

Society Of London Theatre.txt

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From: Richard Pulford [mailto:richard@solttma.co.uk]  
Sent: 11 March 2002 11:51  
To: 'jane.humphreys@dti.gsi.gov.uk'  
Cc: 'catherine.smadja@culture.gsi.gov.uk'  
Subject: Digital television: Spectrum Planning

Dear Ms Humphreys

I am writing on behalf of the Society of London Theatre and the Theatrical Management Association in response to the consultation document entitled 'Digital Television: The Principles for Spectrum Planning.

In general, we support the response made to you by JFMG. We are particularly concerned about the possible impact of the changeover on the use of radio-microphones within theatre.

Over the years, the professional theatre sector has used radio-microphones with increasing frequency and increasing technical sophistication, not only in musicals but also (though less commonly) in non-musical presentations. At present, the radio-microphone system for a typical musical will use between 20 and 38 channels; and the likelihood is that producers will wish to use more rather than fewer channels in future. Unless sufficient spectrum can be made available for such use once the intended changes in spectrum planning have come into effect, theatre producers will be faced with sharply increased costs. This is necessarily a matter of real concern to both the Society and the Association. Musical theatre is at the heart of the attractions of London's West End in particular, contributing tens of millions of pounds a year to the economy of the capital. The most popular often go on to be major export earners in overseas markets. Yet mounting a new musical show is both a very expensive and a very high-risk business. Any external change which adds to producers' costs will merely increase the financial risk still further, discouraging the external investment which is so crucial to West end theatre.

There appears to be no technical reason why future spectrum planning should not adequately reflect these concerns so long as their significance is recognised from the beginning. Accordingly, on behalf of both the Society and the Association, I must urge that future arrangements should be fully consonant with the sector's legitimate needs.

If there is any further information or explanation which would be helpful to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Richard Pulford  
Chief Executive of SOLT/TMA

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