.

It is the mission of Krêkvars to present a festival that is accessible to student artists by keeping the entry fees at a minimum and assisting them in areas such as marketing and pre-production planning. The festival also aims to be accessible to its audience, which will include a large number of students, by keeping ticket prices low.

The Krêkvars arts festival aims to be a platform where young student artists can produce new theatrical works for an audience with a minimal production budget. The festival also aims to present a wide variety of new theatrical works for the audience to experience and enjoy at a minimal cost.

3.2 PRE-FESTIVAL PLANNING

In this section of the chapter various aspects of the pre-festival planning and organising process will be examined and discussed. These discussions will include descriptions of the 2001 and 2002 festivals. The descriptions given in this section will be written from the festival organiser's personal experience, as well as feedback questionnaires filled in by the participants and reports written by the venue managers.

3.2.1 Time

2001: The planning for the festival started roughly four months before the festival took place. It was the first time that the festival was presented and no previous groundwork had been laid. It was the first time that the staff and direction of the festival organised such a project and it was a trial and error situation.

After the first festival had ended, a feedback meeting was held by the staff of the UP Department Drama. It was mentioned that the planning for the festival had started too late in the year and it was suggested (First evaluation of..., 2001) that planning for the following year's festival should start in February, when the academic year starts.

2002: The planning for the second festival started a little earlier in the year. Planning started in February when the academic year of the university commenced. The festival organiser had been told at the end of the previous year that the festival would become an annual event and knew from the beginning of the academic year that the project had to be planned and organised. Because the festival direction had more planning time, last minute rushing around was minimised. There was also more time to consider important decisions, like the design of the posters and which printers to employ for the job.

Since the festival is an annual event the planning and organisation thereof could be a permanent portfolio in the department. Planning for the following festival should start as soon as the festival is completed. This will allow the organiser and staff more time to plan and will prevent nervous last minute planning.

The time of year that the festivals took place, will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.1.1 of this chapter. In that section it will be discussed how the time of year influenced the actual festival.

3.2.2 Organisational staff

2001: The organisational staff of the festival consisted of the festival organiser, the production manager of the UP Department Drama and a marketing committee consisting of volunteer second-year students. This committee was only responsible for the design of the posters and the flyers. (This committee and their responsibilities will be discussed in more detail in 3.2.10 in the section on marketing and publicity.) The production manager was mostly responsible for arrangements regarding the departmental productions and the handling of money. This meant that the majority of the festival organisation had to be done by the festival organiser, with very little backup from a support staff.

The fact that there was only a limited number of people working on the organisation of the festival created some difficulty in the sense that a large amount of responsibility was shared by a small number of people. This challenge was further aggravated by the fact that the members of the festival staff each had other duties in the department that they were responsible for. The students working on the festival organisation also had academic responsibilities to attend to and were only available for festival work at certain times. This meant that their time was limited and that no one could work on the organisation of the festival exclusively.

2002: The organisational staff of the festival consisted of the festival organiser, the production manager of the UP Department Drama and two honours students employed by the department to assist with the festival organisation. The first assistant was not able to sufficiently fulfil these duties and a second

assistant had to be appointed. These assistants lightened the workload of the festival organiser somewhat, but since there was still a limited number of staff members working on the festival a large amount of responsibility was still shared by a small number of people. These students again had academic responsibilities of their own, which meant that they were only available for festival work at certain times.

There was also some uncertainty regarding the making and enforcing of decisions. This was greatly due to unclear job descriptions regarding the festival. Some decisions were made without the knowledge of the festival organiser. This could be due to a confusion of duties, responsibilities and seniority regarding the festival and other duties, responsibilities and seniority in the drama department in general.

This created some difficulties for the festival organiser and was also a source of some embarrassment. Some of the participants were dissatisfied with the decisions that had been made, for example the renting fees that students were charged for the hiring of costumes and props. During the previous year's festival students of the drama department were allowed to make use of these items free of charge. The students were not aware of this new regulation beforehand and complained about it to the festival organiser. The festival organiser was not only unaware of the decisions but was also unable to explain or justify them.

3.2.3 Entry forms

2001: Since this was the first festival presented by the Department Drama of the University of Pretoria, there was no previous paperwork and no groundwork had been laid yet. There were no entry forms and one had to be designed. Examples of entry forms of other arts festivals, for example

Aardklop, were studied and a new entry form was designed specifically for the needs and specifications of the Krêkvars arts festival.

Information given on the entry form included the dates of the festival, the closing date for entries, contact information of the festival director, the number of productions that could be accommodated (see section 3.3.2 for more detail), the number of time slots that would be allocated to each production (see section 3.2.7 for more detail), arrangements regarding publicity and marketing (see the section on publicity and marketing – 3.2.10 - for more detail), the maximum length of each production, (see section 3.2.5 for more detail), arrangements regarding the moving and storage of décor (see sections 3.3.7 and 3.4.2 for more detail), arrangements for the pay-out of box-office earnings to the artists (see section 3.4.3 for more detail), and arrangements regarding the reading and signing of the UP Drama lease agreement (see section 3.2.8 for more detail).

This newly designed entry form worked effectively. The participants were aware of all the rules and conditions of the festival. They could also tear off the first page of the entry form with all the information, rules and contact details and keep it with them as a reminder.

2002: The entry form of the previous year's festival was taken and adapted to suit the needs of the second festival. On the second entry form the most of the information stayed the same, since it had proven to be effective. Information that changed on the second entry form included the dates of the festival, the closing date for entries and contact details of the festival organiser. (See section 3.2.4 for more detail.)

3.2.4 Contact details of the festival organiser

2001: The contact details of the festival organiser were included on the entry forms, posters, flyers and all letters and e-mails sent out by the festival office. The location and address of the festival office was also given so that participants and prospective participants knew where to get hold of the festival organiser if they had any enquiries.

The telephone number given was the festival organiser's personal cellular phone number. This was due to the fact that the festival office did not have a telephone. This resulted in the festival organiser being called at difficult times for, sometimes trivial, questions and problems.

The festival office was located in the main building of the drama department. Since many of the participants were drama students who were at the drama building on a daily basis, it was easy and convenient for them to go to the festival office for information and enquiries. It was also easy and convenient for other student participants to go to the festival office, since it was located on the campus.

2002: The contact details of the festival organiser were again given on all the letters, correspondence and publicity material of the festival. This year, though, the festival organiser was temporarily moved into another office, which had a telephone. This, to a certain extent, solved the problem of calls coming through at difficult times. If participants in the festival had enquiries that were not very urgent and could not reach the festival organiser in the office, they waited until the next day to phone. The festival organiser was also available on the cellular phone to take calls and solve problems that were urgent.

The new office presented some challenges of its own. The office belonged to another staff member of the UP Department Drama who had gone on study

leave for six months. This staff member was not at the department for the last semester of the year and did not have to share the office space. The telephone line, however, had to be shared with the lecturer in the office next-door. This caused some irritations and difficulties, since the festival organiser was not in the office permanently and had to be called (and sometimes looked for) whenever there was a phone call.

The festival organiser also had to use the original festival office for the purposes of checking and sending e-mails. This was because each computer in the drama department was assigned its own e-mail address. The address given to contact the festival organiser was the same as the one used the previous year and could not be accessed from the computer in the new office. This meant that the festival organiser had to work from two offices and was running around between them constantly. This also caused some difficulties for the participants in the festival, since they sometimes had to search for the festival organiser.

It was only in the last part of the year that a telephone line was installed in the original festival office. By this time the entries had already closed and very few participants knew the new number, since the number of the second office was printed on all the entry forms, letters and publicity material.

3.2.5 Selection

2001: There was no fixed structure for selecting productions to be presented at the festival. It was stated on the entry form that only a fixed number of productions could be accommodated. (See section 3.3.2 for more detail.) It was further stated that the productions had to be a maximum of 45 minutes to qualify and that a policy of “first-come-first-served” would be used to select the productions.

As a result of this policy there was no control over the quality and the content of the productions. Some productions were consequently of a lower quality and failed to attract large audiences.

2002: This year, again, there was no fixed structure for selecting the productions to be presented, even though it was suggested that a committee should be assembled to select the productions for the festival. Certain staff members of the drama department were of the opinion that, since the festival was an opportunity for students, especially drama students who were not working in the entertainment industry yet, to “try out” their own productions, they should not be limited regarding the content thereof. Thus an “anything goes” policy was adopted. This policy allowed certain artists to present productions that would not necessarily have been accepted into the programmes of other larger arts festivals.

There was again only a fixed number of productions that could be accommodated (see section 3.3.2 for more detail) and the length of each production could not exceed 45 minutes. The same policy of “first-come-first-served” was adopted.

Since there was no control over the quality and the content of the productions, there were certain productions that disappointed the audiences. These productions, as a result, attracted small audiences and some of them showed a financial loss. This did, however, serve as a valuable lesson for student artists, since they could now more effectively judge which kind of productions would fare well in the industry and which would not.

3.2.6 Entry fees

2001: The entry fee for the festival was R30 per production. This was done to ensure that productions could take part in the festival with minimal production

budgets. It also ensured that the participants did not show (too large) financial losses, since most of the participants were students who only had access to limited funds.

The low entry fees pleased the participants, since many of them only had limited production budgets. These entry fees were non-refundable and entrants lost the money if they decided to withdraw from the festival. Because the fees were so low, however, some entrants did not mind too much losing the fee if they decided to withdraw from the festival. (For more detail see the section 3.3.4 on cancellations.)

The money received from the entry fees was used to print posters, flyers and programmes for the festival itself (UP DRAMA Kunstefees..., 2001). Since there were not many productions at the festival and the entry fees were very low, the marketing budget was also quite small. (See section 3.2.10 for more detail.)

2002: The entry fees were again R30 per production and the fees were again non-refundable. The money was used to print posters and other marketing material for the festival itself. Since more productions had entered the second festival the marketing budget was slightly higher than the previous year and more expensive posters could be printed.

At a feedback meeting after the second festival (Notule van feesvergadering..., 2002) it was suggested by the staff and the students of the UP Department Drama that the entry fee was too low. If the fee was higher, but still within the reach of students and other artists working with limited budgets, it could prevent some participants from withdrawing from the festival, if it meant that they would lose the money. A higher entry fee would also mean that the marketing budget would be slightly higher.

3.2.7 Scheduling

2001: Since there were not very many productions presented at the first festival, the task of scheduling was not too much of a challenge. Each production was assigned between three and five time slots on different days and at different times of the day.

What did cause some difficulties was the fact that some artists had entered more than one production and had to be accommodated. The schedules had to be drawn up in such a way that the different productions of each individual artist did not overlap.

Some of the entrants were also students from academic departments other than the drama department and their class times had to be considered when the schedules were drawn up. This was not a problem for students of the drama department, since the whole week was devoted to the festival and there were no classes in the department.

There were also some participants in the festival that had to work during the day and these times had to be taken into consideration. In order to most effectively draw up a schedule that accommodated as many participants as possible, the entrants were asked on the entry forms to specify which times they were not available.

2002: The scheduling of productions presented much the same challenges as the previous year. Class times and working hours had to be considered and entrants were again asked to specify which times they were not available to perform, in order to draw up the schedule. This year, however, there was a very large number of productions presented at the festival, which made the scheduling task much more complicated.

Because many of the participants were only available to perform during the evenings, they were assigned most of these time slots. This created some dissatisfaction with other participants, since the evening slots were considered to be better. (See section 3.3.12 on the attendance statistics for more detail.)

It not only complicates the scheduling task if artists enter too many productions, it also causes some dissatisfaction with other potential entrants. Since the festival worked on a “first-come-first-served” selection principle, many potential entrants were not awarded a place in the second festival, due to other artists entering a large number of productions.

At a feedback meeting after the second festival (Notule van feesvergadering..., 2002) it was suggested that artists should be limited to participating in no more than two productions per festival. This would not only make the scheduling somewhat easier but would give more artists the opportunity to perform.

3.2.8 Legal aspects

2001: The entry form for the festival specified that the participants had to read and sign the lease agreement for the use of the UP Drama theatres. This was in accordance with the policy of the University of Pretoria that required every person or group that used the theatres to sign the agreement.

Since the lease agreement was quite a lengthy document it was impractical to print out a vast number of documents for each participant to sign. There were a few copies of the agreement in the festival office for entrants to read. There was also a section inserted into the entry form that the entrants had to sign, committing themselves to the regulations of this agreement.

2002: For this festival the Legal Services department of the University of Pretoria was contacted to assist in adapting the lease agreement so that it would specifically suit the needs of the festival. A section was again inserted into the entry form that the entrants had to sign, committing themselves to the regulations of the lease agreement. A separate one-page contract was also drawn up by the Legal Services department for the entrants to sign. In this contract they also committed themselves to the regulations of the lease agreement.

During this year, pyrotechnics laws were changed radically, prohibiting people from smoking on the stage of a theatre. There were some texts that required the smoking of cigarettes and the Legal Services department was again contacted for advice. The legal advisor assisted in drawing up a separate contract in which certain participants were given permission to smoke cigarettes on the stage of the theatre, when and if it was necessary. According to the legal advisor, the law prohibiting the smoking of cigarettes in public places, such as theatres, would not only take away the artists' creative freedom, but would also result in certain texts becoming unusable. The health of the audience members still had to be considered and therefore it had to be indicated in the programme, for the benefit of theatregoers, in which productions cigarettes would be smoked.

Because the law regarding smoking on stage seemed to have taken away some of the artists' creative freedom (in the sense that anything didn't go anymore) some of the participants in the festival took advantage of this special allowance. Some of the productions presented at the festival called for actors smoking on stage, even when it wasn't really cardinal to the development of the characters and the plot. These artists seemed to have wanted to prove a point, since smoking was largely avoided in departmental productions presented during the rest of the year. This, however, was not the norm and in the majority of the festival productions that called for actors smoking on stage,

it was justified and necessary for the development of the characters and the plot.

Another pyrotechnic law that caused some challenges at this festival was the prohibition of the use of open flames and fireworks on the stage of a theatre. The problem in this regard was caused greatly due to the fact that participants did not read through the lease agreement thoroughly. Many of the participants only scanned through the lease agreement and signed it without fully understanding the regulations thereof. One group of entrants, who had presumably not read through the lease agreement thoroughly, used a firecracker in their production. They were reprimanded and fined.

3.2.9 Sponsorships

2001: The planning for the festival started too late in the year to seek sponsorships. There was not enough time to seek for and negotiate with potential sponsors, to aid with the finances of the festival. A section of the departmental budget was put aside to use for the festival. This money was mostly used for printing posters, flyers and other marketing material. (See the section on marketing – 3.2.10 – for more detail.)

The printers that printed the posters and flyers did offer a form of sponsorship by giving a discounted price. This was done in exchange for printing their logo and contact details on the posters and flyers. As a result of this sponsorship more posters and flyers could be printed than the budget originally allowed.

2002: This year again no sponsorships in the form of financial donations were made. The marketing material was again paid for by the departmental budget. This year, however, other printers were used. These printers did not want to sponsor the festival by giving a discounted price, but still insisted on printing their logo and contact details on the posters.

A local radio station, which had received the press release of the festival via e-mail, contacted the festival organiser and offered to sponsor the festival with airtime. (See the section on marketing – 3.2.10 – for more detail.) This was done in exchange for printing their logo on the posters and flyers and displaying their posters and other marketing material at the festival. In return they aired radio advertisements of the festival on their station. Both the festival and the radio station benefited from this arrangement. The festival direction could do more intensive marketing for the event and could save on the marketing budget, while the radio station could have their material viewed and recognised by a large number of potential listeners.

Before any sponsorship could be sought, the administration of the University of Pretoria had to be contacted and permission had to be granted. This was because the university has a strict policy on sponsorships for a specific department or event due to the large sponsorships that they already receive annually from corporate sponsors for various causes and events. It is the policy of the university that smaller departments may not approach sponsors that already sponsor the university for their own events.

3.2.10 Marketing and publicity

2001: The marketing budget for the festival was very small. The entry fees received from the participants were used for this purpose. Since there were not many productions that had entered, elaborate marketing material was out of the question.

The drama department appointed four volunteer students to help with the designing of posters and flyers. These students had regular meetings to work on the designs. These meetings took place in their free time, so that these duties did not interfere with other academic responsibilities, such as classes, tests and the handing in of assignments. Even though the festival and

participation therein was considered a part of the students' training, it was not incorporated into the curriculum and viewed as an extra and optional opportunity for training. Eventually it was decided that four different posters would be printed to add some variety to the festival. These were A1 size and were done in black and white, so that they could be photocopied.

The four different posters were also printed in A5 size and handed out as flyers. The students of the drama department were asked to help with the handing out of flyers. This was done because the festival was organised especially to present the drama students with an extra opportunity to perform and to produce their own productions. The festival direction and staff members of the Department Drama were of the opinion that the students had a responsibility to assist in the marketing of the festival and to ensure its success. Each student was given as many flyers as he or she thought they could distribute.

These posters and flyers were designed to market the festival itself. Information on the posters and flyers included contact details of the festival organiser, the dates of the festival, ticket prices and the venues (UP Drama theatres). Each artist or group of artists was responsible for marketing their own production and had to carry those costs themselves.

The artists were told that they could give a certain amount of posters and flyers to the festival staff to be distributed around the drama department and the theatres. The posters that were distributed around the rest of the campus (festival and production posters) had to display stickers bought from the university, indicating that they had been given permission to put up the posters.

Press releases were sent out to the local radio stations, magazines and newspapers. These media agents then advertised the festival whenever it was possible for them to do so.

Because there was very little time in which to plan and organise the festival, the marketing was not very effective. Many of the participants stated in the feedback questionnaires (Feedback questionnaires 1-24, 2001) that the marketing campaign for the festival could have been better and should have started earlier. (See section 3.4.4 on feedback for more information.) More than half of the participants who filled in and returned the questionnaires stated that the marketing of the festival itself was one of its greatest shortfalls. In a feedback meeting on the first festival (First evaluation of..., 2001) the staff and students of the UP Department Drama agreed that “Publicity and marketing was one of the major weaknesses.”

2002: Since planning for the second festival started earlier in the year than for first festival, the festival direction had more time and could do more intensive marketing. This year two students from the Graphic Design department of the university were asked to design the posters and flyers. They were not paid for their services, but used the material for their assignments and were each given a complimentary pass to the festival.

After the success of the first festival, it was decided that the drama department would allow a slightly bigger budget for the second festival. This made it possible to print more expensive posters. The posters for the second festival were not only black and white copies, as they were the first year, but they were printed in colour. These posters were more interesting and the colour drew more attention than the black and white. Proofs of the posters were put up in the drama department and the students could vote which poster they liked best. This was done in an attempt to involve the drama students with the festival on more than one level.

The design of the poster was again used for the flyers. These, however, were black and white and were photocopied. This allowed the festival direction to copy more flyers, if they were needed, when the first batch was distributed. The drama students were again asked to help with the distribution of the flyers.

The festival direction again only marketed the festival itself and participants were responsible for the marketing of their individual productions. Posters and flyers of these productions were distributed around the drama department and the theatres by the festival direction and students. Other posters had to be distributed by the artists themselves and had to display stickers that indicated permission from the university to put up posters.

Press releases were again sent to the major local radio stations and newspapers. These media agents advertised the festival whenever it was possible for them. One of the major newspapers in the Pretoria printed the press releases regularly and also printed some of the production photographs sent to them. This was very successful and the photographs drew many people's attention. When people phoned the production office to enquire about the festival they said they had learnt about the festival from the newspaper and that they were particularly interested in the production of which the photograph was published.

One of the radio stations, Radio Rippel, that received the press release contacted the festival office and offered to act as a sponsor for the festival. The station aired radio advertisements of the festival in exchange for their logo and details to be printed on the posters and other advertising material. These advertisements were recorded by the drama students as part of their training and evaluated for marks. The station also displayed some of their own posters and advertising material at the festival.

This working relationship between the festival and the radio station was not only effective as a marketing tool for the festival but for the station as well. The festival direction could save some money on their marketing campaign and the radio station could have their logo and marketing material displayed where it could be seen and recognised by potential listeners.

Another radio station, Impact Radio, also contacted the festival office and scheduled an interview with the festival organiser. Questions were asked about the festival and the productions. This was an effective marketing tool, since the festival organiser could give information to the listeners that did not appear in the press releases.

The radio station on campus, Tuks FM, contacted the festival organiser for an interview. Here again more information could be given to the listeners, especially the students. One of the disc jockeys at the station in charge of cultural events and the arts, advertised the festival regularly and also gave reviews of some of the productions while the festival was running. (See section 3.3.10 on reviews for more detail.)

Another effective marketing tool that was employed for the second festival was to involve the hostels on campus. The Student Representatives' culture office awarded culture points to the hostels if they bought a certain amount of tickets for the festival productions. This prompted the more competitive hostels to make block bookings, which increased the audience numbers.

Certain students, marketing their own productions, decided to take a more visual approach. The actors of one specific production, "Waar in die wêreld is Bruenanda Bosfeëtjie?" dressed up in their costumes and handed out flyers on campus. This caused the students to become curious about the production, which resulted in this production drawing large audiences.

3.2.11 Programmes

2001: After the schedules were drawn up, the programmes were compiled. The programmes were in the form of a grid, almost like a student's class schedule. The days were listed in order from left to right and the time slots were listed in chronological order from top to bottom. Each production was then listed in the square assigned to the specific day and time that it would be performed. This was a very user-friendly way of compiling the programme. It was easy to read and to select the production that one wanted to attend.

A short description of each production was also given in the programme. This made it easier for festivalgoers to decide which productions they wanted to attend and which they didn't. The information given here included the artists, director, creator, genre, language, venue, dates, times and the rating.

The ratings were classified in three categories. The first, "For everybody," meant that the production contained no material or subject matter that children had to be protected from. The second category, "May be offensive," indicated that some material or subject matter in the production might offend certain festivalgoers or children. (This would be equal to a PG 13 rating.) The last category, "Expect anything," indicated just that; that one should expect anything. Productions in this category contained material or subject matter that could be highly offensive. (This would be equal to a PG 18 rating.)

Aside from the schedules and the production description contained in the programme, one of the posters was printed in A5 size and used as a front page. This front page not only made the programme look more interesting, but also contained all the information a prospective festivalgoer would need, such as contact details, dates and venues.

2002: The programme was compiled in much the same way and the same rating system was used as the previous year. The descriptions of the productions were printed in the programme and the poster was used as a front page. Because of the new pyrotechnics laws, it was also necessary for the festival direction to indicate in the programmes whether cigarettes would be smoked on stage during the productions or not. A notice was also included reminding festivalgoers that only the artists, and not the audience members, were allowed to smoke in the theatres.

Because there was quite a large number of productions at this festival (see section 3.3.2 on the number of productions for more detail) an extra venue had to be used. This had the result that there would have been an extra schedule to print in the programme and it was decided not to print the schedules in a grid format. The schedules were, however, put up at the venues and at the drama department and handed out to everyone who wanted one. Many festivalgoers found the grids handy, as they were easy to read and to understand. Because the grids contained the dates, times and venues on one page it made the decision process easier and quicker.

3.2.12 Costumes, props and décor

2001: Students of the UP Department Drama were allowed to take out costumes and props from the wardrobe and to use décor from the workshop free of charge. This was because it is the policy of the drama department that their students may use these items free of charge for their own purposes. This helped to keep the students' production budgets for the festival low. Other participants in the festival, who wished to make use of the drama department's costumes, props and décor had to pay the normal renting fees, as prescribed by the department.

Artists who wanted to use costumes and props from the wardrobe had to make an appointment with the wardrobe mistress. This was done to ensure that the wardrobe mistress was available to assist the artists, at times that suited both parties. They could then go there at an agreed upon time, when she would be available to help them with the selection and the signing out of items.

Artists who wished to use décor and furniture belonging to the drama department had to give their specifications to the venue managers. (See section 3.2.13 for more detail about the technical teams.) The venue managers then made appointments with the workshop manager to pick out the items and to deliver them to the theatres. This arrangement was time-effective and practical, since a large amount of décor could be ordered at one time.

2002: The same policy regarding the selection of costumes, props and décor was used as the previous year. Artists had to make appointments with the wardrobe mistress and venue managers had to arrange appointments with the workshop manager to pick out items and to have them delivered.

This year, however, it was decided that the students of the drama department had to pay a deposit for the use of their costumes and props. They were also required to pay a renting fee and could no longer use the items free of charge. This was decided without the input of the festival organiser and created some problems.

The first problem was the fact that this decision had been taken mid-way though the pre-festival process. Artists had already entered their productions for the festival and had already signed their contracts. They were unaware of this new policy, since it was not indicated in the contract. The students of the drama department assumed that, since it was not indicated beforehand that the policy had changed, the same policy would be used as the previous year.

Another problem was the fact that the decision was taken without the knowledge of the festival organiser. When the students became aware of the new policy, they all went to the festival organiser with their complaints. Their main concern was the fact that this policy was not described in the contract. Because they had not been prepared for this, their production budgets had already been finalised and did not include renting fees for costumes and props. This caused some embarrassment, since the festival organiser could not explain or justify the decision.

3.2.13 Technical teams

2001: The first-year students were assigned to handle the technical tasks at the festival. This was done because it is the policy of the UP Department Drama that first-year students should do the technical tasks for departmental productions. These technical tasks were considered part of the students' training. The first-year students were divided into four teams, two assigned to each venue.

The technical teams for each venue were compiled as follows:

a.) Two students were assigned to be venue managers. These venue managers had to manage their teams and acted, for all practical purposes, as stage managers in their assigned venues. The venue managers also had to act as the link between the artists and the workshop. They had to ensure that each production received the décor and furniture that they had asked for.

The venue managers also had the task of solving problems that arose with each production. If they could not solve the problem themselves, they could report it to the festival organiser, who would then find a solution.

Overall, the venue managers had to make sure that everything ran smoothly in their venues before and during the festival. They had to make sure that all the actors and their crew members were at the theatre on time for their rehearsals and performances to start. They also had to see to it that the moving into and out of the theatres ran smoothly and that props, décor and costumes were available for rehearsals and performances. The venue managers also had to open the venues in the morning and lock them up in the evening during the time of the festival.

b.) Two students were assigned to each venue to operate the lighting equipment. They had to get the lighting specifications for each production that they were involved with, plot the lights and run the lighting board during the productions.

c.) Two students were assigned to each venue to operate the sound equipment. These students had the task of finding out the sound specifications for each production that they were involved with and of operating the sound equipment during the productions.

d.) Two students were assigned to each venue to handle the front-of-house. They had to decorate the foyers of the theatres and take care of the box-office. Each foyer manager had to fill out a report at the end of each day, to indicate the ticket sales for each production and to report any problems that arose during the day. This was done so that statistics of the festival could be drawn up and to solve any problems that might have occurred during the day in the foyer.

Each venue was assigned two teams of four members. This was done so that the teams could alternate. Each team was assigned specific productions that they were responsible for and it was only necessary for them to work when

those productions were performed. When the other productions took place, the teams were free to watch them, as part of the audience.

2002: The technical teams for this year's festival were compiled in the same way as the previous year. The only difference was that there were far more productions and a third venue had to be used. This meant that there were three technical teams of four members each for this festival instead of two.

This created quite a challenge since a large number of students were now needed to perform the technical tasks. Even though there were enough first-year students to fulfil these tasks, taking part in the festival was not compulsory to anyone. First-year students in the drama department are required to complete a certain number of technical tasks during the year and many had already reached their quota. Those who did take care of technical tasks during the festival were told that they would receive marks for these tasks, but students who had already received enough marks for other technical tasks did not all volunteer to work during the festival. This meant that many students regarded the week of the festival as a holiday and did not attend.

As a result some of the technical crew members had to stand in for others. Some students had to work double shifts. This not only meant that they could not attend as many productions as they would have liked, but also that they were quite tired at the end of the day. This affected their work negatively and, in some cases, was the cause for crew members arriving late, or not at all, at their venues.

Another challenge at the festival was the fact that some students lived far away and were not certain of their transport. Alternative arrangements were made for some students, but others seemed to be happy to have the day off rather than working at the festival.

An effective method of control was to have roll-call at the theatre every day. This had to be done early enough so that there would still be time to make alternative arrangements if it was necessary. Each member of the team had to provide his or her contact details, but not everyone's cellular phone was always switched on. This method of control was used by some of the venue managers, but not all of them thought it necessary.

3.2.14 Lighting design and rigging

2001: For this festival the first-year students in charge of lighting operation for the festival were assigned the task of designing and rigging the lights in the theatres. This was considered a part of their training, since the first-year curriculum includes an introduction to lighting design. Because these students were in their first year of training, some were able to handle the task sufficiently, but others did not have enough knowledge and experience to do this.

One of the participants in the first festival commented (Feedback questionnaire 10, 2001) that the lighting designers were not equipped to handle the task and another participant (Feedback questionnaire 11, 2001) commented that the lights were done in an amateur way. This might have been true, but when one takes part in a student theatre festival, where students are responsible for these tasks, one should make some allowances. These students were, after all, still in the process of being trained and were not professional theatre practitioners yet.

2002: For the second festival, the services of a lighting engineer were used to design and rig the lights in the theatres. This was done to ensure that the lighting design would be more professional than the previous year, and to lighten the workload of the first-year students. This put some strain on the

budget for the festival, but since it was decided on before the planning had started, preparations were made for this in advance.

Another challenge in this regard, was the fact that the sound and lighting equipment in one of the theatres that would be used for the festival was being replaced just before the festival had to begin. This job would have been completed well before the technical rehearsals were supposed to start (see section 3.2.16 for more detail) and the lighting rig would have been completed.

The engineer contracted by the department to install the new equipment, was also the engineer contracted by the festival to design and rig the lights in the theatres. This engineer and his team ran into some unforeseen difficulties whilst installing the new equipment and did not finish on the estimated date. This meant that, not only was one of the theatres not ready in time for technical rehearsals to start, but also that the lighting designs and rigs for the other theatres were not finished in time for artists to start rehearsing.

As a result some artists and lighting operators lost valuable rehearsal time because they could not plot and rehearse with their lights. Some artists lost rehearsal time due to the fact that the lights were rigged during the times that were scheduled for their rehearsals. In one case, an artist had started rehearsing (it was his only technical rehearsal), but could not finalise his lighting plot. The lighting design was only finalised the next day, halfway through the technical rehearsal schedule. This meant that he had to finalise his lighting plot on the day of his opening. Some other productions also had to re-plot their lights at a second or third technical rehearsal.

3.2.15 Sound recordings

2001: For this year's festival not many productions required sound recordings. The few productions that did need recordings, made use of the sound studio at

the drama department to do this. Artists who were not students of the department had to pay a fee for these services, set by the department. Drama students were given special rates for using the sound studio.

The manager of the sound studio also recorded a greeting that would be played before each production started. This greeting welcomed theatregoers and asked them not to make noises (such as crackling chips packets) during the production and to switch their cellular phones off.

This greeting was informal and comical. Some of the participants in this festival stated in their feedback questionnaires that the greeting was “cool” (Feedback questionnaire 1, 2001), but others were not so pleased. One participant stated, “Greetings should be a bit formal” (Feedback questionnaire 16, 2001).

2002: This year there were quite a number of productions that required the services of the sound recording studio. The same policy was employed as the previous year, regarding payment for recordings.

Because the manager of the sound studio was also a student, who had to attend classes, there were times when it was difficult to arrange a meeting time for the recordings. Some of these recordings took place after hours. This was also a problem, since the studio manager had to work more and different hours than the time that she was employed for.

For the second festival more than one greeting was recorded. Some were comical and others were serious and to the point. All the information and requests made by the department and the artists were contained in these greetings. It was now possible to choose a more formal greeting for serious productions and a comical greeting for the less serious ones. This aided in creating the correct atmosphere for each production that followed. It also

ensured that the members of the audience were in the appropriate mood before the production started.

The sound studio was also used to record the radio advertisements that would be played on the radio station that acted as marketing partner for the festival. These advertisements were worked into the module for the third year radio class and set as assignments. Students had to write the advertisements and record them. They received grades for these advertisements, which counted towards their overall marks in this subject.

3.2.16 Technical rehearsals

2001: The technical rehearsals started one week before the festival took place. Each production was assigned a certain number of technical rehearsals during that week. When this schedule was drawn up, students' class times and other artists' working hours had to be taken into consideration. This was somewhat more complicated than the actual festival schedule, since students in the drama department still had classes during this week. This meant that they had to schedule their technical rehearsals between their classes, which limited the times that they were available for rehearsals. Artists from outside the drama department received time slots according to the information given on the entry forms, regarding the times that they would not be available.

The time slots were 90 minutes each, twice as long as the maximum allowed length per production for the festival. This was done to allow the artists enough time to plot their lights and to have a full technical run in one time slot.

Some groups of artists did not require more than one technical rehearsal. Their other slots were then left open on the schedule and later assigned to productions that needed more technical rehearsal time.

2002: For the second festival the same policy was employed regarding the scheduling and time of technical rehearsals. Because there was a much larger number of productions entered for the second festival each production had less rehearsal time slots.

Because of the delay with the design and the rigging of lights (see section 3.2.14 for more detail) some of the productions also lost some rehearsal time. As a result of this, many productions felt that they had not had enough rehearsal time before the festival. Some artists also thought that the technical crews did not have enough time to rehearse, which affected the quality of their performances.

This might also have been due to the fact that many of the artists who had entered the festival were drama students who were used to having an assigned technical crew at rehearsals from the beginning. At a festival, however, especially where a large amount of productions have to be accommodated, it is not always practical or possible to have many technical rehearsals.

3.2.17 Meetings and correspondence

2001: Festival meetings were organised regularly. This was done because it was necessary for the participants and the festival staff to know what would be expected of them and what they could expect from the festival. The festival organiser, student representatives and the staff members involved with the organisation of the festival were present at these meetings. At these meetings information was given to the student representatives, which they had to convey to the members of their group. Suggestions were also made by students and staff, in order to organise a festival that could accommodate as many people as possible.

These meetings were effective ways of conveying information. It was also an effective method of exchanging ideas and assessing the level of enthusiasm. Such meetings were time consuming, but were also of great value. At times it was a challenge to schedule a meeting, especially where students were involved. Since the students had different classes at different times it was sometimes difficult to find a time that everyone was available.

Correspondence with the participants took place mainly via e-mail. All the relevant information was e-mailed to the entrants. Invitations to the opening of the festival were also e-mailed to prospective festivalgoers.

Sometimes it was necessary to speak to a participant personally. This was usually when an answer was needed immediately (such as confirmation for rehearsal times) or an answer to a question needed to be given sooner rather than later (such as the available equipment in a specific venue). In these cases the participants were phoned or they phoned the festival office. Speaking to a festival participant personally indicated that the festival organiser took an interest in the challenge and in helping the participant.

2002: The meetings were organised in the same way as the previous year. Correspondence also took place in the same way. Because there were many more participants in the second festival, corresponding with all the participants was more of a challenge for the festival organiser. For this reason, and because the festival organiser had many other tasks to take care of, much of the correspondence was done by one of the festival assistants.

These assistants were also students. They had classes to attend and other academic responsibilities to take care of. This meant that they were not always available for festival work exclusively. They did, however, fulfil their festival duties when their academic responsibilities allowed them to.

3.2.18 Refreshments

2001: For the first festival, the task of providing refreshments was assigned to the second-year students of the drama department. All arrangements were left in their hands. They had to buy the stock and organise the teams to sell it. This was done because the second-year students usually sell refreshments at departmental productions. These funds are then used to organise the farewell for the third-year students at the end of the year.

The Bok theatre was assigned for this purpose. This theatre is a small venue with no built-in seating rostra. It also does not have a raised stage or curtains. This venue used to be a classroom and when all the seats and rostra are removed it is just an empty room with a level floor area. The second-year students used tables and chairs from the workshop and set the theatre up to look like a restaurant. This venue was the general meeting place where festivalgoers and artists came together to talk and to exchange ideas.

2002: For the second festival, organising the refreshments was more of a challenge. The management of the university declared that one of the contractors on campus had to supply the refreshments. This was because they did not want any department to be in competition with these contractors.

Lengthy meetings were held with management staff. At these meetings the festival organiser and production manager were told to ask the contractors on the campus for tenders.

When a contractor was decided on to provide the refreshments, it came to the knowledge of the drama department that their liquor licence did not cover the venue where the refreshments would be sold. The contractor offered to take out a liquor licence that would cover the venue. In order to do this, the festival organiser had to drive across the city a number of times in the last few days

before the festival. Eventually, on the last working day before the festival would start, a liquor licence was awarded to the drama department for the specific venue.

The Bok theatre was again used for the purpose of selling refreshments. The second-year students decorated the venue in much the same fashion as the previous year. The second-year students also helped with the sales and, since they usually sell refreshments to raise money for the farewell, the university and the contractor decided to award them a percentage of the profit.

There were some difficulties regarding the availability of the contractors and the quality of their food and beverages. This will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.11 of this chapter. This section will discuss how these challenges affected the actual festival, as well as how these challenges were handled.

3.3 KRÊKVARIS 2001 AND 2002

In this section a critical analysis will be given of the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals. Certain aspects of these festivals will be described in terms of both years' festivals. From these discussions conclusions will be drawn and, in chapter 4, recommendations will be made to aid future festival organisers in planning and organising an effective student theatre festival.

3.3.1 Time

In this section two aspects of time will be discussed. The first is the time of year (the dates) that the festival took place. The second is the times of the day that productions were performed.

3.3.1.1 *Dates*

2001: The festival took place from the 6th to the 11th of August. This was shortly after the July holidays, which meant that many of the students had to rehearse during the holidays and could not go away from Pretoria.

The 9th of August, the Thursday of the festival, was a holiday, Women's Day. Initially it was thought to be a good idea to organise the festival in a week that included a public holiday. The thought was that many working people would then be able to attend the festival, as they did not have to go to work.

This might have been true for working people, but the public holiday meant that many students were lost as potential festivalgoers. The reason for this was the fact that the holiday was on a Thursday. As a result many departments had given the students classes off on the Friday. These students, many of them hostel dwellers, made use of the long weekend to go away and the campus was rather quiet during this time.

Another challenge was the Oppikoppi festival that was held in Pretoria for the first time that year. The Oppikoppi festival took place during the last few days of the festival and many potential festivalgoers, especially students, were lost as a result.

When the dates of the arts festival were decided upon, there were some factors that needed to be taken into consideration. The first, and probably most deciding, factor was the availability of the theatres. Since the festival was presented by an academic department of the university, the schedules of the department had to be taken into consideration. It was rather difficult to find dates that did not overlap with other productions and important events, such as tests and exams. For this reason the festival was scheduled at that time, since it was the only week that both theatres were available.

2002: The second festival took place from the 29th of July to the 3rd of August. Again this was shortly after the July holidays, which meant that many students had to rehearse during the holidays. The second festival took place a week earlier than the first festival because of the competition that the festival had experienced the previous year with other events. This meant that the artists had one week less in which they could rehearse.

The schedules of the drama department again had to be taken into consideration and the festival was organised during the only week that all the theatres were available. This time planning for departmental productions was done in advance, ensuring that the festival could take place during a week when the majority of the students were on campus and no other events were taking place.

3.3.1.2 *Time of day*

2001: The time of day at which the first production started was determined by a few factors. These were the number of productions entered for the festival (see section 3.3.2 for more detail), the number of time slots assigned to each production (see section 3.3.3 for more detail) and the time of day that the festival was estimated to end. At this festival, the first productions started at 12:30 in the afternoon and ended at 22:15 in the evening.

This schedule ensured that the working days of the festival were not too long. Artists and technical crew members had enough time to rest before the next day's productions and could arrive at the theatres refreshed and well rested.

2002: At the second festival there was a very large number of productions being presented. As a result of this the festival started much earlier in the morning. The first productions started at 9:00 in the morning. The last

productions ended at 22:30 in the evening, which was also a bit later than the previous year.

As a result of the working hours being so long, many of the students were quite tired at the end of the day. The artists and crews needed to rest before presenting a production and this was not always possible when they had to start very early in the morning after ending very late the previous night. This was the cause for a student, who had to open the theatre one morning, oversleeping. This student was contacted and reached in time for the production to begin, but the situation caused some tension.

Audience members also did not go to the theatre if it was too early in the morning. (See section 3.3.12 for more detail on attendance statistics.) A theatregoer would rather go to a later performance of a certain production, or at a time that is better suited, if a production has more than one performance.

3.3.2 Number of productions and genres

2001: At this festival there were 24 productions. The genres and amounts were as follows: Choir and ensemble 1; Performance art 1; Movement and dance 2; Drama 4; Comedy-drama 1; Comedy 3; One-acts 1; Cabaret 3; Songs and poetry 5; Marionettes 1; Mime 1 and Satire 1.

(For more detail on the attendance statistics of each genre see section 3.3.12.)

At this festival there were also three training productions that were presented and evaluated for class marks. These productions were the honours students' directing projects. One of these productions had just returned from the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown and was scheduled in the very first time slot of the week. The drama department wanted to present its biggest

production for the opening of the festival. They used the fact that the production had just returned from a successful run in Grahamstown to market both the production and the festival. (See section 3.3.6 for more detail on the opening of the festival.)

For these training productions the drama department was responsible for all the costs involved in presenting the production. These costs included the payment of royalties and marketing material. Because these productions were presented as part of the students' training the drama department also took the entire box-office income, and not only a percentage. This was because students are not paid for other departmental productions that form a part of their training.

At this festival there were a few students who were involved in more than one production. This made the scheduling task somewhat difficult.

2002: At the second festival there were 54 productions. The genres and amounts were as follows: Music 2; Movement and dance 1; Drama: 19; Black comedy 2; Comedy 9; Cabaret 9; Songs and poetry 4; Marionettes 1; Revue 1; Short film 1; Story telling 1; Children's entertainment 2 and Cocktail 2.

At this year's festival one inventive student created a new category, called a "cocktail." This was because she felt that no existing label of a genre could effectively describe the productions that she had entered. These productions were exactly what the name said, a mixture of a variety of genres. This new word that she had coined also earned her many audience members, since many people were curious as to what exactly a "cocktail" was.

(For more detail on the attendance statistics of each genre see section 3.3.12.)

At this festival again there were some training productions that were presented and evaluated for class marks. The UP Department Drama was again responsible for all costs involved with presenting these productions. There were five honours directing projects. One of these productions had again just returned from the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. It was scheduled in the first time slot of the week and presented for the opening of the festival. (See section 3.3.6 for more detail on the opening of the festival.)

There were also many students who took part in more than one production. This, as well as the large number of productions presented, made scheduling very difficult, since there were so many productions and artists that had to be accommodated.

At a feedback meeting of the second festival (Notule van feesvergadering..., 2002), it was suggested that there were too many productions for the available infrastructure to accommodate. It was also suggested that students could be restricted to taking part in no more than two productions at the festival. This would make the scheduling task much easier and would give more students and other artists the opportunity to take part in the festival. It would also put less strain on each artist if he or she did not take part in too many productions. If the artists are spread too thinly throughout the festival week and the rehearsal period, they might become very tired and this could affect their performances on stage negatively.

3.3.3 Schedules

2001: Each production could run for a maximum of 45 minutes. This was done so that students could attend a production during a free period and still be on time for the next class.

In accordance with this, the time slots were 45 minutes each. After each time slot a period of 45 minutes was allowed for the production to move out of the theatre and strike their set. This time was also used by the following production to move into the theatre and set up.

The productions were presented in two theatres, the Masker and the Lier, on the UP campus. The Masker theatre could seat roughly 200 people and the Lier could seat roughly 80 people. The smaller productions, with smaller casts and less technical requirements, were scheduled to perform in the Lier, since it was a smaller theatre. The larger productions were scheduled in the Masker theatre, because the stage was bigger and there was more technical equipment. The productions in these theatres ran simultaneously.

One of the students, who had entered a poetry and prose programme, decided that he did not want his production to be performed in one of these theatres. He was given permission to perform the production in the Bok theatre. This was a much smaller theatre, which was used by the second-year students to sell refreshments. He also decided that he did not want to charge entry fees for the production, since he was more interested in the extra opportunity to perform the production than the money he could earn with it.

Each production was assigned between 3 and 5 time slots. There were, however, some productions that decided to cancel before the festival started. (See section 3.3.4 on cancellations for more detail.) These time slots were assigned to other productions that wanted extra performances.

There were also some productions that withdrew after the schedules had been drawn up. Two productions also withdrew after they had performed once or twice, deciding not to use the other time slots assigned to them. (See section 3.3.4 on cancellations for more detail.) These time slots were crossed out on

the schedules that were put up in the venues and the theatres were empty during those times.

Because the classes at the University of Pretoria start on the half hour, there were some time slots that students could not attend, unless they had more than one free period. As a result of this the festival lost some students as potential festivalgoers.

Potential festivalgoers were also lost because the productions ran simultaneously. The productions running at the same time had to compete with each other for audience members. It also limited the festivalgoers' choices of productions, since they sometimes had to choose between certain productions.

2002: Much the same policy was adopted for the scheduling of the second festival. Productions could run a maximum of 45 minutes and each production was assigned between 3 and 5 time slots. This year again there were some productions that chose not to use as many time slots and the open slots were awarded to other productions.

For the second festival, because there were so many entered productions, three theatres had to be used, namely the Masker, the Lier and the Chapel. The Masker theatre could seat roughly 200 people, the Lier theatre could seat roughly 80 people and the Chapel theatre could seat roughly 40 people. The productions in the Lier and the Chapel ran simultaneously, since they were the smaller venues. Between these time slots, the productions in the Masker were presented.

The time slots were organised somewhat differently from the previous year, to accommodate all the entrants. A production started every 45 minutes in a different venue. This caused some difficulty, since some of the productions

started late or were too long. These productions then ended after the next one had started, which caused some productions to lose potential audience members.

This was also a challenge in the sense that theatregoers had very little time, if any, to move from one theatre to another. These theatregoers would only be on time for the next production if the previous one was shorter than 45 minutes and had ended before the next one would start. At a feedback meeting of the second festival (Notule van feesvergadering..., 2002) it was suggested by the staff and the students of the UP Department Drama that productions should not end and start at the same time. This would allow theatregoers enough time to move between the venues and be on time for the productions.

Because a production was presented every 45 minutes, this meant that a time slot could start on the hour, fifteen minutes past the hour, half past the hour or fifteen minutes to the hour. This way of scheduling also lost many students as potential audience members. As already mentioned, the classes at UP start on the half hour and this meant that students could only attend one in four productions, unless they had more than one free period.

At this festival there were also some productions that withdrew. This year, however, a clause was put into the contract, which stipulated that the artists would be penalised if they withdrew after being awarded time slots. Some productions still had to withdraw for personal reasons. In these cases the reasons were considered and exceptions were made. (See section 3.3.4 on cancellations for more detail.)

3.3.4 Cancellations

2001: At this festival there were quite a few productions that decided to withdraw. Some of these productions withdrew after entering, but before they

were awarded time slots and the schedules were drawn up. In these cases the artists lost their entry fees but were not penalised in any other way. These time slots were awarded to other productions.

One group, whose production had already been awarded three time slots, decided that they wanted to withdraw after they had been awarded time slots. When they made this decision, the festival had already started and the schedules had been drawn up. There was no time at that stage to award the time slots to other productions.

Two other productions that had already used one or two of their time slots decided halfway through the festival that they were not drawing enough audiences and decided not use their last time slots. One of these groups of artists informed the festival director of their decision. They explained that their production was quite expensive to present and that they were working at a loss. The other group did not inform anyone of their decision and just stayed away on the last night.

Since there was no contractual agreement that stipulated that artists would be penalised if they withdrew from the festival, some artists made up their own minds about this and the festival direction had very little say in the matter. The withdrawal of these last-mentioned three productions caused the festival direction some embarrassment. Since it had already been indicated on the programmes that these performances would take place, festivalgoers came to the theatres to attend the productions. These artists did not, however, make arrangements for someone to inform the theatregoers of their withdrawal and the potential audience members had to leave disappointed.

One of the most popular productions at the festival had to withdraw from their final performance because of personal reasons. These reasons were considered by the festival direction and the drama department. The technical

crew for that production were asked to inform theatregoers of the situation if they came to the theatre to see the production.

2002: At the second festival, again, there were some productions that withdrew from the festival before being awarded time slots. These time slots were awarded to other productions and it was indicated on the programmes.

This year, however, a clause had been inserted into the lease agreement stipulating that artists would be penalised if they withdrew from the festival for reasons that the festival direction did not find valid. If groups felt that they had to withdraw for personal reasons, the reasons would be considered by the festival direction. If the direction decided that the reasons were valid, these groups were not penalised, but they had to arrange for someone to explain the situation to festivalgoers arriving at the theatre to see the production.

This clause prevented many productions from withdrawing. There were, however, certain productions that withdrew from the festival for personal reasons. In these cases letters of explanation were written to the festival organiser, requesting permission to withdraw from the festival. These reasons were considered by the festival direction and arrangements were made to inform festivalgoers of the situation.

3.3.5 Ticket prices

2001: For this festival it was decided to keep all ticket prices at R5 per person per performance. This was done to encourage students, and other potential festivalgoers with small budgets, to attend as many productions as possible.

Day and week passes were also sold for this festival. A day pass was sold at R30 and allowed a festivalgoer to attend seven productions for the price of six. It was not important that the day pass would be used for all seven productions

on one day. It was more important to write down the productions that had been attended so that the pass could not exceed seven productions and also to award the box-office income to the correct productions.

A week pass was sold at R80 and allowed the festivalgoers to attend all 24 productions during the week. Since two of the productions decided not to charge entry fees, the pass allowed the holder to attend 22 productions for the price of 16.

The passes were sold to encourage people to attend as many productions as possible. This system, however, was not very effective, since the names of the productions were not always filled in and some productions lost a part of their box-office income.

Some of the productions decided not to charge admittance fees. The drama department also allowed drama students to attend the departmental productions free of charge. This is in accordance with the policy of the department, which allows drama students complimentary entrance to all departmental productions.

2002: For the second festival the tickets were again sold at R5 per person per production, in an attempt to attract large numbers of audience members. For this reason the festival had been dubbed the “Five-Rand-Festival.”

Most of the festivalgoers, when asked, said that the ticket prices were just right, since they were affordable. It also allowed them to see more productions than they usually would have the budget for. There were, however, some festivalgoers that admitted to being sceptical about the quality of the work presented when they first found out that the ticket prices would be R5.

Many of the artists also felt that R5 was too little to charge for entry to a production. Some artists felt that it was an insult and presented the image that their art was of a low standard. At the feedback meeting for the second festival (Notule van feesvergadering..., 2002) the students suggested that the ticket prices could be increased.

For the second festival it was decided not to sell passes, since the system was not very effective the previous year. It was also decided that R5 was a small enough amount to pay for seeing a production and that discounted prices were not necessary. There were also no productions allowing audiences free entrance at this festival.

The drama students were again allowed free entrance to the departmental productions. At the feedback meeting for the second festival (Notule van feesvergadering..., 2002) it was suggested that the drama department adopt a different policy regarding complimentary entrance for departmental productions during the festival. It was mentioned that R5 is a small enough amount for students to pay to attend these productions and it was suggested that the department should charge students for attending departmental productions at the festival.

It was further suggested that artists limit the amount of complimentary tickets they hand out for their productions. Handing out complimentary tickets not only limited the artists' income, but also the festival's income, since the festival took a percentage of each production's box-office income.

3.3.6 Opening

2001: For the opening of the first Krêkvars arts festival, the student production that had just returned from the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown was presented. This production was directed by one of the honours students of the

UP Department Drama and was also evaluated for marks towards this subject. The production had received many good reviews at the festival and this fact was used to market the production and the festival.

The production was presented in the first time slot of the week on Monday afternoon at 12:30. Guests from the university, as well as members of the press, were invited to attend the production. Before the production started all the guests gathered in the foyer of the theatre to enjoy something to drink and some snacks. The festival was then officially opened by the head of the drama department.

2002: For the second festival the opening production was again an honours directing project that had just returned from the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. This production had also received many good reviews. Guests from the university and members of the press were again invited to attend the opening production and to enjoy something to eat and to drink in the foyer before the festival was officially opened by the head of the drama department.

During the few months before the festival the theatre in which the production was presented was being rebuilt. New equipment was also installed, which was used for the first time during the festival. For this reason all the students of the drama department were invited to attend, not only the opening of the festival, but also the reopening of the theatre.

This year, however, the festival started much earlier in the day. The first production of the day started at 9:00 in the morning because there were so many productions and, as a result, so many time slots. For this reason not many guests from outside the department attended the opening of the festival. Many of the invited guests also told the festival organiser that they had meetings early in the morning and could therefore not attend the opening production.

3.3.7 Storage of décor

2001: The décor used for the productions had to be stored in the theatres. Décor and furniture was mostly stored in the wings of the theatres and in the dressing rooms. This created some difficulty, since the wings were partly blocked and made moving around back stage rather difficult for the actors. The dressing rooms were also quite crowded by the décor and costumes that were stored there. This limited the space that the artists had to prepare for their productions.

Entrants were asked to use minimal sets, since there was not much storage space in the theatres for costumes and décor. Not all the productions complied with this request. Some productions had large items of décor and many costumes and props, which crowded the dressing rooms and the wings of the theatres even more.

2002: The décor and costumes were again stored in the dressing rooms and the wings of the theatres. Because of the problem that was created by the amount of furniture and décor the previous year, it was decided that productions should share furniture. This created another challenge. Some of the furniture was moved between the different theatres, but was not brought back in time for the next production. This resulted in stagehands running around between the theatres trying to locate the furniture they needed to set up the stage for the next production. This wasted a lot of time and created some nervous tension. At a feedback meeting of the second Krêkvars arts festival (Notule van feesvergadering..., 2002) it was suggested that better communication should be established between the venue managers regarding the sharing of furniture.

3.3.8 Technical teams

2001: Because the technical teams consisted of first-year students, not all of them had been trained before the festival to operate the equipment. The technical crew members that had not had the opportunity to operate the equipment before were mostly trained during the week of technical rehearsals. As a result of this some of the operators were uncertain at times what they had to do.

Certain technical crew members did also not take their responsibilities as seriously as they should have. Some of them arrived late at the venues for their shifts and others did not arrive at all. These crew members were reprimanded but not all of them took the warnings seriously and did not change their behaviour. This caused some nervous moments for the artists and the venue managers.

There were, however, certain crew members that took their responsibilities very seriously and even took care of extra shifts, when others did not fulfil their tasks sufficiently. These crew members were always thanked for their hard work and dedication.

2002: Again the technical crews consisted of first-year students of whom some were uncertain about what they had to do. There were also, again, some who did not fulfil their responsibilities sufficiently, but others who did and took care of the extra shifts.

At feedback meetings for both the festivals (First evaluation of..., 2001 & Notule van feesvergadering..., 2002) the students and staff praised the technical crew members that had taken their responsibilities seriously and fulfilled their tasks sufficiently. It was said that they had done a good job under difficult circumstances.

It was suggested that the technical crews should be in place a month before the festival starts and that their training should start much earlier. In the case of the second festival this was not possible, since the renovations to the Masker theatre and the installation of new equipment were only completed a few days before the festival started. Such an arrangement is not always possible, since the students who have to take care of the technical tasks at a festival still have classes and other academic responsibilities to take care of in the time before the festival.

3.3.9 Cleaning up in and around venues

2001: The theatre staff that usually take care of cleaning up in and around the theatres were asked to fulfil this task during the festival as well. Since there were now many more productions than the rest of the year there was also much more cleaning up to do. This frustrated the theatre staff, since some of them were not willing to take care of more tasks than they had to during the rest of the year.

The second-year students were asked to clean up around the Bok theatre, since it was their venue for selling refreshments. The stagehands were asked to make sure that the theatres were clean and neat and the foyer managers were asked to see to it that the foyers were tidy. This took some of the responsibility away from the theatre staff, but added to the tasks of the technical crews.

On the last day of the festival the person in charge of opening and cleaning the Bok theatre arrived very late. The theatre was not clean and the surrounding area was very untidy. The festival organiser, the production manager and some volunteers had to open the venue and clean it. This created an uneasy atmosphere, since the staff assigned to manage and

maintain the venue had neglected their responsibilities and others, who had different responsibilities, had to take care of it.

2002: This year the technical crews were asked from the beginning of the festival to make sure that it was clean and tidy in and around the venues. The stagehands were asked to make sure that the theatres and dressing rooms were tidy, the foyer managers were asked to keep the foyers neat and the second-year students were asked to clean up in and around the Bok theatre. The task of the venue managers was to check that all these places were clean and tidy and to help out if the other crew members were busy with tasks concerning the productions.

The stagehands were asked to sweep and, if it was necessary, wash the stage floors at the beginning of the day and after productions had moved out of the theatre. The students were asked to take care of cleaning in and around the theatres because the festival started quite early in the morning. The theatre staff that usually took care of this task would not have enough time to clean all three venues before the first productions moved into the theatres.

3.3.10 Feedback and reviews

2001: At this festival no feedback or reviews were given in the press about the festival. Some of the honours students did, however, write reviews about certain productions. These reviews were handed in as assignments but they were never published. Interested people could ask to see and read these reviews, but very few people knew that they had been written and thus did not read them.

2002: For the second festival some honours students again wrote reviews for class marks. These were not made public, since not many people knew that they had been written.

A correspondent from the university radio station gave feedback about some of the productions that he had seen. It was an effective marketing tool, since he recommended certain productions on the air. The good reviews motivated some listeners to attend certain productions, but the less favourable reviews discouraged them from attending other productions.

3.3.11 Refreshments and open microphone

2001: The second-year students were in charge of selling refreshments at the festival. They were assigned the Bok theatre for this purpose. It was decided that prices would be kept low, in order to accommodate students and other festivalgoers that only had access to limited funds.

The students had to work in teams to attend to the sales, but not everyone took sufficient care of their shifts. On the last day of the festival the person in charge of the sales arrived very late at the venue. There were no refreshments or food available until later in the day. This caused some potential customers to buy food and refreshments at other places and also cost some productions potential audience members.

In the evenings it was arranged that there would be a microphone and a sound system in the venue. Music was played and people could go to the venue to socialise and dance. Some festivalgoers also made use of the microphone and presented their own miniature productions, to great amusement of the audience.

2002: For the second festival one of the contractors on campus took care of the refreshments. This was not so successful, since they were only available to sell refreshments and food until about 16:00 in the afternoon. This caused many potential customers to find food and refreshments elsewhere and much income was lost in this way.

At a feedback meeting of the second festival (Notule van feesvergadering..., 2002) the students and staff of the UP Department Drama remarked that the food supplied by the contractor was very expensive and of low quality. It was also mentioned that there was nothing to eat or to drink in the Bok theatre during the evenings or on Saturday. Because of this, potential customers, audience members and income were lost.

There was again a sound system and an open microphone in the venue. Many festivalgoers gathered here, especially in the evenings, to socialise. This was organised by the second-year students and they had to tend to the equipment and the events.

The open microphone was an effective tool that drew many people to the festival. The people who gathered in the venue enjoyed talking to others and being entertained by impromptu performances. The relaxed atmosphere of the venue created a positive feeling about the festival and people enjoyed themselves, the food and refreshments and the extra entertainment.

3.3.12 Attendance statistics

In this section of the chapter the attendance statistics of the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals will be discussed. The section will be divided into three subsections. In the first two subsections the attendance statistics for the individual theatres will be discussed for both years. Section 3.3.12.1 will thus contain the attendance statistics for the 2001 festival and section 3.3.12.2 will contain the attendance statistics for the 2002 festival. The statistics will be discussed in terms of attendance per day, attendance per time slot and attendance per genre. In the third subsection, 3.3.12.3, the statistics for these two festivals will be compared and conclusions will be drawn.

The attendance statistics only describe the numbers of paying audience members that watched the productions. There are two reasons for this. The first reason is that it was very difficult to record the amount of complimentary tickets issued for each production. Since students of the drama department were allowed to watch the departmental productions free of charge they did not book seats for the performances. Many of the students also went into the auditorium without reporting to the foyer personnel, since they did not need to pay for their tickets.

The second reason is that many of the students who presented productions at the festival allowed their friends and family to watch their productions free of charge. This was done because the artists felt that, since many of their friends were students and had limited budgets, they would rather let them watch the productions free of charge than not at all. The statistics were thus drawn up based on paying audience members, since it was believed that many students, and other audience members, would not have attended the productions if they did not have complimentary tickets.

Information for the tables outlining the attendance statistics was taken from the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars programmes and attendance statistics drawn up by the festival organiser. The names of the productions were substituted with letters of the alphabet, to protect the identities of the artists. The letters “AM1,” for example, indicates that mention is made of Production **A**, which was presented in the **M**asker theatre at the 2001 Krêkvars arts festival. The genre of the specific production is also indicated.

These statistics only indicate the numbers of paying audience members. Complimentary tickets were not taken into consideration. For this reason, some productions might have a “0” indicating the attendance for that time slot, even though it did have an audience. This would mean that the audience

University of Pretoria etd – Le Grange, R (2003)

members for this specific production did not pay admittance fees and were in possession of complimentary tickets.

The time slots that are left open indicate that the productions had withdrawn from the festival or that certain time slots were cancelled.

3.3.12.1 Attendance statistics for 2001

Table 3a: Masker Theatre Attendance 2001

Information for this chart was taken from the 2001 Krêkvars programme and Le Grange, 2001a.

Time	Mon 6/8/01	Tue 7/8/01	Wed 8/8/01	Thu 9/8/01	Fri 10/8/01	Sat 11/8/01	Total
12:30	JM1 Cabaret 14	BM1 Drama 12		AM1 Choir & Ensemble 23	BM1 Drama 6	JM1 Cabaret 15	70
14:00	CM1 Comedy 26	GM1 One-acts 56	IM1 Comedy- drama 21	BM1 Drama 11	HM1 Movement & dance 8	KM1 Cabaret 28	150
15:30	BM1 Drama 21	HM1 Movement & dance 24	EM1 Perform- ance art 11	JM1 Cabaret 24	IM1 Comedy- drama 11	HM1 Movement & dance 27	118
17:00	GM1 One-acts 18	EM1 Perform- ance art 22	AM1 Choir & Ensemble 12	HM1 Movement & dance 11	EM1 Perform- ance art 9	BM1 Drama 14	86
18:30	HM1 Movement & dance 20	AM1 Choir & Ensemble 7	GM1 One-acts 52	FM1 Movement & dance 45	FM1 Movement & dance 20		144
20:00	AM1 Choir & Ensemble 8	CM1 Comedy 91	DM1 Songs & poetry (Charity Show) 0	IM1 Comedy- drama 16	JM1 Cabaret 29	EM1 Perform- ance art 25	169
21:30	KM1 Cabaret 52	DM1 Songs & poetry (Charity show) 0	JM1 Cabaret 39			DM1 Songs & poetry (Charity show) 0	91
Total	159	212	135	130	83	109	828

Table 3b: Lier Theatre Attendance 2001

Information for this chart was taken from the 2001 Krêkvars programme and Le Grange, 2001b.

Time	Mon 6/8/01	Tue 7/8/01	Wed 8/8/01	Thu 9/8/01	Fri 10/8/01	Sat 11/8/01	Total
12:30	FL1 Comedy 11	CL1 Mime 57	AL1 Drama 47	BL1 Mario- nettes 12	JL1 Songs & poetry 31	EL1 Drama 15	173
14:00	BL1 Mario- nettes 5	BL1 Mario- nettes 0	CL1 Mime 17	IL1 Comedy 17	FL1 Comedy 21	JL1 Songs & poetry 50	110
15:30	AL1 Drama 20	GL1 Songs & poetry 25	FL1 Comedy 64	CL1 Mime 42	BL1 Mario- nettes 9	GL1 Songs & poetry 12	172
17:00	JL1 Songs & poetry 25	AL1 Drama 12	EL1 Drama 19	FL1 Comedy 26	GL1 Songs & poetry 4	IL1 Comedy 21	107
18:30	CL1 Mime 17	IL1 Comedy 15	BL1 Mario- nettes 1		EL1 Drama 10		43
20:00	EL1 Drama 19	JL1 Songs & poetry 42	IL1 Comedy 30	GL1 Songs & poetry 29		AL1 Drama 43	163
21:30	HL1 Cabaret 11			DL1 Songs & poetry (Charity show) 0	DL1 Songs & poetry (Charity show) 0		11
Total	108	151	178	126	75	141	779

During the 2001 Krêkvars arts festival the average attendance numbers per performance were the highest on the Tuesday and the lowest on the Friday. The attendance numbers were also higher during the first three days of the festival than they were during the last three days. A possible reason for this could be the fact that the Thursday was a public holiday, which meant that not many students were on campus that day. Many of the students could also have decided to take the Friday off as well and go away for the long weekend. As a result of this the festival lost many potential audience members due to the large number of students who went away.

The most popular time slot during the 2001 Krêkvars arts festival, according to the average attendance per performance, was the 20:00 slot and the least popular time slot was the 17:00 slot. The average attendance numbers per performance were also higher during the last three time slots than they were during the first four time slots. A reason for this might be that the audience members who were students might still have had classes during the morning and the afternoon and could only attend the productions during the evening. Other audience members, who were not students, could also probably only attend productions during the evenings, since they still had to work during the day.

The genre that had the highest attendance numbers per performance during the 2001 Krêkvars arts festival was One-acts, closely followed by Comedy. The genre with the lowest attendance numbers was Marionettes. There are many factors that could have influenced these numbers. The first factor could be the size of the theatre in which the productions were presented. Since the Masker theatre could accommodate a much larger audience than the Lier theatre, larger attendance numbers could be expected in the Masker.

Another factor that could have influenced the attendance numbers is the types of productions that were presented. Certain types of productions are more

popular than others, especially if a festival wishes to draw a large number of students as potential audience members. Students would, for example, be more likely to attend productions of which the content is aimed at adults, rather than those aimed at children.

Certain audience members might also decide to attend a production if their friends or others that had already seen it recommend it to them. By the same token these potential audience members might decide not to attend a production if others recommend them not to because of the quality or the content thereof.

A production might also be unable to draw large audiences if the artists did not do sufficient or effective marketing. If potential audiences are not aware of the production, or feel that the content might not be interesting, they might decide not to attend the production. Artists should also plan their advertising campaigns in such a way that they reach their target audiences. It would, for example, not be effective to advertise a production aimed at young children at a social venue where people in their twenties get together.

3.3.12.2 Attendance statistics for 2002

Table 3c: Masker Theatre Attendance 2002

Information for this chart was taken from the 2002 Krêkvars programme and Le Grange, 2002a.

Time	Mon 29/7/02	Tue 30/7/02	Wed 31/7/02	Thu 1/8/02	Fri 2/8/02	Sat 3/8/02	Total
9:00	AM2 Black comedy (Opening) 45	CM2 Children's entertain- ment 45	LM2 Music 22	IM2 Drama 7	RM2 Cabaret 7	GM2 Drama 25	106
10:30		IM2 Drama 3		CM2 Children's entertain- ment 0	PM2 Drama 20	DM2 Children's entertain- ment 4	27
12:00	BM2 Comedy 9		FM2 Movement & dance 28	PM2 Drama 13	AM2 Black comedy 40	CM2 Children's entertain- ment 10	100
13:30	CM2 Children's entertain- ment 2	JM2 Music 48		QM2 Cabaret 57		AM2 Black comedy 93	200
15:00	DM2 Children's entertain- ment 4	EM2 Comedy 60	MM2 Revue 27	DM2 Children's entertain- ment 4	TM2 Cabaret 17	KM2 Drama 0	112
16:30	EM2 Comedy 25		AM2 Black comedy 32	RM2 Cabaret 9	FM2 Movement & dance 15	MM2 Revue 103	184
18:00	FM2 Movement & dance 23		NM2 Comedy 170	KM2 Drama 2	GM2 Drama 28	PM2 Drama 49	272
19:30	GM2 Drama 15	KM2 Drama 14	OM2 Drama 39	NM2 Comedy 130	IM2 Drama 84	RM2 Cabaret 22	304
21:00	HM2 Cabaret 38	AM2 Black comedy 90	EM2 Comedy 120	SM2 Cabaret 45	OM2 Drama 23	TM2 Cabaret 22	338
Total	116	260	438	267	234	328	1643

Table 3d: Lier Theatre Attendance 2002

Information for this chart was taken from the 2002 Krêkvars programme and Le Grange, 2002b.

Time	Mon 29/7/02	Tue 30/7/02	Wed 31/7/02	Thu 1/8/02	Fri 2/8/02	Sat 3/8/02	Total
9:45	AL2 Drama 2	JL2 Drama 4	OL2 Comedy 25	OL2 Comedy 8	GL2 Drama 7	ML2 Drama 8	54
11:15	BL2 Drama 2	HL2 Drama 12	EL2 Drama 10	QL2 Drama 42	AL2 Drama 20	HL2 Drama 60	146
12:45	CL2 Drama 10	KL2 Drama 6	GL2 Drama 9	FL2 Drama 51	CL2 Drama 22	BL2 Drama 19	117
14:15	DL2 Comedy 17	DL2 Comedy 47	PL2 Comedy 30	GL2 Drama 18	EL2 Drama 31	PL2 Comedy 67	210
15:45	EL2 Drama 9	LL2 Cabaret 12	JL2 Drama 12	LL2 Cabaret 7	QL2 Drama 65	OL2 Comedy 40	145
17:15	FL2 Drama 8	ML2 Drama 11	LL2 Cabaret 22	PL2 Comedy 33	ML2 Drama 20	QL2 Drama 36	130
18:45	GL2 Drama 20	AL2 Drama 10	BL2 Drama 12	NL2 Comedy 23	OL2 Comedy 35	KL2 Drama 6	106
20:15	HL2 Drama 27	FL2 Drama 55	NL2 Comedy 31	ML2 Drama 27	JL2 Drama 32	CL2 Drama 36	208
21:45	IL2 Comedy 37	NL2 Comedy 13		KL2 Drama 9	KL2 Drama 16	DL2 Comedy 44	119
Total	132	170	151	218	248	316	1235

Table 3e: Chapel Theatre Attendance 2002

Information for this chart was taken from the 2002 Krêkvars programme and Le Grange, 2002c.

Time	Mon 29/7/02	Tue 30/7/02	Wed 31/7/02	Thu 1/8/02	Fri 2/8/02	Sat 3/8/02	Total
9:45	AC2 Drama 6	IC2 Cabaret 11	AC2 Drama 4	EC2 Drama 4	JC2 Story telling 3	GC2 Mario- nettes 13	41
11:15	BC2 Songs & poetry 7	JC2 Story telling 2	JC2 Story telling 4	MC2 Comedy 1	DC2 Cocktail 5	OC2 Cabaret 16	35
12:45	CC2 Cocktail 7	AC2 Drama 10	EC2 Drama 2	JC2 Story telling 5	CC2 Cocktail 3	DC2 Cocktail 18	45
14:15	MC2 Comedy 7	CC2 Cocktail 3	KC2 Songs & poetry 9	BC2 Songs & poetry 8	OC2 Cabaret 15	MC2 Comedy 7	49
15:45	DC2 Cocktail 14	KC2 Songs & poetry 11	IC2 Cabaret 22	KC2 Songs & poetry 22	NC2 Songs & poetry 7	KC2 Songs & poetry 24	100
17:15	EC2 Drama 0	LC2 Cabaret 11	MC2 Comedy 2	NC2 Songs & poetry 3	IC2 Cabaret 19	AC2 Drama 30	65
18:45	FC2 Short film 13	GC2 Mario- nettes 8	HC2 Songs & poetry 22	OC2 Cabaret 31	BC2 Songs & poetry 17	LC2 Cabaret 16	107
20:15	GC2 Mario- nettes 4	MC2 Comedy 6	CC2 Cocktail 6	DC2 Cocktail 13	HC2 Songs & poetry 13	FC2 Short film 12	54
21:45	H2 Songs & poetry 5	FC2 Short film 5	NC2 Songs & poetry 2		EC2 Drama 8	CC2 Cocktail 5	25
Total	63	67	73	87	90	141	521

During the 2002 Krêkvars arts festival the average attendance numbers per performance were the highest on the Saturday and the lowest on the Monday. The attendance numbers were also higher during the last three days of the festival than they were during the first three days. A possible reason for this could be that potential audience members only became aware of the festival during the last part of the week. These potential audience members could also have decided to attend the festival after certain productions had been recommended to them by others who had attended the festival earlier in the week.

The most popular time slots during the 2002 Krêkvars arts festival, according to the average attendance per performance, were those after 18:00 in the evening. A reason for this might be that the audience members who were students might still have had classes during the mornings and the afternoons and could only attend the productions during the evenings. Other audience members, who were not students, could also probably only attend productions during the evenings, since they still had to work during the day.

The genre that had the highest attendance numbers per performance during the 2002 Krêkvars arts festival was Revue, closely followed by Black Comedy, and the genre with the lowest attendance numbers was Story Telling. Again there are many factors that could have influenced these numbers, such as the size of the theatre in which the productions were presented, the types of productions, the quality of the productions and the marketing done for each production.

3.3.12.3 *Comparison and conclusions*

Even though the total attendance numbers for the second Krêkvars arts festival were more than double those for the first festival, the number of productions and the total amount of performances were also more than

double. Also, at the second festival three theatres were used, where at the first festival only two theatres were used.

As a result of these factors the average attendance numbers, both per production and per performance, were lower during the second festival. This means that, even though the second Krêkvars arts festival drew more festivalgoers than the first, because of the larger number of productions these festivalgoers were more thinly spread between all the productions and performances.

A possible reason for the decline in the average attendance numbers could be that, since there were so many productions, festivalgoers had to choose between certain shows. Since many of the festivalgoers were students their budgets or their time might also not have allowed them to attend more productions.

3.3.13 Income statistics

In this section the box-office income of the productions taking part in the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals will be discussed. The average income per production for each festival will be discussed and mention will be made briefly of the highest and lowest earning productions.

3.3.13.1 Income statistics

2001: During the week of the first Krêkvars arts festival the artists earned an average of R319 per production. The total box-office income of the artists was R4 785.01 and it was shared by 15 productions. Twenty-four productions were entered for the festival, but two of them withdrew before the festival started. There were also four departmental productions and three productions that did

not charge entry fees. For these productions the artists did not earn any money.

The production that totalled the largest box-office income earned R550 in four performances. The artist that presented this production did extensive and effective marketing and advertising, which resulted in the production drawing large audiences.

The production with the lowest box-office income earned R40, 13. This was earned in one performance, as the production withdrew from the festival early in the week. Another production earned R101, 63 in five performances, averaging R20, 33 per production. The artists that presented this production did not do much advertising and marketing, which resulted in the production being unable to draw large audiences.

2002: During this festival the artists earned an average of R238, 11 per production. The total income earned by the artists was R11 191, 25, which was shared by 47 productions. There were 52 productions presented at the festival, of which five were departmental productions that did not award the artists a section of the box-office income.

The top-earning production grossed R1 125 in only two performances. This group of artists did extensive marketing and advertising for their production before and during the festival. This resulted in them drawing large audiences and earning a large box-office income.

The production that earned the lowest box-office grossed only R33, 75. This was earned in one performance and the production had to withdraw thereafter for personal reasons. Two other productions earned R45 each during the festival in three performances. That is an average of R15 per performance. These productions did not do much advertising and marketing for their

productions, which resulted in the productions drawing only small audiences and not earning large box-office incomes.

3.3.13.2 *Comparison and conclusions*

Even though the total box-office earnings for the second festival was more than double that of the first festival, artists earned smaller box-office incomes on average during the second festival. There are many factors that could have influenced this. The first and most noticeable aspect was the amount and type of marketing that was done. Productions that did extensive marketing tended to fare better at the box-office than those that didn't.

Another factor that could have influenced the decline in box-office earnings is the large number of productions that were presented at the second festival. Since there were so many productions to choose from, potential audience members might have been forced to choose between productions that they wanted to attend.

The money that the artists earned at the festival was not a large amount. These small amounts, however, inspired artists to work hard to ensure that their productions were successful. Since the majority of the participants were students who only had part-time jobs, or no jobs at all, the money that they earned at the festival served as an extra income, which could aid in making their lives a little bit more comfortable.

3.4 POST-FESTIVAL

In this section the periods after the festivals will be critically discussed. From these discussions conclusions will be drawn and, in chapter 4 recommendations will be made to assist future festival organisers in organising and planning student theatre festivals.

3.4.1 Clean up and strike

2001: After the festival had ended the lights had to be taken down from the grids in the theatres and all the equipment had to be put back into their places of storage. This responsibility was assigned to the theatre staff and the striking process began on the first Monday after the festival.

The theatre staff were also asked to clean up the theatres and the premises. The stages and the dressing rooms were cleaned and all the garbage around the theatres was taken away by the staff.

2002: After the festival had ended the equipment in the theatres that did not belong to the drama department had to be removed. Employees of the company that was contracted to design the lighting started removing their equipment on the Sunday, the day after the festival. Equipment belonging to the drama department was removed by the theatre staff on the first Monday after the festival had ended.

Theatre staff were asked to remove the garbage in and around the theatres and to clean the theatres and the dressing rooms. There were big waste bins outside the Masker theatre that had been used by a previous production. The bins were filled with garbage from the festival. Since these bins did not belong to the university but to a garbage removal company, the festival organiser had to arrange with the company to remove them.

3.4.2 Costumes and décor

2001: After the last performance of each production the cast and crew had to remove all their costumes and décor from the theatre if these did not belong to the drama department. They were asked to move them away as quickly as possible. This was done to make it easier for the venue manager and

stagehands to determine which items belonged to the department and which didn't.

Some of the productions did not respond to this request. Three productions, all entered by the same company, left their décor in both theatres for more than a month. Every time they were contacted about their items that were still in the theatres, they explained that they did not have the means to collect and transport them back to their own storage places.

This caused some problems for the drama students and staff. The theatres had to be used again for departmental productions soon after the festival had ended but their storage and movement spaces were limited by the extra décor in the wings and the dressing rooms.

Costumes and props belonging to the drama department that were used for the productions presented by drama students had to be neatly packed into containers by the directors and cast members after the last performance. These containers were stored in the dressing rooms of the theatres. The workshop staff of the drama department collected these containers on the first Monday after the festival. The décor and furniture was also collected on the first Monday and taken back to the workshop.

The students who had signed for these items had to go to these departments to sign the items back and to unpack the containers. This had to be done as soon as possible, so that the items could be used again for other productions. Some students did not take this responsibility seriously and took a long time before they unpacked their items and signed them back. This created some difficulty for the wardrobe staff and for other staff members who wanted to use these items for other productions.

2002: Because of the difficulties that were experienced the previous year with décor and costumes that were left in the theatres a clause was inserted into the contract that warned entrants in festival that they would be fined if they did not remove their items from the theatres on or before the first Monday after the festival had ended. These entrants would be charged a storage fee for every day that their items remained in the theatres. All the entrants heeded this warning and no costumes or décor were left in the theatres after the festival.

Students who had signed out items from the wardrobe again had to pack them into containers for the workshop staff to collect on the first Monday after the festival. The décor and furniture was also left in the theatres and collected on the Monday by the workshop staff.

Because of the delay the previous year with signing back items from the wardrobe and workshop, an arrangement was made by the production office that no box-office incomes would be paid out to a production until their containers were unpacked and checked. (See section 3.4.3 for more detail on the paying out of fees.) This motivated most of the students to complete the task as soon as possible, but some did not heed this warning and still took a long time before unpacking the containers.

3.4.3 Paying out of fees

2001: Artists were paid 75% of the total box-office income for their productions. The drama department kept 25% of the box-office income to cover administrative and marketing costs. On the last page of the entry form it was clearly stipulated that the box-office income for each production would be paid seven days after the last festival day. Since the festival ended on a Saturday and seven days later would again be a Saturday, the artists were asked to collect their money on the second Monday after the festival had

ended. Some of the artists collected their money on that day but others couldn't and made different arrangements.

There were also some artists who did not collect their money or make other arrangements. These artists' money was kept in the safe in the production office. Since both the festival organiser and production manager had other responsibilities to tend to within the drama department and were both quite busy, these artists were informed that they would have to make an appointment to collect their money at a time that suited the festival organiser and the production manager.

2002: For the second festival the same percentage of the box-office income was paid to the artists. They were again told to collect their money seven days after the last festival day, but again many artists did not collect their money on the given date and had to arrange an alternative time that suited the festival organiser and the production manager.

At a feedback meeting after the second festival (Notule van feesvergadering..., 2002) it was suggested that artists should be penalised if they do not comply with the arrangements regarding the paying out of box-office income stipulated in the lease agreement. A suggestion was made that artists should lose a percentage of their income if they do not collect it on the given date or make alternative arrangements in advance.

3.4.4 Feedback

2001: After the festival had ended all the venue managers were asked to write reports evaluating their technical crews. This was done so that the festival organiser could identify the strong and weak points of the technical work and teams for the week. These reports could also guide the festival organiser to improve certain aspects when organising the next festival.

Artists that took part in the festival were also given feedback questionnaires. These questionnaires contained questions about the technical aspects of the festival, scheduling, refreshments, cleaning up of the theatres and the premises, fees paid by the artists and ticket prices. These questionnaires helped the festival organiser to determine the strong and weak points of the festival and were used as references when the second festival was planned and organised.

A feedback meeting was held after the festival to further determine the strong and weak points of the festival. The staff members of the drama department and the student representatives were invited to this meeting to give their opinions and to make suggestions to improve the festival in following years. This was done so that everyone in the drama department was involved in the process and could feel that they had a part in the planning and shaping of the festival.

2002: The venue managers were again asked to write reports on their technical crews. This year, however, questionnaires were not handed out to the participants. Many participants were rather asked for their opinions during the festival or when they collected their box-office incomes.

A feedback meeting was again held by the staff and students of the drama department. Everyone had the opportunity to air their views on and opinions of the festival at this meeting. Many suggestions were also made to help improve the festival in following years.

3.4.5 Suggestions

During the feedback meetings after both festivals many suggestions were made by students and staff to improve the event in years to come. Most of

these suggestions have already been mentioned in the previous sections. The following are a few suggestions that have not been mentioned yet.

It was suggested that more staff of the drama department take part in the festival. The students felt that it is important for everyone in the department to be involved in the festival in one way or another. Students also enjoy seeing their lecturers on stage, doing what they are teaching their students to do.

It was also suggested that an established artist should be invited to take part in the festival. This would attract more potential festivalgoers to the venues and could result in other productions having bigger audiences.

To prevent productions from running longer than the time allocated to them, it was suggested that a production should move into the theatre at least 30 minutes before their performance should start. This will prevent them from taking too much time setting up their stage and preparing for the performance.

Another suggestion was that music bands should be allocated the last time slots of the day. This was because bands usually take a long time to set up their equipment. Because they also usually have a lot of equipment, it takes a long time to move all the equipment out of the theatre after the performance. If they were assigned the last time slot of the day it would not matter if it took a long time to remove the equipment, since they would not be interfering with the next production moving into the theatre.

3.5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous sections certain aspects of the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals were highlighted and discussed. Some of these aspects presented more challenges than others and some could be solved more easily than others.

When planning and organising a student theatre festival it is important to carefully plan for and consider all the aspects involved. One should also be prepared that things might go wrong. Therefore it is important to have the proper infrastructure and support system to solve these problems.

The aspects discussed in this chapter and the conclusions drawn from them, will be used as a basis for the next chapter. In chapter 4 these discussions and conclusions will be used to formulate recommendations to aid future festival organisers in effectively planning and organising a student theatre festival.

CHAPTER 4

GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AND ORGANISING A STUDENT THEATRE FESTIVAL

In this chapter recommendations will be formulated to aid future festival organisers in effectively planning and organising a student theatre festival. The aspects of a student theatre festival, as discussed in chapter 3, as well as the conclusions drawn, will be used as a basis to do this.

The strong and weak points of the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars arts festivals, as discussed in the case study, will be examined. The strong points will be highlighted and suggestions will be made to improve on the weak points.

This chapter will be divided into three parts, namely pre-festival planning and organisation, the actual time of the festival and post-festival activities. In each section suggestions will be made to most effectively plan and organise a student theatre festival.

4.1 PRE-FESTIVAL PLANNING

In this section suggestions will be made regarding the planning time before the actual festival. Different aspects of the planning process will be discussed. The strong and weak points will be highlighted and suggestions will be made to avoid or effectively deal with challenges that might arise.

4.1.1 Time

In this section of the chapter three aspects of time will be discussed. These aspects are the planning time, the dates of the festival and the time of day that the festival productions start and end.

4.1.1.1 *Planning time*

Enough time should be allowed for the planning and organising of a festival. Planning for the following festival should start as soon as the festival is completed. This will allow the organiser and staff more time to plan and will prevent nervous last minute planning. It will also allow more time for important aspects, such as marketing and publicity and scheduling to be considered.

If the festival direction wishes to seek sponsorship enough time will be needed to negotiate with potential sponsors. Sponsors should have time to consider the proposal and to review all the facts, such as attendance and exposure statistics. Sponsors will not be likely to support an event if they are not sure whether they will benefit from it or not.

Students and other artists should also be aware of the festival and the dates in advance. This will allow them enough time to plan their productions and to get their texts and casts ready. If students and other artists are aware of the deadlines and closing dates, they will be more motivated and will be prepared on time.

It is advisable that the planning for a student theatre festival should already be ongoing at the beginning of the academic year. That way festival staff will have enough time to make the necessary arrangements. Students in the department will also be aware of the festival from the time they first come to the department at the beginning of the year.

4. 1.1.2 *Dates*

If the dates of an arts festival are decided upon, there are some factors that need to be taken into consideration. The first, and probably most deciding, factor is the availability of the theatres. If the festival is presented by an

academic department of a university, the schedules of that department need to be considered. It might be difficult to find dates that do not overlap with other productions and important events, such as tests and exams.

If the festival is aimed at attracting student audiences, it is also not advisable to organise it in a time that many of the students will be away from the campus, such as over a long weekend or during the holidays. The festival should rather be organised for a time that most of the students are at the university. This, again, might be a challenge, since these times are usually when the students are writing exams and do not have free time to go to the theatre.

It is also advisable not to organise such a festival at the same time as another event, which draws many student supporters. This will cause the festival to lose many prospective festivalgoers to the other event.

4.1.1.3 *Time of day*

For the benefit of the artists and the crews, it is not advisable to start a festival too early in the morning. The artists and crew members need to rest before presenting a production and this is not always possible when they have to start very early in the morning after ending very late the previous night.

Audience members also usually prefer not to go to the theatre if it is too early in the morning. A theatregoer would rather go to a later performance of a certain production, or at a time that is better suited, if a production has more than one performance.

It is also advisable for the last production of the day not to end too late. Artists and crew members need to rest before the next day's performances. An alternative method of solving this problem is to have more than one crew per theatre. The crews can then alternate. If the crews are assigned to specific

productions, instead of working only during the first or the last part of the day, it might still happen that certain crews need to take care of shifts early in the morning, after finishing late the previous night.

Audience members, specifically students, might also be tired late at night. These students' days might have started very early if they had classes to attend during the morning. Students might also prefer not to attend productions that end too late at night if they have to get up early the next morning to go to class, since they will be tired and might not be able to concentrate. The same is true for audience members who have to work during the day, especially if their work starts early in the morning. At night students might also prefer to socialise with their friends, rather than attending productions where they might be required to concentrate.

4.1.2 Organisational staff

If the festival is an annual event the planning and organisation thereof could be a permanent portfolio in the department. It is also important for the festival organiser to have sufficient backup in the form of assistants and volunteer committees, since organising and planning a festival is a large responsibility and requires a large amount of work.

Employing students to assist with the organisation and planning of a festival could be beneficial on more than one level. Students would not only be able to earn some extra money, but it would also provide them with an on-the-job-training opportunity. These students would have the opportunity to experience work in the entertainment industry while they are still studying. This is valuable training, since the students would gain first-hand experience of the industry before they actually enter it on a professional level.

It would lighten the load of the festival organiser if the responsibility were shared by others and would allow the festival organiser more time to concentrate on important aspects and decisions. It would also be beneficial if one or more assistants could man the festival office at times when the festival organiser was not available. If the office were always manned during office hours it would mean that someone is always available to answer telephone calls and questions. This would also limit the inconvenience to other staff members, who might be expected to take messages or search for the festival organiser when he or she is not available.

Before the planning of the festival starts the job descriptions and line functions in the drama department should be clearly defined. Every person contributing to the event should be certain as to what their responsibilities and duties are, regardless of their seniority in the department. If the festival is presented by a department of an academic institution the three main bodies of organisation should each be clearly informed of their duties, to ensure that they don't overlap.

These three bodies are: Departmental organisation and decision-making, production organisation and decision-making and festival organisation and decision-making. Since the festival is a departmental event presenting different theatrical productions, it is necessary that all three these bodies of organisation are involved. It should, however, be clear which responsibilities and duties belong to whom.

If the job descriptions and line functions are clearly defined, it will prevent confusion for both the organisational staff and the participants. The staff will have a clear idea of which challenges they are expected to face and which not. The participants will also know whom they should approach if problems should arise or if they have any questions.

It is also important that all three these bodies of organisation work together. If the festival is presented by a drama department of a university, it needs to present a positive image of the specific institution and the department. It is also important that the decision-makers in each of the three bodies of organisation work together when problems arise that need to be solved. It might happen that someone can present a solution for a problem that falls outside the realm of his or her responsibilities for the festival, that the person whose responsibility it is cannot solve (or cannot solve alone).

If students are appointed to assist with the organisation of the festival, their duties should also be clearly outlined. Each person should be clear on what is expected of him or her. Their duties and working hours should also be scheduled in such a way that they do not interfere with classes and other academic responsibilities.

4.1.3 Legal aspects

In this section, the legal aspects involved with organising a student theatre festival will be discussed. There are two important legal documents that should be prepared. These are the entry form and the contract or lease agreement of the theatres. Both these documents should be signed by the participants and should contain all the relevant and important information they will need to know regarding the rules and regulations of the festival.

4.1.3.1 Entry forms

An entry form for a theatre festival should be user-friendly and all the information given should be relevant and clearly explained. Entrants should be aware of all the rules and regulations of the festival. These forms should be short and provide all the information the entrants would need to plan their productions. The following information should be described in the entry forms:

4.1.3.1.1 *Limitations*

If there are any limits imposed on an entered production it should be indicated on the entry form. These limitations could include the maximum and minimum required length of the productions. Certain festivals might also require that only début texts may enter or that the productions are presented by amateur artists or students. Artists should also be made aware of the amount of time allocated to them for moving into and out of the theatres.

4.1.3.1.2 *Dates*

All relevant dates should appear on the entry form. These dates include the dates of the festival, closing dates for entries and dates on which box-office earnings will be paid.

4.1.3.1.3 *Contact details*

Artists should be given all the contact details of the festival organiser and the assistants. They should know the telephone numbers of these people, as well as where the festival office is, should they have any enquiries. The times that the festival office will be open should also be indicated.

4.1.3.1.4 *Venues*

The specifications and limitations of each venue, such as the available equipment, and the size of the stage and the auditorium, should be clearly indicated on the entry form. This will ensure that entrants request to perform in the theatres that will best suit the needs of their productions. It will also prevent entrants from making unrealistic demands on the theatre and the available equipment.

4.1.3.1.5 *Facilities*

Entrants should be made aware of the facilities offered by the department. If entrants are, for example, allowed to make use of a sound recording studio, the wardrobe or the workshop they should be aware of these facilities. The contact numbers of the people in charge of these departments should also be supplied.

4.1.3.1.6 *Décor*

Arrangements regarding the storage and transportation of décor should be mentioned on the entry form. Artists should be certain of the amount and size of décor they are allowed to use. They should also be aware of the available storage space. This will help them to plan their productions and will prevent them from requiring elaborate décor if there is not enough space in which to store it.

4.1.3.1.7 *Fees*

The fees payable by and to the entrants should also be stipulated in the entry forms. Artists should know how much the entry fees are. They should also know how much the ticket prices are and what percentage of the box-office income will be paid to them. If the department hosting the festival decides to charge renting fees for the venues, this fact, as well as the amount that will be charged, should also be included in the entry form. If any of these fees are non-refundable, it should be indicated as well.

4.1.3.1.8 *Contact details of the participants*

Participants should provide all the relevant numbers and addresses where they can be contacted. It might be necessary for the festival direction to

contact the artists in order to convey information, such as the times of their performances and rehearsals. The festival organiser might also need some information from the participants and will therefore need to phone, fax or e-mail them.

4.1.3.1.9 *Scheduling information*

Each participant should be aware of the number of time slots that will be allocated to him or her. Participants should also provide the times that they are not available for performances, in order for the festival organiser to draw up the various schedules.

4.1.3.1.10 *Contract*

If a department requires the entrants in a festival to sign a contract or a lease agreement for the use of the theatres, it should be indicated. It should be indicated where and when the entrants can read copies of this contract. If the department decides to only print a limited number of copies to save paper, a separate one-page document should be drawn up for entrants to sign, committing them to the regulations of the contract. It should also be indicated when these contracts need to be signed.

4.1.3.1.11 *Submitting the entry form*

It should be clearly indicated where and when the entry forms should be submitted. If there are any limitations in this regard these should also be indicated. These limitations could include that entry forms will not be accepted without entry fees. The festival direction might also require that entry forms are submitted personally and that they will not accept faxed or e-mailed entry forms.

4.1.3.2 *Contracts / Lease agreements*

It should be ensured that all participants in a festival read the contracts and legal documents and understand all of the regulations. It might be necessary that the festival organiser or a member of the festival staff responsible for the handing out of contracts and legal documents discuss the regulations of the contract with each entrant. This could be time-consuming, but will prevent misunderstandings resulting in participants being reprimanded and fined.

The contracts should describe, in detail, the rules and regulations of the theatres and the festival. The following information should be included in the contracts:

4.1.3.2.1 *Smoke*

If permission is given to a certain production to smoke cigarettes on stage, it should first be determined whether it is justified or not. To determine this, texts of the productions requesting permission to smoke cigarettes on stage could be examined by the festival organiser first. If smoking on stage is not justified in the text, artists should be requested to make alternative arrangements.

4.1.3.2.2 *Pyrotechnics*

The rules and regulations regarding pyrotechnics should be clearly stipulated. Artists should know whether they are allowed to use, for example, firecrackers and burning candles on stage during their productions. If special allowances can be made, artists should know about this, as well as the safety measures that need to be taken.

4.1.3.2.3 *Facilities*

If artists are allowed to use facilities of the department, such as a sound recording studio, the wardrobe or the workshop, they should be aware of this, as well as the fees to be charged. If students of the department are given lower rates than other artists, it should also be indicated.

The policies of these departments should also be brought to the attention of the artists. Artists should know exactly when they should return the items belonging to these departments, as well as the penalties that will be charged for failing to do so. The locations and contact numbers of these departments should also be clearly indicated in this document.

4.1.3.2.4 *Payments*

It should be clearly indicated in the contract which payments will be made to the participants of the festival and when it will be done. Artists should know exactly what percentage of the box-office will be paid to them and what percentage will go to the department. The dates of these payments, as well as the arrangements, when and where, should be stipulated.

4.1.3.2.5 *Moving into and out of the theatres*

It should be clearly stipulated how much time participants have to move into the theatres before each performance. They should also be certain of how much time they will have afterwards to move out of the theatre. It should further be stipulated if there is a cut-off time for productions to set up. Some departments might decide not to allow a production to take place if they do not arrive at the theatre within this given time.

Arrangements regarding the removal of décor, props and costumes from the theatres after the festival has ended should also be specified clearly in the contract. Participants should be aware of these dates as well as if and how special arrangements can be made, should they be unable to fulfil these requirements.

4.1.3.2.6 *Complimentary tickets*

If the festival has a specific policy regarding the issue of complimentary tickets, the participants should be made aware of this. The direction of a festival could, for example, decide to limit the amount of complimentary tickets artists are allowed to issue. A department might also require that a certain amount of complimentary tickets be issued to the festival or departmental staff.

4.1.3.2.7 *The use of equipment*

If it is the policy of the department that only authorised staff members or students are allowed to operate the equipment, this should be stipulated. A department might also decide not to allow its staff or students to operate equipment belonging to other artists or companies. This will indemnify them, should something go wrong with the equipment.

4.1.3.2.8 *Cancellations*

To prevent productions from withdrawing from the festival, it is preferable to employ preventative measures. These could include entry fees and renting fees being non-refundable, or participants being fined or even blacklisted by the festival. Artists should be fully aware of these arrangements.

Sometimes, however, circumstances arise that are beyond human control. It is advisable to include a clause into the contract stipulating that special

consideration will be given to these circumstances, necessitating participants to withdraw their productions from the festival.

4.1.3.2.9 *Rules / Laws of the theatre, department and country*

Laws and rules that apply to the theatres and the department hosting the festival should be clearly explained. These rules might not be relevant only for the time of the festival, but are general rules that apply to all users of the theatres. These rules could include policies regarding visitors in dressing rooms and policies regarding the consumption of refreshments in the auditoriums. It is also advisable to add a clause to the contract that stipulates that the laws of the country should be abided by and respected.

4.1.3.2.10 *Penalties*

If an artist or a group of artists break any of the above-mentioned regulations of the contract, everyone should be clear as to whose responsibility it is to handle the problem. It should also be clearly stated in the lease agreement what the penalties are for breaking these regulations. This will motivate the participants to abide by the rules.

4.1.3.2.11 *Chain of command and legal actions*

Should a problem arise, the participants should be aware of whom they can go to for a solution. The artists should be given all the contact numbers and details of their venue managers and the chain of command should be clearly explained.

If the problem cannot be solved by the participants and either the venue manager, festival organiser or festival assistants, further action might have to

be taken. In such a case, the information regarding legal advisors and the legal action that may be taken should be clearly explained.

4.1.4 Contact details of the festival organiser

The festival organiser should preferably work from one office, which has a computer, Internet access, a telephone line and, if it is possible, an answering machine. This will make correspondence easier and avoid confusion for the participants. A telephone line in the office will also prevent calls from coming in at difficult or inappropriate times. It should also be possible to reach the festival organiser after hours if problems should arise that have to be solved immediately.

If problems arise during the time of the festival that need to be solved immediately, the participants should be aware of the chains of command. They should know the contact numbers of their venue managers. If the venue managers are not able to solve these problems, they should know where to contact the festival organiser or an assistant at all times. For this purpose walkie-talkies could be used. It is also advisable that either the festival organiser or one of the assistants is on standby in the festival office at all times during the time of the festival.

It is important that the participants in the festival all know where to reach the festival organiser and the staff. They should have all the correct contact information and should know whom they can contact, as well as when and where, if problems should arise. This information should be included on all the publicity material, as well as the entry forms and other correspondence such as letters and e-mails.

It is preferable that the festival office is manned throughout working hours. If the festival organiser is not available an assistant should be in the office to

take messages and to answer questions. It will also be more convenient for students of the department taking part in the festival if the office is constantly manned. This would allow them to go to the office for information and enquiries between their classes. They would then not have to go to campus at different times especially to contact the festival organiser or staff.

4.1.5 Selection

If there is no control over the quality of the productions certain productions could disappoint the audiences. These productions, as a result, will draw small audiences and some might show a financial loss.

It is preferable that a selection policy is implemented to control the quality of the productions to be presented, especially if productions are presented by artists from outside the academic department. This will prevent the audiences from leaving the theatres disappointed with the productions and might prompt them to recommend the productions to their friends. This, in turn, will prevent the productions from showing financial losses.

Each department, however, should decide on the policy they wish to adopt regarding the selection of productions. If the aim of such a festival is to allow students to experiment, the department might decide not to assess the quality of each production beforehand, but rather to comment thereon after the festival. If these productions do fail at the box-office, the students will then have been allowed to fail within a protected environment, since they would not be working in the entertainment industry on a professional level yet. Whether these productions succeed or fail, the students would then be able to judge more clearly what would work in the industry and what would not.

Since the participants in the festival would mostly be drama students “trying out” their own productions for the first time, some of them might request

guidance regarding the quality and potential of these productions. This might help them in future to assess the quality of their work. Still, it remains the decision of the department whether they wish to provide this kind of assistance beforehand or whether they would prefer the students to experiment and try out their own ideas.

If a department decides to appoint a selection committee, this committee could consist of staff members of the drama department. It is preferable that the members of this committee are working or have worked in the entertainment industry. They will then be able to guide the students as to what would succeed in the industry and what would not. Guidelines for selection could include the originality of the work and the presentation thereof (some festivals might require that only original texts or originally directed productions may enter) and the number of productions that the artists are involved in.

The genre should also be considered when selecting productions for a festival programme. Different genres should be accommodated at the festival, to ensure variety and to cater for the tastes of different festivalgoers. If a festival wishes to attract large numbers of students as audience members, it is also advisable to select productions aimed at a student market. If productions are selected that are not specifically aimed at a student market, the artists presenting them should be guided in the correct marketing strategies, in order to attract the desired audiences.

4.1.6 Number of productions

When deciding on the number of productions to be presented at a festival, there are several aspects to consider. The first and most important aspect is the available infrastructure. The festival organiser should be certain that there are enough theatres in which to present the productions. It is also important to be certain that there are enough students to handle the technical tasks during

the time of the festival. This will put less strain on the staff and technical crews of the festival.

It is also important to make sure that there is enough equipment available for the needs of the festival productions. If there are, for example, three theatres available but only enough equipment for two theatres it is advisable to rather only use two theatres. Using less equipment per venue would not only affect the quality of the productions, but could also negatively affect the overall image of the festival.

If there are too many productions presented at a festival, it would not only make the scheduling task difficult, it could also negatively affect the attendance at the festival and individual productions. If festivalgoers have too large a choice of productions to attend, their budgets or time might not allow them to attend as many as they would have liked. As a result, they might be forced to choose between certain productions. This will result in certain productions drawing smaller audiences.

This does not seem to have affected other, larger arts festivals. These festivals seem to grow each year in the number of productions presented. A reason for this might be the growing audience numbers. Festivalgoers might still have to choose between productions but since there are larger numbers of festivalgoers, it does not affect the attendance numbers of the individual productions.

These growing audience numbers could be as a result of the popularity of the festivals. Since many of the festivals have been taking place for a number of years, more members of the public are aware of them and know what to expect. This phenomenon could motivate the direction and participants of student theatre festivals to employ more intensive and effective marketing

strategies, which would lead to more members of the public becoming aware of and attending these festivals.

4.1.7 Cancellations

It is necessary, if one wants to prevent productions from withdrawing from a festival, to stipulate in the agreement that is signed beforehand, exactly what the penalty for this action would be. If a group of artists are aware that they might be penalised for withdrawing, they will not enter a production unless they are certain that they can fulfil their obligation to the festival and the festivalgoers.

Productions withdrawing from a festival could be a source of great embarrassment for the festival direction and staff. It could also be a source of irritation and frustration for the festivalgoers who had planned to attend a certain production. This might cause the festivalgoers to think of the festival, drama department and the artists in a negative way, which could influence their support of the event, department or artists in the future.

One should, however, make allowances for circumstances beyond human control. In cases where a situation arises that no one could foresee it is sometimes necessary for the artists to withdraw from the festival. In such cases arrangements should be made to explain the situation to potential festivalgoers and to apologise for the inconvenience.

4.1.8 Entry fees

Entry fees for a student theatre festival should be kept low, since many of the students only have access to limited production budgets. This will teach student artists to draw up and manage production budgets, without having to pay too much money. If these entry fees are non-refundable and entrants will

lose the money if they decide to withdraw from the festival, it should be clearly indicated on the entry form and in the contract.

If the entry fees are too low, some entrants might not mind too much losing the fee if they decide to withdraw from the festival. A slightly higher fee would prompt students to reconsider withdrawing. A higher entry fee would also prompt the artists to do effective marketing and publicity for their productions. Better publicity would result in larger audiences, which in turn would minimise the chance of a financial loss for the production.

It should also be decided beforehand what the entry fees would be used for. If the fees were used for marketing and publicity purposes, as was the case with the 2001 and 2002 Krêkvars festivals, a slightly higher entry fee would result in a larger publicity budget. This in turn would allow the festival direction to employ a more intensive marketing strategy and to print more expensive marketing material.

4.1.9 Ticket prices

If a theatre festival aims to attract a large number of students as audience members, the ticket prices should be kept low. This will ensure that students and other festivalgoers, who only have access to limited funds, can attend a number of productions without having to pay too much.

If the ticket prices are too low, festivalgoers might become sceptical about the quality of the productions that are being presented and they might decide to stay away. Artists might also feel that a very low entrance fee is an insult to them. They might feel that their art, which they worked hard and long hours on to prepare for the festival, is presented as cheap and of a low standard.

A way to combat this challenge is by doing effective marketing for the festival. If the public and other audience members are aware of the ticket prices, and of the reasons for them being so low, it might remove the stigma that the productions are cheap and of a low standard. This might motivate the students to do more and more effective marketing for their individual productions, which will be a valuable training experience.

Too high ticket prices will limit the number of audience members attending the productions. This is especially true if the festival aims to attract many students as audience members. These students might only have access to limited funds. If performance at such a festival were considered a part of the students' training, it would be more valuable to them to have large numbers of audience members attending their productions than earning large sums of money. Larger audiences would mean that more people would become aware of the artists and their works.

If departmental productions are presented at such a festival and students are usually allowed free entrance to these productions, the drama department might consider adapting its policy regarding complimentary tickets. If the ticket prices are kept low students will be able to afford to buy tickets. On the other hand students might decide to support their friends' productions rather than departmental productions, especially if their budgets are limited and only allow them to watch a certain amount of productions during the run of the festival. Students might want the money for their tickets to be awarded to their friends, rather than to the department.

Artists should also be warned to be careful about the number of complimentary tickets they make available for their productions. If they hand out too many complimentary tickets, it will affect their box-office income, as well as the income earned by the festival and the drama department. Artists might also feel that they would rather let their friends and family watch their

productions for free than not at all, but they should be warned to exercise control.

To assess the situation properly, one could hand out questionnaires at the festival. These questionnaires could be used to determine how the audience members and artists feel about the ticket prices, the quality of the work presented at these prices and how much they are willing to pay for tickets to a festival like this. One could then adapt the policy on the prices charged for tickets to the festival, if necessary.¹

4.1.10 Scheduling

When the schedules for a student theatre festival are drawn up there are many factors to consider. The first is the class times of the students. If artists from academic departments other than the one presenting the festival enter, their class schedules would be different from the drama students' schedule. These artists should then be asked to specify the times that they are not available so that the festival organiser can try to accommodate them.

If a theatre festival is presented by a department of a university, the class times and schedules of that university should be taken into account, for the benefit of the audiences as well. If the festival aims to attract students as audience members during their free periods, the time slots should be arranged so that they fall within the times allocated for classes. The time slots should start when the academic periods start and should finish before the next academic period starts.

¹ Handing out questionnaires to festivalgoers and audience members will not only aid the artists and festival organiser to assess what was successful at the festival and what was not, it is also a valuable source of information for research and development purposes within the university. Students will be taught how to conduct semi-structured interviews for research purposes.

It is also preferable that productions do not start at the same time the previous production ends. This will allow audience members to move between the theatres without having to rush. It will also prevent potential audience members from missing certain productions because they do not have enough time to move between the theatres.

If artists enter who are not students, their working hours should also be considered. If these artists are only available during the evenings or on weekends the festival organiser should be aware not to assign all the best time slots to them, but to spread their time slots evenly. Each production should be awarded at least one prime slot, to avoid dissatisfaction.

Artists should also be limited as to the number of productions that they are allowed to be involved in. This will not only give more artists the opportunity to perform, but will also ensure that the artists are not too thinly spread throughout the festival week. If artists take part in too many productions, they might become tired, as they will not have enough time to rest and to prepare before their performances. This will affect their concentration on stage and their performances negatively. It will also make the scheduling task somewhat easier, since there will be a smaller chance of artists' production times overlapping.

Productions should also be assigned sufficient time to move into and out of the theatres. There should be enough time for the artists to set up their productions, without feeling rushed. If they have to rush through the setting up of their stages, the artists might feel that they did not have enough time to prepare for their performances and will not be ready to go on stage.

Artists should be further cautioned not to enter productions that are too long. If a production runs longer than its allocated time and ends late, it will limit the time that the next production has available to move into the theatre. This might

cause some nervous tension for the artists and crew members of the following production and an unpleasant atmosphere in the theatre. It might also lead to artists being penalised for their tardiness.

4.1.11 Sponsorships

If sponsorships are to be sought for a festival, the process should be started early enough to allow time for negotiations and preparations. It is also preferable to prepare a document that explains exactly what the event is about and what the sponsors will gain from it. This document should also comply with the guidelines for seeking sponsorship set by the academic institution to which the specific department belongs.

Seeking media agents as sponsors could present advantages for both the festival and the media organisation. The festival direction will be able to save on their marketing budget (money which can be put to other uses, such as inviting established artists to perform at the festival – see 3.4.5 for more detail), which will allow them to do more intensive and effective marketing. The media agents will benefit from the exposure that they receive at the festival.

If the artists are responsible for financing their own productions, it might also be an effective training experience to allow them to seek sponsors for their individual productions. They should be guided regarding the policies of the university for seeking sponsorships. They should be trained in the correct methods of seeking sponsors and drawing up proposals. This form of training will be of great use to them in the entertainment industry when they have to produce and finance their own productions.

4.1.12 Marketing and publicity

Marketing and advertising a theatre festival effectively is cardinal to its success. If members of the public are not aware of the event and the productions presented, they will not be able to support it. Marketing should be aimed specifically at the group of people targeted as potential festivalgoers. Marketing should also be interesting in order to draw the attention of the target market.

When a marketing campaign is planned, the direction of a festival should allow enough time for negotiations, as well as for ideas to be exchanged. Enough time should also be allowed for the public and potential festivalgoers to take note of the festival and to plan in advance if they would like to attend the festival.

Having a media agent, such as a radio station, as a partner is not only an effective marketing tool, but also an effective form of gaining sponsorship. The marketing budget will be drastically reduced when advertising is sponsored, leaving more money for other purposes, such as hiring more and better equipment. It will also allow the festival direction to do more intensive and effective marketing.

If the media agent acts as a sponsor, their exposure will depend greatly on the number of festivalgoers. This might prompt them to advertise the festival more often and more effectively, which will also be advantageous for the festival itself.

It is also an effective marketing tool to arrange interviews with radio stations. In these interviews information can be given about the festival and the productions that do not appear in the press releases. Listeners could also call in and ask the festival organiser questions about the festival.

The festival direction should plan how many posters would be needed before they are printed. If too many posters are printed they will go to waste. Money that could have been used for other purposes would also be wasted. A smaller amount of posters could be printed and the money could be used to print more programmes which could be distributed free of charge. (See section 3.2.11 for more detail about the programmes.) This would then give the prospective festivalgoers a better idea of what will be happening at the festival. They will also have more information on the productions themselves and will be able to plan ahead if there are any productions that they wish to attend.

The marketing campaign for a theatre festival could also be visual. Some of the artists could perform extracts of their productions on campus and in areas that are frequented by students. This will make the students and other prospective festivalgoers curious about the festival and give them a little taste of what is to come.

Printed adverting (especially in newspapers) could be very valuable for theatre festivals, since many members of the public read newspapers on a daily basis. Photographs of some of the productions will also draw a lot of attention because it is visual, colourful and interesting.

The Internet is another effective marketing tool. Press releases can be e-mailed to press agents and other information can be sent to prospective festivalgoers. This form of communication is immediate and more cost-effective than mailing letters. The festival could also build a web site on which all the information, press releases, contact details and other interesting marketing objects, such as photographs and reviews, can be displayed.

Since such a festival is aimed at providing students with performing opportunities, these students should also be involved in the marketing and

advertising thereof. Students could be asked to distribute posters around the theatres and the drama department, as well as around the city. They could also hand out flyers to the public, inviting them to the festival. This will ensure that the students are involved with the festival on more than one level and that they share in the responsibility for the success thereof.

The marketing and advertising material should include all the information that prospective festivalgoers would need if they would want to attend the event. This information includes the dates and times of the festival, contact details, ticket prices and the venues in which the festival productions will take place.

4.1.13 Programmes

A programme should contain all the necessary information for the benefit of festivalgoers and potential festivalgoers. They should be certain of the dates, times and venues that the productions will take place in. They should also have an idea of what the productions are about and more or less what they should expect. This will make it easier for them to decide which productions to attend and which not to attend.

A schedule that is printed in the form of a grid is easy to read and to understand, especially for students. Many students' class schedules are in this format and they are used reading and interpreting it.

A programme should not only be informative and user-friendly, it should also be interesting. Using the festival poster as a cover page for the programme will make the programme more interesting than merely providing the information. Members of the public might also recognise the logo of the festival and the design of the poster that they might have seen on publicity material before.

4.1.14 Costumes, props and décor

When a festival is organised where a large number of artists need to use costumes, props, décor and furniture supplied by a specific department of an academic institution, it is more practical to arrange meeting times to select and choose these items. This will ensure that the person in charge is available to help and to assist the artists.

It will also save time to assign one person, such as a venue manager, to contact the specific department to select the items. Since each production has its own specifications and there is a wide variety of items to choose from, it might be quite time-consuming having a large number of groups going through the departments at their own pace. This might interfere with the other duties of the staff members of the specific departments.

If the policies of the department, regarding renting fees and deposits, vary during the time of a festival from its normal policies, it should be indicated in the documents given to the artists. This will prevent any confusion about the policy and the artists will know how to do their planning and what they should be prepared for.

If artists from outside the department enter the festival, they should also be aware of the facilities available to them. If they are allowed to use props, costumes and décor belonging to the department, they should be made aware of this fact, as well as the fees that they are required to pay for the use thereof.

4.1.15 Technical teams

Before the technical crews are compiled, the festival organiser should be certain that there are enough students to fulfil the responsibilities. It is also a challenge to ensure that the technical crew members arrive at the venues on

time (or at all). If students live far away from the theatre and are not certain of their transport, alternative arrangements could be made to accommodate them.

It is an effective method of control to have roll-call at the theatre. This should be done early enough so that there is still time to make alternative arrangements if it is necessary. Each member of the team should provide his or her contact details, and make sure that their cellular phones are always switched on. It is advisable to take all possible precautions to ensure the diligence of one's team, but one has to be prepared that unforeseen circumstances might occur.

If the technical tasks are considered a part of the students' training, the academic department presenting the festival could evaluate them on their performances. This might prompt more students to take part in the festival and will also prompt them to be more diligent.

If the technical tasks are assigned to students, the technical crews should be in place well before the festival starts. This will allow them more time for training and will ensure that they can handle the equipment with more confidence. It will also limit the mistakes that might occur during the festival, due to their own uncertainty or a lack of training. This might not always be possible, since the students would have other academic responsibilities to tend to. The theatres might also not be available for the purposes of training the technical crews.

4.1.16 Lighting design and rigging

If a department presenting an arts festival decides to use students, who are still in training, to design and rig the lights, these students should have the

proper support and back up. The participants should also be aware of this and be prepared to make allowances for mistakes that might occur.

If it is decided to use a professional person to do the design and to rig the lights, this person should be made aware of the deadlines. If this person is aware of the deadlines it is his or her duty to report any delay in the process, so that alternative arrangements can be made in time.

The person chosen to design and rig the lights should also be aware of the exact requirements for the purposes of the festival. If there is only a limited amount of lighting equipment available for use during the festival it is advisable to design a lighting plan that will accommodate the majority of the productions. Too many “specials” might not be practical, since there might not be enough equipment.

Artists should also be made aware of the fact if there is only a limited amount of equipment available. They should be cautioned not require too many special effects and to keep their technical requirements to a minimum.

4.1.17 Sound recordings

Every artist that takes part in an arts festival should be aware of the facilities that they can make use of, as well as the policies surrounding those facilities. If students of the specific department receive special rates for the use of the facilities, such as a sound recording studio, it should be clearly indicated. The manager of such a sound studio should also be made aware of the workload and the hours that will be worked on such a project. If the studio manager is required to work after hours or extra hours, the department by which he or she is employed could suggest a way of compensating for these circumstances. If the studio manager is a student, precautions should also be taken to ensure that these responsibilities do not interfere with other academic responsibilities.

If greetings are recorded for a festival, it is preferable to have more than one. It would allow the artists to choose the kind of greeting that they would like to be played before their production. This would create the correct atmosphere for the production that will follow. It would also enable the artists to ensure that the audience members are in the right mood before their productions start.

If radio advertisements are to be aired to advertise the festival, the writing and recording of these advertisements could be set as assignments for the students. This will give them the opportunity to be involved with the festival on more than one level. It will also provide them with the opportunity to do recordings that will be used in the industry before they enter it on a professional level.

4.1.18 Technical rehearsals

When the technical rehearsal schedules are drawn up there are many factors to consider. The first important factor is the availability of the artists to attend the rehearsals. If the artists are students, their class times need to be taken into consideration. The rehearsal slots then have to be scheduled, as far as possible, according to these times. The working hours of artists who are not students also need to be considered.

Rehearsal times should also be long enough to allow productions to plot their lights and to rehearse with the technicians. If the artists and the technicians are all students who have different class times, it might also be a challenge to find times that suit both parties.

Another factor to consider is the availability of the theatres for rehearsals. If the theatres are used by an academic department for its own productions the festival organiser should be certain that the theatres are available in time for rehearsals to start.

All the props, costumes and décor of the last production to take place in the theatre before the festival begins should be removed in time for rehearsals to start. This will minimise frustration and obstacles for the artists rehearsing. The artists and venue managers should also ensure that the artists have all the costumes, props and décor they have requested for their productions before they start rehearsing.

Certain productions might feel that they do not have enough time to rehearse with their technical crews. This might be because many of them would be drama students who are used to having an assigned technical crew at rehearsals from the beginning. At a festival, however, especially where a large amount of productions have to be accommodated, it is not always practical or possible to have many technical rehearsals. Artists should be made aware of this aspect. For this reason it is also advisable keep a festival production minimal where technical aspects are concerned.

4.1.19 Meetings and correspondence

Information should be given to the participants on a regular basis. It is necessary for them to know what is expected of them and what they can expect from the festival and the festival direction.

Meetings are effective ways of conveying information. It is also an effective method of exchanging ideas and assessing the level of enthusiasm. Such meetings could be time consuming, but could be of great value. It could also be a challenge to schedule a meeting, especially where students are involved. Since the students have different classes at different times it might be difficult to find a time that everyone is available.

E-mail is one of the most cost and time-effective methods of correspondence. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to speak to someone personally,

especially if there is a problem that needs to be solved. Speaking to someone personally would indicate that the festival organiser takes an interest in the challenge and in helping the participant. There is also no delay, since one does not have to wait for a person to answer an e-mail or a letter.

Another method of conveying information to students and participants, is posting notices in and around the main building of the drama department. Having a notice board near the festival office specifically for this purpose will be time effective for both the participants and the festival organiser. Participants coming to the festival office for information can then simply read the notice and the festival organiser would not have to arrange a meeting time, or several meeting times, since participants' schedules might vary, to convey the information.

4.1.20 Storage of décor

If a festival presents a large number of productions, an alternative storage space could be arranged for décor, props and costumes. This will prevent wings and dressing rooms being crowded with extra articles and allow the artists more space in which to prepare for their performances. It will also eliminate the safety hazard of furniture blocking the wings where artists are supposed to move around in the dark during a production.

Artists should also be made aware of the fact if there is only a limited amount of storage space available for their décor, props and costumes. They should be cautioned not to enter productions that would require large sets and many costumes or props. If their productions do require many of these items, they should be warned to make alternative storage arrangements. They should also be warned that they should still stay within the time limits for moving into and out of the theatres, if they do decide to remove these items after every performance.

At a theatre festival, where many productions need to be accommodated, it is advisable that productions should be minimalistic. It will minimise the amount of storage space that is needed. It will further minimise the needed storage space if productions agree to share certain items, such as furniture and props. If furniture, props and costumes are shared between different productions taking place in different theatres, a schedule should be drawn up to indicate where these items are at all times. The communication between the venue managers and stagehands should also be effective and everyone should know exactly what furniture, props and costumes they should move at what times.

4.1.21 Refreshments

The department that organises an arts festival should be aware of all the policies regarding the sale of refreshments. The arrangements should be made according to these policies well in advance. This will prevent nervous last-minute running around. If all the arrangements are made in advance, the last few days before the festival starts will not be so hectic, since everyone will be certain that the “red tape” has been taken care of.

If the university requires a contractor on campus to supply the food and beverages, this contractor should be fully aware of what is expected with regard to the festival. The contractor should be aware of the times that the festival is taking place as well as the times that the staff of the specific contractor is required to work.

It is advisable to draw up a document specifying the exact needs of the festival regarding food and beverages. This document should include the times that the staff will be required to sell food and beverages, as well as the type, quality and amount of food and beverages that they are required to sell. This document should then be distributed to all the contractors on campus and they should be asked for tenders.

If none of the contractors are able or willing to comply with the request, the festival direction could request the university to make a special allowance regarding the sale of food and beverages during the time of the festival, such as allowing the students of the drama department to take care of the sales themselves. If the contractors providing the food and beverages during the time of the festival do not fulfil this task sufficiently it will not only cost the festival some income, but the productions might also lose prospective audience members if people decide to go elsewhere to find something to eat or to drink.

4.2 THE ACTUAL TIME OF THE FESTIVAL

In this section of the chapter suggestions and recommendations will be made regarding the actual time that the festival takes place. These suggestions will include methods of solving problems that might arise during the time of the festival as well as suggestions how to prevent these challenges from arising.

4.2.1 Opening

If a social function is organised for the opening of an arts festival, it is preferable to start with a production that is well known or a production that many people would like to see. This will ensure that the guests are interested and will motivate them to attend the function. If this production has been successfully presented before, it should be made known in the invitations and marketing material. This will also ensure the interest of the guests and of potential festivalgoers for the rest of the festival.

If the opening of an arts festival is scheduled to take place too early in the morning, it might result in a smaller number of attendants. People do not usually go to entertainment events early in the morning, especially during the

week. Many of the invited guests might also have meetings early in the morning and could therefore be unable attend the opening production.

4.2.2 Technical teams

The students who are assigned as venue managers should be responsible and diligent. They should be able to manage their crews and provide technical backup and advice where it is necessary. The technical crew members should also know whom they could go to, should problems arise in the theatres or with the technical equipment.

It might be necessary for venue managers have roll-call at the theatre before every shift starts. This should be done early enough so that there is still time to make alternative arrangements, if it is necessary.

If taking part in a theatre festival is considered part of the students' training, the drama department might decide to evaluate these students on their technical work for the festival. The venue managers could write reports on a daily basis on their crews' performances. They could also mention the difficulties that arose, as well as if and how they were handled. This could motivate the students to be more diligent in their responsibilities.

4.2.3 Feedback and reviews

Reviews can be a very effective marketing tool, since potential audience members might only want to attend productions that receive good reviews. Bad reviews, on the other hand, could discourage potential audience members from attending productions. Members of the public might also want to first assess the atmosphere at a festival, as well as the quality of the productions presented, before they decide whether they want to attend or not.

If artists at a festival receive feedback on their productions it would help them to determine where their strong and weak points in the productions are and could guide them in improving the production if it was necessary. It would also be helpful if these reviews came from members of the public or the press. They would then be able to judge how their productions were received by people other than their lecturers.

Students could also, as part of their training, write reviews on some of the productions. These reviews could then be set as assignments, which could be evaluated by their lecturers. This will not only provide them with an extra opportunity to practise writing theatre reviews, it will also give the artists the opportunity to discover how their productions were perceived by their fellow students and artists.

4.2.4 Refreshments and open microphone

If contractors are used to supply refreshments, they should be aware of the needs and demands of the festival. If they are not available on certain days or at certain times, it could cost the festival many potential festivalgoers and much potential income.

If students take care of the refreshments they should also be aware of these needs and demands. Those that are assigned to take care of certain duties and shifts should be dedicated. If they are not dedicated it might cause the festival to lose potential customers or audience members. It might also cause uneasy situations with other students or staff members who have to fulfil extra duties.

It is advisable to assign a responsible person to manage the crews in charge of sales. This person could draw up the schedules for shifts, ensuring that everyone is assigned an equal amount of working hours and that everyone

arrives at the venue in time for their shift to start. It might be necessary for this person to have roll-call at the venue before each shift starts. This should be done early enough so that alternative arrangements could be made, if it is necessary. If a person is not available to take care of his or her shift, or arrives late at the venue, it would be necessary for the person in charge to arrange for another student to take care of the shift.

An open microphone could be an effective tool to draw many people to the festival. The people who gather in the venue will enjoy talking to others and being entertained by impromptu performances. A relaxed atmosphere in the venue will create a positive feeling about the festival and people will enjoy themselves, the food and beverages and the extra entertainment.

It is necessary, though, to appoint a responsible person to be in charge of the venue. This person should see to it that everything runs smoothly in the venue and that the equipment is not damaged. This person should also have access to emergency numbers, such as a contact number for campus security, should problems arise that are beyond his or her control.

4.2.5 Cleaning up in and around venues

It is rather unpleasant for an artist to prepare in an untidy dressing room or to perform in a dirty theatre. It also creates a bad image of the festival and the department that hosts the event if the surrounding area is untidy. For these reasons the venues should always be clean and tidy.

In the planning stages of a festival such as this, specific crew members should be assigned to take care of cleaning up in and around the venues. They should be made aware of these responsibilities and it should be explained to them why they should take it seriously. The theatre staff should also be aware of their extra responsibilities and know what is expected of them.

4.3 POST-FESTIVAL

In this section the period after the festival will be critically discussed. Suggestions will be made on how to handle the tasks that need to be done after the festival had ended.

4.3.1 Clean up and strike

In the planning stages of a festival, arrangements should be made to have the premises cleaned and the garbage removed after the festival. It is important to clean the premises properly after the festival has ended otherwise a negative image might be created about the festival or the department that hosts the festival.

If any equipment was used that did not belong to the department, arrangements should be made with the company to whom it belongs to strike and remove this equipment. The equipment belonging to the department should also be removed and put back into storage as soon as possible. This will ensure that the theatres are clean and ready for use by the department for its own productions.

4.3.2 Costumes and décor

If productions do not remove their items from the theatres within a reasonable time it might cause difficulties for the students and staff that have to use the theatres after the festival. Costumes and décor standing around in the dressing rooms and wings of the theatres will limit the movement and storage spaces for students rehearsing in the theatres.

Arrangements should be made before the festival starts to determine when these items have to be removed from the theatres. These arrangements

should be clearly outlined in the contracts that the artists sign when they enter for the festival. If artists will be penalised for not complying with these arrangements it should also be clearly stipulated in the contract. This will prevent confusion and will prevent artists from taking chances and saying that they did not know about these arrangements.

Items belonging to the department should also be removed as soon as possible. This will not only ensure that the theatres are clean and ready for use, but it will also ensure that the items are checked back at their respective departments and available for use in other productions.

4.3.3 Paying out of fees

A specific date should be arranged with the artists to collect the money they earn at a festival. This arrangement should be made in writing to prevent any confusion and to ensure that all the artists are aware of the date and time. If any of the artists are not able to collect their money on the given date, they should inform the festival organiser of this and make alternative arrangements.

If artists do not comply with these arrangements the department might decide to penalise them for their tardiness. These artists could, for example, lose a percentage of their income if they do not collect it on the given date or make alternative arrangements in advance.

If such a penalty is charged, it should be explained to the artists before the festival starts. All the artists should be aware of the way in which they would be penalised, and the reasons for this policy. This could motivate artists not to delay collecting their money and would also prevent any confusion about the penalty system.

4.3.4 Feedback

Feedback questionnaires are a very effective method of determining how the festival was experienced by the artists, crews and festivalgoers. Such questionnaires could help the organisers to determine the strong and weak points of the festival. The weak points could then be improved upon for the next festival and the strong points could be highlighted. Sometimes the artists, crews or festivalgoers also make suggestions on how to improve the festival that the organisers did not think of.

Handing out questionnaires could be a valuable training experience for students taking part in such a festival, since it is an introduction to the “action research” methodology. Artists could assess, through the questionnaires, which aspects of their productions were successful and which were not. For their following productions they could then adapt the unsuccessful aspects and accentuate the successful ones. This process can then be repeated with their following productions and the results of the questionnaires could then be compared.

If these artists wish to report on this method of research and the suggestions made by the audience members, they should also be trained in the aspect of ethics. These artists, or researchers, should be aware of aspects such as informed consent and preserving the respondents’ anonymity and dignity.

If the festival is presented by and for the students of a drama department, asking them to fill out questionnaires will ensure that they are involved in the festival on a level other than merely as artists or crew members. Asking these students for feedback and opinions will ensure that they are involved in shaping the festival and aiding in its success.

4.4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning and organising a student theatre festival is by no means an easy task and festival organisers should not think that it is easy either. There are many factors to consider, and many tasks to complete. The festival organiser should be certain of whom the festival is for, both in terms of artists and audience members. The festival should then be aimed at accommodating as many of these artists and audience members as possible.

It is also necessary for the festival organiser to have sufficient backup in the form of assistants and other staff members. Since there are a multitude of tasks to take care of, it might not always be possible for the festival organiser to handle these alone. Problems might also arise that the festival organiser is not equipped to solve alone.

No festival will ever be perfect or without any problems. Unforeseen challenges might arise and there are a number of things that might go wrong. It is thus necessary for the festival organiser and staff to be as well prepared as possible. They might also have to arrange for backup plans, in case things do go wrong. But, most importantly, the festival organiser and staff should learn from their mistakes and keep improving the festival with every new year.

In the last chapter of this dissertation the findings and recommendations of the foregoing chapters are summarised. These are briefly discussed, to emphasise the importance of effective planning and organisation of a student theatre festival.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the discussions in the foregoing chapters it becomes clear that effective planning and organisation of a student theatre festival is cardinal to its success. There are several aspects to consider when organising such an event. These aspects include advantages and challenges for artists, festival organisers, festivalgoers and the general community in which such an event takes place.

Advantages for artists include extra performing opportunities and exposure to audiences and to the entertainment industry in general. Artists, especially student artists who do not work in the entertainment industry on a professional level yet, have the opportunity at such a theatre festival to present their own work in front of live audiences. These audiences could consist of their fellow students, the general public, or agents, directors and other theatre practitioners who might be interested in employing them in the future.

Theatre festivals also present financial advantages to the participating artists. Artists not only have an opportunity to earn an extra income. If the entry fees for the festival and the production costs are kept at a minimum, artists have the opportunity to present their work without having to pay too much money. This will ensure that more artists, especially student artists that only have access to limited funds, can take part in festivals and present their work.

Another advantage for artists taking part in a student theatre festival is that they have the opportunity to present new ideas, or to present old ideas in a new way. Arts festivals, and especially student theatre festivals, usually emphasise the need for new works to be presented. These festivals also

7.1) If yes, how many festivals?

7.2) Briefly state where and when the festival(s) took place and the names of the production(s).

7.3) What was your involvement in the production(s)?

7.4) Were there any major challenges you experienced in producing the production(s)?

7.5) If so, what were they?

8.) Do you consider yourself part of the mainstream entertainment industry in South Africa?

8.1) Please explain why.

8.2) If so, what were the major challenges you encountered breaking into the South African entertainment industry?

9.) What would you consider the major challenges for unestablished artists to break into the South African entertainment industry today?

10.) Do you think that arts festivals can be used to aid unestablished artists in overcoming these challenges?

10.1) Please explain why.

11.) Do you think that South African arts festivals today cater for the needs of unestablished artists?

11.1) Please explain why.

encourage artists to create new works, since they wish to stimulate this creation process and the participation of young up-and-coming artists.

Student theatre festivals can also provide an extra training opportunity to its participants. If the artists taking part in these festivals are students, especially drama students, they will be presented with extra performing and directing opportunities. They will further have the opportunity to be trained “on the job” in the technical aspects of the theatre, such as light and sound control and operation.

Student theatre festivals present some advantages for the organisers as well. These advantages include financial advantages, in the form of the salary that they will be paid. Another advantage is the job satisfaction experienced from a job well done. This is especially true when a festival aims to promote young talent and the creation of new theatrical works. If these young artists and the work they present are recognised and appreciated by those who watch the productions, festival organisers can feel satisfied that they had helped to create this opportunity for exposure and recognition.

Advantages to student theatre festivalgoers include the opportunity to attend and experience a wide variety of theatre productions. These productions are usually presented at an affordable price, which means that the festivalgoers can attend many productions. If the festival programme includes workshops and classes, festivalgoers have the further advantage of taking part in the festival themselves and gaining first hand knowledge of the arts and the entertainment industry.

The community in which such a festival takes place can also benefit from the event. The greatest benefit is the financial gains as a result thereof. Many people might visit the area during the time of the festival. These people will

spend money, not only on the productions, but also on accommodation, food and tourist attractions.

The direction might also decide to use the gains from the festival to improve the lives of the people living in that area. Many festivals have organised outreach projects to do so. These projects aim to take the theatre to less privileged members of the community and to collect study material, such as books, to be distributed among these members of the community.

A student theatre festival does not only present advantages. As with most things in life it presents challenges as well. The greatest challenge for the artists is probably the financial aspect. If a festival is presented in a remote part of the country, it might be quite expensive for the artists to move the décor, costumes and props to that area. Production costs and renting fees for venues might also be quite expensive, especially if the artists are students with limited production budgets.

Unknown artists might also find it difficult to attract large audiences to their productions. This rings true especially for student artists who do not work in the entertainment industry on a professional level yet. This is because many festivalgoers seek out established artists and productions. Theatregoers are sometimes sceptical about the quality and content of productions presented by unestablished artists, since they do not know exactly what to expect.

Artists might experience further difficulties at festivals if the technical staff assigned to work on their productions are ill equipped for the task. This is especially true at student theatre festivals, where the technical crews are made up of students who are still in training. These students will rarely have the expertise of professional theatre practitioners, which could mean that mistakes and problems could occur more easily.

One of the greatest challenges for festival organisers is the financial challenge. There are a multitude of expenses to cover when organising a theatre festival but sometimes there is not enough money to cover them all. A solution to this challenge might be to seek sponsors but, as already mentioned, finding sponsorships for art could sometimes be an almost insurmountable challenge.

At student theatre festivals where departmental productions are presented, the festival direction and the department have further financial responsibilities. In contrast with general arts festivals, where artists have to take care of their own production costs, such as the renting of costumes and décor, the printing of publicity material and the payment of royalties, academic departments would have to take care of those costs on behalf of the artists.

It has been mentioned several times throughout this dissertation that effective marketing and publicity is cardinal to the success of a theatre festival. At a student theatre festival it might be a greater challenge than general festivals. This is especially true if the festival direction and staff have other responsibilities within the department that presents the festival. The budgets, specifically the marketing budgets, for these festivals are also usually smaller than those of general festivals and it might be a further challenge to motivate the students of the department to take part in the general marketing campaign for the festival.

The available infrastructure for the festival is a further challenge for festival organisers. The amount and size of theatres, the amount and quality of the equipment, the number and efficiency of technical crew members and the amount and efficiency of backup and support staff will all influence the size and the success of the festival. These factors need to be carefully considered in the planning stages of the festival.

Selecting the productions to be presented at the festival is one more challenge to festival organisers. The number of productions that could be accommodated should be taken into account, as well as the quality and content of the productions. At a student festival it is preferable to advise the artists on the quality of their productions, as it would be a learning experience and a trial run of the entertainment industry. These students need to learn which kind of productions would be successful in the marketplace and which would not.

Effective administration and communication is also important to ensure the success of a theatre festival. If the participants and support staff are students, it might be a challenge to find convenient times for meetings to convey information to them. It is important, though, that they should have access to all the relevant information. Alternative methods, such as e-mail, the Internet and notice boards could be time and cost-effective methods of conveying this information.

The administrative tasks that festival organisers should take care of include the selection and management of staff and crews. The festival organiser needs to be certain that there are enough staff and crew members to complete all the tasks and that they have proper backup and support. These teams and crews include technical crews, organisational staff, teams responsible for selling refreshments and teams responsible for cleaning up the premises.

The festival organiser should further ensure that the schedules are drawn up in such a way that they accommodate as many artists and festivalgoers as possible. He or she should also ensure that ticket prices, entry fees and renting fees are kept reasonable and within the reach of participants and festivalgoers. This will ensure the support of artists and festivalgoers for the festival in the future.

The community in which such a festival takes place could also experience some challenges. If artists and festivalgoers come from other parts of the country, it might be a challenge for all of them to find accommodation. Parking for all their vehicles might also present a challenge, especially if the festival is presented by a university, or another academic institution, where parking spaces are usually already limited.

When one considers all the above-mentioned advantages and challenges presented by a student theatre festival, it becomes clear that effective organisation and planning is very important. The festival organiser should have enough backup and support staff to aid in this planning process. Every staff member should also be fully aware of the challenges that might arise, as well as methods of facing and handling them. Everyone should also be aware of the advantages that such a festival could present as well as the methods of exploiting and highlighting these advantages.

Planning and organising a student theatre festival is by no means an easy task. It is therefore important that the organisational staff are certain of their aims and their mission. They should be certain of whom the festival is for and what it is about and should stay focussed on the task at hand. This will allow them to most effectively plan and organise a theatre festival that will accentuate the advantages and combat the challenges for student artists. This in turn will motivate more students to take part in such a festival, which will not only be to their own benefit, but will also ensure the success of the festival in years to come.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FESTIVAL ORGANISERS

- 1.) Why, in your opinion, is an arts festival necessary?
- 2.) What are the difficulties in organising such a festival?
- 3.) What mistakes should one look out for when working on such a project?
- 4.) What has been the most rewarding aspect of your festival so far?
- 5.) What made you decide to get into this line of work?
- 6.) Briefly describe the steps one should take when organising an arts festival?
- 7.) Please list the names and portfolios of the organisational staff, and briefly outline their responsibilities.
- 8.) How do you go about marketing the festival?
- 9.) In the past, what has been the most difficult obstacle to overcome?
 - 9.1) How did you overcome it?
10. What is the most important thing to remember when organising an arts festival?
- 11.) Any tips for future festival organisers?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ARTISTS

Date:

Questionnaire regarding arts festivals

- 1.) Please state your name and profession.
- 2.) Please state the number of theatrical productions you have been involved with. (Excluding compulsory student productions that formed part of your training.)
- 3.) Would you regard these productions as (please mark all that apply):

Professional		Semi-professional		Amateur	
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- 4.) Did you play any major parts (acting or otherwise) in any of the productions?

None	
1 – 5	
6 – 10	
11 – 15	
More than 15	

- 5.) How did you get these parts?
- 6.) Were there any problems in getting these parts?
 - 6.1) Please motivate.
- 7.) Have you ever performed at an arts festival?

Yes		No	
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11.2) If not, how do you think arts festivals should be adapted to cater for the needs of unestablished South African artists?

12.) Do you, as an artist, feel that there is a specific area of the South African entertainment industry (such as writing, acting, directing, etc.) that needs to be developed or needs to import “young blood”?

12.1) Please make suggestions.

13.) If so, do you think that arts festivals can be used as a method of satisfying this need?

13.1) Please explain how.

14.) As an artist, what is your general feeling about arts festivals in South Africa today? (What do you consider the strong points, the weak points and what changes would you like to see in the future?)

APPENDIX C

CHECKLIST FOR FESTIVAL ORGANISERS

<u>Tasks</u>	Responsible person	Contact number	Date planned	Date implemented	Date completed	Comments / Suggestions / Feedback
<u>Entries</u>						
Entries open						
Entries close						
<u>Scheduling</u>						
Schedules drawn up						
Schedules published						
<u>Legal aspects</u>						
Contracts printed						
Contracts signed						
<u>Technical teams</u>						
Technical teams assigned						
Technical teams						

trained						
<u>Rehearsals</u>						
Rehearsal schedules drawn up						
Rehearsal schedules published						
Rehearsals started						
<u>Lights</u>						
Lights designed						
Lights rigged						
Lights plotted						
Strike						
<u>Sound</u>						
Greetings written						
Greetings recorded						
<u>Publicity</u>						
Flyers designed						
Flyers distributed						
Posters designed						
Posters distributed						

Press releases sent out						
Photographs taken						
Photographs printed						
Photographs sent out						
Radio ads written						
Radio ads recorded						
Radio ads sent to stations						
Radio interviews arranged						
<u>Opening</u>						
Invitations sent out						
Refreshments arranged						
<u>Refreshments</u>						
Crews assigned						
Shifts assigned						
Stock bought						
Liquor licence obtained						

<u>Admin</u>						
Tickets bought						
Cash boxes arranged						
Float arranged						
Meetings and correspondence						
Meeting 1						
Minutes published						
Meeting 2						
Minutes published						
Meeting 3						
Minutes published						
Meeting 4						
Minutes published						
Meeting 5						
Minutes published						
Notices put up						
Notices put up						
Notices put up						
Notices put up						

University of Pretoria etd – Le Grange, R (2003)

Notices put up						
<u>Clean-up</u>						
Crews arranged						
Cleaning materials arranged						
Post-festival clean-up						
<u>Décor</u>						
Meetings with venue managers						
Meetings with venue managers						
Meetings with venue managers						
Delivery of décor						
Removal of décor						
<u>Paying of fees</u>						
Dates arranged with artists						
Pay day						
Special arrangements						