

Union Artists

PRODUCERS OF KING KONG

10/11/8/5/8
P.O. Box 8162
TELEPHONES 835-7261/2/3
JOHANNESBURG



20th March, 1953.

Mr. Alan Paton,
23 Lynton Road,
Kloof,
NATAL.

Dear Alan,

Your letter dated 13th March arrived here on the 15th, which is why when I spoke to you on the phone I thought you were answering the letter that I had written you.

I am sorry that business matters have been a bit of a mess, but our bookkeeping has been chaotic for years. Fortunately, one of the large business concerns in this city has given us a Bookkeeper/Administration Officer to help with the work but she only started work at the beginning of this month and she is now getting things straightened out. By early next week I should be able to finalise all the royalty matters with you.

I do not understand your last paragraph about having a permanent assistant director on a production. The white theatrical companies in this country are touring shows all the time on exactly the same basis that we are touring Sponono*. I can only think that you do not have as much confidence in Meshack as you would have in a white stage director. Meshack's responsibilities on Sponono are exactly those of a stage director in any normal theatrical company. In every centre we have people handling the general administration, so that he is only responsible for the cast and technical problems. Perhaps we can discuss this matter further when I come down to Laritzburg next week.

Despite the wonderful reviews we have had in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town I regret to inform you that the response from the public has been quite extraordinary. As I have already advised you, the Mayor's School Feeding Fund lost quite a lot of money in Port Elizabeth and it now looks as though we are going to have incurred a loss of over R2,000 in Cape Town. I am at an absolute loss to understand the reason for this. The situation for us is extremely serious, because in addition to the money we have actually been losing in the past few weeks, we had looked to Sponono to pay our administration costs during these

* EXCEPT THAT they have better facilities 2/.... months..

INCORPORATED UNDER SECTION 21 OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1926 (AS AMENDED) AS AN ASSOCIATION NOT FOR PROFIT.



months as we do not have any other productions going at the moment.

As you know, we would very much like to play in every possible centre. I am afraid that our trustees, who look after the money are not going to allow us to continue unless we are able to run the production on a different basis. We just do not have the money to lose and I regret that we are going to have to ask you to alter our royalty arrangement so that instead of paying you a percentage of the gross takings, we pay you a larger percentage of the nett profit. We have devised a scheme for playing in the townships on the basis outlined on the attached memorandum. I personally think that it has every chance of working out, but my instructions are to reduce the risk. Would you think about this, so that we can discuss the matter further when I see you next week.

With all best wishes.

As ever,


IAN.

There was a lengthy discussion about the performances which would take place in the Transvaal townships. It was decided that we would play eight performances a week, consisting of five school matinees and three evening performances. In each area there would be a gala opening performance which would be run in collaboration with a local charity. Increased prices would be charged for these performances. We would also have an opening night party at which members of the audience could meet the cast.

It was decided that we would not finalise our itinerary until the following meeting of the Administration Committee so that members would have the chance of giving the matter further thought. The venues mentioned included Kroonstad, Twa Thema, Daveyton, Vlaakfontein, Atteridgeville, Sharpeville, and the South Western Areas. In any event, it was agreed that no decision would be taken about the length of our run in the Southern Western Areas until we have completed the first weeks run in the townships.

Prices would also be finalised at the next meeting, but it was tentatively decided that we would charge 15c at school matinees and 60c and 75c for the evening performances.

It was agreed that we would sell booked seats at two different prominent shops in each area. We would have to provide the ticket sellers and would make an arrangement with the shop-keepers to lock our takings in their safe.

Publicity material would have to give full details of the booking arrangements as nothing like this has ever been tried in the townships. We would also have to appoint someone very responsible to handle our publicity and must give consideration to the possibility of using a sound van.

00000