

**MINUTES**  
**WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**PRESENTORS LIAISON COMMITTEE / SPECIAL MEETING**

**Thursday, August 10, 2017**

The Presentors Liaison Committee of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 10, 2017, in the Trustees' Board Room, War Memorial Opera House, Chair Bechtle presiding.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Chair Bechtle, Trustee Lui, Trustee Moscone, Trustee Shultz, Trustee Wilsey, President Horn,  
*Ex officio*

Other Trustees Present: Trustee Levin

Staff Present: Elizabeth Murray, Managing Director

**REGULAR ITEMS**

**1. Final report on the six-month Pilot Program to allow covered beverages in the Opera House and Davies Symphony Hall Auditoriums:**

Chair Bechtle stated that at its meeting on October 13, 2016, the Board of Trustees approved the request of the San Francisco Opera, Symphony and Ballet to conduct a six-month pilot program allowing covered beverages in the Opera House and Davies Symphony Hall auditoriums effective January 2017. In April 2017, the Presentors Liaison Committee received a mid-term report on the pilot program from staffs of the War Memorial, Patina, Ballet and Symphony, which report indicated that the pilot program was going well. Since that time, the program continued for the balance of the Ballet and Symphony seasons and for the San Francisco Opera's 2017 summer season. Chair Bechtle said that today the Committee will receive a final report on the six-month pilot program and then consider possible continuation of the program.

Chair Bechtle stated that in advance of today's meeting, Committee members received patron survey results of the Symphony, Ballet and Opera; a summary report from Patina showing average per performance beverages sold in 2017 as compared to 2016; and a letter from the San Francisco Ballet recommending continuation of the beverages in the auditorium program.

Chair Bechtle introduced Russell Kelban from the San Francisco Symphony and Mary Beth Smith from the San Francisco Ballet to review the pilot program survey results for the Committee.

Russell Kelban and Mary Beth Smith reported:

- Patrons were emailed a post-performance survey.
- San Francisco Symphony survey results covered 86 performances with results through June 19, 2017.
- San Francisco Ballet survey results covered 65 performances with results through May 11, 2017.
- San Francisco Opera survey results covered 24 performances with results through July 2, 2017.

Mr. Kelban stated that statistically there is very little difference between the mid-term survey results and the final survey results, with the majority of Symphony/Ballet/Opera survey respondents saying that drinks in the theater had a positive impact on their experience. During discussion, Mr. Kelban noted a frequent comment from patrons about the absence of cup holders in the auditorium and said that if the program continues, the War Memorial and resident licensees may want to investigate the addition of cup holders.

Beth Murray provided comments on behalf of the War Memorial and Patina, as Brian Crowell from Patina is on vacation. Ms. Murray reported that overall the pilot program is going very well and noted that 2017 sales of alcoholic beverages increased by an overall 32% over 2016 sales, with both a price increase and beverages in the auditorium contributing to the increase. She stated that there have been no major custodial or maintenance issues as a result of the pilot program.

Ms. Murray showed the Committee the new improved cup that has a sipping lid instead of the cups that were used during the pilot program that require use of a straw. She noted that the cup is compostable and that new signs have been created to help patrons use the proper waste containers for cup disposal.


Chair Bechtle asked if beverages were being allowed into all Opera House and Davies Symphony Hall performances. Mr. Kelban responded that presently the Symphony does not permit beverages in the auditorium for Great Performer recitals and chamber concerts. Ms. Murray added that all outside licensees are given the opportunity to decide on a show by show basis whether or not to permit beverages into the auditorium. Ms. Smith noted that while the Ballet originally thought they would not allow beverages in the auditorium during Nutcracker performances, they are now reconsidering this.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Trustee Wilsey and seconded by Trustee Lui to recommend continuation of allowing covered beverages in the Opera House and Davies Symphony Hall auditoriums subject to continued monitoring and reporting by War Memorial staff, and the following recommendation was unanimously adopted.

**RECOMMENDED,** By the Presentors Liaison Committee of the War Memorial Board of Trustees to approve the request of the San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Symphony to continue allowing covered beverages in the auditoriums of the Opera House and Davies Symphony Hall subject to continued monitoring and reporting by War Memorial staff.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chair Bechtle adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

  
Jennifer E. Norris  
Executive Secretary