

A GUIDE TO SCREENING ALTERNATIVE CONTENT FROM BALLET TO THEATRE

Cinema by the Sea - Looe's community cinema first started showing event cinema in 2014. Since then it has screened a wide variety of "Alternative Content" from West End theatre to the ballet Swan Lake from the Marinsky Ballet in St Petersburg. Not forgetting the Awesome Aussies: Opera Australia's annual performance on Sydney Harbour!

Most commercial cinemas and arts centres use fairly expensive satellite technology to obtain AC, and although it is possible to use cheaper domestic satellite equipment after lengthy discussions with installers, distributors & manufacturers of satellite decoders, we decided satellite was not for us.

Three major snags scuppered the use of satellite.

- AC satellite transmissions are not broadcast on fixed channels but are transitory in nature, and currently domestic satellite decoder/recorders cannot be easily programmed to automatically record them.
- There are widespread restrictions on when content can and cannot be screened that make programming impossible for popular shared venues.
- The large satellite dishes that are typically required can be vulnerable to storm damage.
- Heavy rain can also interfere with the broadcast signal causing the image and sound to break up.

Fortunately there are a number of distributors that can supply AC in other ways, usually as BluRay discs. Although a new distributor Cinegi, makes content available for download via the Internet so it can be replayed from a laptop into your projector.

For those who have yet to screen any AC it is worth highlighting the significant differences that exist between film distributors and AC distributors.

- Alternative Content will need to be supplied to you. Retail discs are not available, so there is no "Use own copy" option when booking.
- AC is only supplied in High Definition, so if you are receiving your content on disc you will be sent a Blu-Ray and will need a BluRay player and HD projector.
- Unlike film where rights can be available for many years, AC tends to be available for a limited time after the original performance/event has taken place. Getting access to content in back catalogues is possible, but is a matter for negotiation.
- Many different methods are used to calculate the cost of screening AC including: flat fee; a percentage of the box office with a Minimum Rights Guarantee (MRG); and a percentage of the box office without MRG.
- Ticket prices tend to be higher than for a standard screening. This reflects the higher costs involved in both producing, marketing and screening this material. Some AC distributors will query your admission prices if they think they are too low, so be prepared to negotiate.
- Most AC distributors will supply you with a range of exceptional useful free promotional materials including: stills, trailers, synopses, audience handouts and posters.
- As many AC performances can be a fair bit longer than films, it's a good idea to have an interval. It gives the audience a break and offers chance to run a bar or provide food. Some AC comes with an interval already programmed into the Blu-Ray or HD video file.

Our experience of screening AC in Looe has been a very good one. The shows have proved profitable and our audiences have appreciated the screenings.

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Distributors who handle Alternative Content include:

Arts Alliance www.artsalliance.com

Sales@ArtsAlliance.com

Cinegi www.cinegi.com

attention@cinegi.com

Cinema Live www.cinemalive.com

info@cinemalive.com

More2Screen www.more2screen.com

Park Circus www.parkcircus.com

info@parkcircus.com