

The ArtsMan Chronicle

July 15, 2009

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SYSTEMS



Another busy season ahead!

By Diane Tuma

Welcome to another issue of "The ArtsMan Chronicle!"

I'm not sure what people are talking about when they talk about the "lazy days of summer". Although this is traditionally the time when people take their summer vacations, it is also a busy time for many of our clients. Educational institutions are using the time to get ready for the upcoming school year, summer festivals are in full swing, and many theatres are anticipating the tourists coming in to experience their shows.

We've been going full tilt with our Version 7 and now Version 8 upgrades, with more than 60% of clients converted from Version 6!

I hope that you will take a short break from your busy work schedule to read the newsletter.

Enjoy!

Version 6 Support Update:

Due to current economic conditions, many clients have been unable to prepare for a conversion to Version 7. Support for Version 6 will continue through to the end of 2010 with some limitations.

Welcome to our Newest Clients

We've had a number of new installations over the past few months. Welcome to the newest members of the ArtsMan family!

Ballet Memphis joined us in April 2009. Located in Memphis, Tennessee, they are now celebrating their 23rd season and are a unique blend of a ballet company, ballet school, educational enrichment and Pilates Centre.

Carousel Theatre had their installation in May 2009. This Vancouver-based theatre is currently celebrating their 35th anniversary season, and produces plays for young people and their families. There is an in-depth profile on them later in the newsletter.

The Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center in Old Saybrook, Connecticut is a new theatre, opening in August 2009, and had their software installation in June 2009. The building, in which the venue will be housed, is circa 1910 and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Another venue that had their installation in June was the Friends of Aeolian Skinner Opus, located in Amarillo, Texas. The organization's mission is to present professional performances of primarily classical music for the enjoyment and education of the people of Amarillo and the surrounding Texas Panhandle.

Meaford Hall Goes Online!

Starting in April 2009, purchasing a ticket for a performance at Meaford Hall became a lot easier, as they launched their Online Sales. Direct sales through the website opened up a whole new arena of customers for Meaford Hall.

"This has been part of the plan since Meaford Hall opened," explained Meaford Hall House Manager Susan Lake in an article in the Meaford Express recently. "This year we upgrade our entire ticket system - Theatre Manager. While they were here we had them set us up for online ticket sales. Our numbers show that 50% of our patrons are from outside of Meaford."

"This is an added level of convenience for all of our patrons. So far it's been very successful. We're showing a steady increase since we launched."

I recently spoke with Susan to see how their online sales have been going for them, and she that she is very happy with the results. 15% of their sales are now coming from online, and she anticipates that within another 6 months, that number will increase to 30%. She said that these numbers are "fantastic" and she's "thrilled" with how well things have been going.

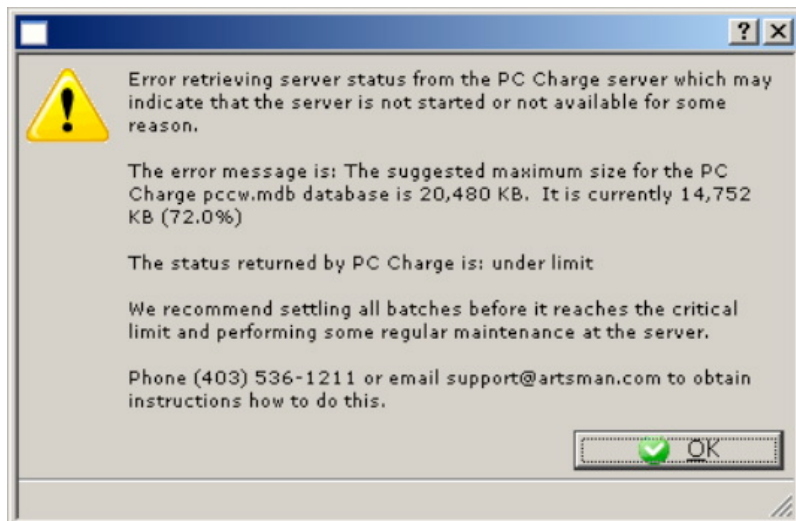
Very early on in the process, Meaford Hall had our support staff assist them with some customization of their web pages, and Susan advised me that they haven't had any issues or questions from their customers. "That's great, seeing as the majority of our patrons are people for whom computers haven't been second nature to them all their lives. Most of them are middle-aged, early retirees and seniors."

Susan said that she's very happy that they were able to finally get their online sales launched. "I think it adds another level of credibility to a theatre to be able to say to a patron that they can purchase tickets online. People now seem to expect to be able to do this, and are disappointed if they can't."

15% of their sales are online and Susan Lake anticipates that this will soon increase to 30%

"The support staff at Arts Management have been great throughout this process. They were instrumental in helping us get this running and very supportive of our endeavour."

Fixing a pccw.mdb File Error in PCCharge



Have you seen this image before? As the pccw.mdb file starts to get large, it can prevent credit cards from being able to be processed efficiently. This pccw.mdb file stores the credit card transactions processed in PCCharge in an encrypted manner. In the later versions of Version 7, and in the new Version 8, Theatre Manager was enhanced to check the size of this file and report back to users logging into Theatre Manager if the file starts to lean towards a potentially risk size level.

If you get a message alerting you to this, you can click OK and proceed with sales as normal. This message will continue to appear, however, until the pccw.mdb file has been managed. Here is the process on how to do this:

Managing the pccw.mdb file:

1. Complete your End of Day Deposit process in Theatre Manager.
2. Minimize Theatre Manager.
3. Open PCCharge.
4. Click the EOD button.
5. Ensure the batch totals are zero.
6. Click the Cancel button.
7. Close out of PCCharge (do not minimize).
8. Open "My Computer".
9. Navigate to c:\Program Files\Active-Charge.
10. Right-click on the pccw.mdb file.
11. Select Send To>>Compressed Zipped Folder
12. Allow the file to zip.
13. Right-click on the zipped copy of the pccw file (it will be a yellow folder with a zipper on it).
14. Select Rename.
15. Add the date to the end of the file name, but before the .zip extension.
16. Right-click on the original pccw.mdb file.
17. Select Delete.
18. Move the zipped pccw file to a location for storage and backup (the BoxOffice\Backups folder containing daily backups is a good option).
19. Start up PCCharge.
20. Log back into Theatre Manager.

Upon starting up PCCharge, a new pccw.mdb file will be created. This file will continue to store future transactions for you.

There is no need to stress when you get this pop-up screen - just click okay and at the end of the day, follow the instructions on the right

Carousel Theatre

Carousel Theatre is currently celebrating their 35th anniversary and have produced 140 plays for young people and their families. They are located on Granville Island in Vancouver, British Columbia and each season, more than 75,000 customers enjoy the Theatre's unique programming.

Over the past few years, as their patron numbers has been growing exponentially, Carousel Theatre had been searching for a better way to solve their data management system issues. In addition, they didn't have the previous means to provide the level of customer service that they wanted to. They needed a solution to both of these problems, and after much research and discussions with their peers (who have implemented Theatre Manager in their own companies), they realized that this was the way they needed to go in order for Carousel Theatre to continue to grow.

I asked Jessie van Rijn, the General Manager at Carousel Theatre, how Theatre Manager compared to their last system: "We have been using Theatre Manager for almost two months, and since its implementation, we find ourselves randomly exclaiming to each other in the office 'this is so easy!', and 'look what I just did - and it only took 2 minutes!' I could go on. We have have a very small infrastructure in the office, and we needed assistance to find a better way to organize our patrons (public audiences, school groups, room renters and theatre school students). Our previous ticketing system only provided us a spreadsheet of our ticket purchasers - so whenever a past patron would call and say 'I'm in your system' we would have to say 'Of course, we remember you, but we do not have immediate access to your contact info - would you mind telling me *again?*' Since we've implemented Theatre Manager, our previous ticket buyers have been so pleased to find out that they don't have to repeat themselves every time - and it gives us a chance to establish a better relationship with each patron."

Since they've been using Theatre Manager, the most important feature for Jessie has been subscriptions: "Subscription ticket sales have never been easier! A few clicks and we're done!" Theatre Manager has made their lives easier by making their patrons' lives easier. "Purchasing tickets online, or through the box office is quick, efficient and hassle-free. They no longer have to worry about dealing with call centres, insane online ticket service charges, or rude outlet sales people. They get the right information, right away!"

For Jessie and the staff at Carousel Theatre, the installation process was enjoyable. "Our ArtsMan installer was awesome. He trained our staff on every single possible thing Theatre Manager could do, and did it in a very patient, clear and efficient manner."

Jessie admitted that she's been far too busy selling tickets to really explore the full capabilities of the system, but she's excited to start booking her school groups through Theatre Manager.

When asked what she liked best about the software, Jessie said "How easy it is to use!"



(LtoR) Carousel Theatre's Artistic and Managing Director CAROLE HIGGINS and General Manager JESSIE VAN RIJN. Photo by TIM MATHESON

Version 8 - It Just Keeps Getting Better!

In April, Doug Easterbrook sent out an email formally announcing the release of Version 8.

Here are some of the key points from the announcement:

There are hundreds of changes, enhancements, key feature improvements, bug fixes, & tweaks that have gone into this version. The key changes that may be of most interest are:

- Theatre Manager version 8 is certified PABP compliant which enables all venues to implement full credit card PCI compliance. We've always taken great care to ensure customer information was safeguarded and cards were encrypted per VISA standards. PABP certification means that an independent auditor has examined our code, tested it against agreed standards, examined it for possible breaches and ensured that all requirements in the PCI compliance documentation can be fulfilled. Theatre Manager was certified in August 2008 and we have an ongoing commitment to re-certify, as per VISA requirements, every two years to make sure your data is safeguarded when TM is implemented according to the install guide.
- Performance, performance, performance. Version 7 is good - Version 8 is better. We tweaked a lot of technical things that redistributed some of the work from Theatre Manager and put it into the PostGres database server. Some examples:
 - Finding a list of 'Smiths' in the database refreshes the patron list up to 10 times faster
 - Selling a group of tickets - 2 to 3 times faster
 - End of day posting - up to 2 times faster
 - Sending an email blast of 5000 letters is 2 to 4 times faster
 - and overall responsiveness is better.
- Coupon Codes can now be redeemed online to affect pricing of tickets. You can offer 10% off for Saturday only and let the sale go through on the web if a specific coupon is cited on the shopping cart page.
- There are a number of other web enhancements such as:
 - a web statistics monitor that provides current and average activity on the web to indicate if you need to adjust the number of listeners
 - You can view the exact steps that a patron took purchasing a ticket in each shopping cart
 - You can check out a patron's shopping cart for them if they call you
- Theatre Manager now remembers the placement of every window, the column setup on each list and more. Closing the window causes TM to remember where it was. If you quit and log back in, TM will remember each window on a per user basis - no need to save them. It just happens.
- There are some key additions to the reporting area:
 - The patron purchase time statistics report is back and is much more flexible.
 - The count of records by postal code is back... and it does more. AND (this is cool) you can also configure it to give you a geographic distance of the patron from a selected Zip or Postal Code. This could help determine the ticket sales based on distance from the venue.
 - We have added 3 levels of filters for field names:
 - All fields
 - Frequently Used -and-
 - Essential, which shows only about 10 key fields to search by on any report. Very handy for new users.

*Quick Tip:
When sending emails to the support team, please include your Company Name in the subject line. This will ensure that your request doesn't get lumped together with other requests which may just have a subject like "help" or "question". We know that all requests are important, and we don't want to miss yours!*

Version 8, (cont'd)

If I'm using Version 7, will any retraining be required?

Emphatically no! Version 7 and 8 look and function the same. There is the odd new button, tab or feature on a windows. Those that have used version 7 can be comfortable that things are in the same place in version 8.

This feedback comes from venues that field tested this new release over the past 2 months in a live working environment. One converted, they never looked back.

How do we upgrade from Version 7 to version 8?

Three components of Theatre Manager need upgraded (explained in the release notes). All the work will be done remotely by Arts Management Staff for you after scheduling a time with the support team (support@artsman.com). One day you will be version 7; the next day, version 8. There is no cost if you have a current maintenance contract. You will need to provide remote access.

What about version 7 if we are not ready to use version 8 yet?

The last official release of version 7 is 7.36.41. We recommend upgrading to that version until you are ready to go to version 8.

What about me - I'm still on version 6?

The process to get from version 6 to version 7 remains the same. It will just be version 8 that arrives on your doorstep with your trainer when you have scheduled your training time.

For those that are not ready to go to version 7 (or 8), our last newsletter explains that we will continue to support version 6 for each venue until next year unless extenuating circumstances arise. If version 6 works for you, fantastic! We realize the economic times may delay upgrading - although, we hope there are a hundred more compelling reasons. If you want to move from version 6 to 8, please contact Tod at sales@artsman.com

*Colleen Lindstrom re
their Version 7 Training:*

*It was a big advantage
having the trainer here
in person, and not
trying to figure this new
version out on our own
as well as learning all of
the capabilities we've
always had and didn't
know.*

*I love the program even
more ... if that's
possible!*

*"Everyone at your company
is so easy to work with! I
really enjoyed the week I
spent training with Tom,
and Tod is always great to
speak with on the phone*

*Mary Fisher-MacDonald,
St. Francis Xavier
University*

V7 and V8 Online Help Now Available!

We would like to thank all our clients for their patience while we've been preparing our online help pages for Versions 7 and 8.

At this time, we'd like to announce that the online help pages are available and ready to use. We are continuing on with the task of adding more detailed information and additional help topics each day.

You can access these pages in either of two ways:

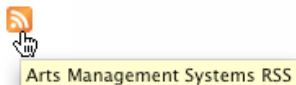
1. Use the link: <http://www.theatremanagerhelp.com> Click on the "Theatre Manager Help" link on the left hand side.
2. Go to our website www.artsman.com and click on the link "ONLINE HELP Version 7 and 8" in the navigation bar on the left.

Version 8.08.04 of Theatre Manager was released today (July 24, 2009) and it has links to the new online help system. Clicking on the '?' in Theatre (V8.08.04 or later) will automatically take you to the main help page. We plan on updating links for context sensitive help on an ongoing basis.

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The Arts Management Website now supports RSS feeds. Subscribing to the RSS feed is a great way to stay up-to-date with what is new with your software and Arts Management Systems. To subscribe to this feed, use the link <http://www.theatremanagerhelp.com> and click on the RSS feed icon in the lower right hand corner. The icon looks like this:



Depending on your browser, you will need to select how you would like to receive your RSS subscription.

We urge you to subscribe to the RSS feeds, as in the future, this will be how you will receive Theatre Manager update notifications.

The Arts Management Team

- how to reach us

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