

Touring Forum

Minutes

Wednesday 22 June 2016, 2pm-5pm
Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline

CHAIR: Sam Eccles

Attendees:

Aiyana D'Arcangelo (Scottish Dance Theatre), Alasdair Hunter, Alex Bird (Tortoise in a Nutshell), Alice McGrath, Ambra Usellini (Charioteer Theatre), Amy Briggs (Starcatchers), Anita Clark (The Work Room), Anne Marie McCloskey (Scottish Dance Theatre), Caishlan Sweeney (Dundee Rep), Carlotta La Floresta (Charioteer Theatre), Christine Martin (Paisley Arts Centre/Renfrewshire Leisure Trust), Claire Dow, Diane Torr, Emyr Bell (NEAT), George Mackenney (ACT Aberdeen), Jen White (Puppet Animation Scotland), Julie Tait (Culture Republic), Kate Taylor, Kath Clark (Horsecross Arts Ltd), Kenneth Davidson, Kirsten Kearney (Conflux), Kirsty Taylor (Live Borders), Kirsty White (Glasgow Life), Kyriakos Vogiatzis (Traverse Theatre), Laura Penny (Visible Fictions), Liam Sinclair (Scottish Dance Theatre), Lorna Duguid (Creative Scotland), Marion Bourbouze (Imaginate), Michael Emans (Rapture Theatre), Michael Emans (Rapture Theatre), Nick Fearn (plan B), Nick Parr (Dundee Rep), Nicola Denman (Barrowland Ballet), Paula Gibson (ACT Aberdeen), Rhiannon McIntyre (The Touring Network, Highlands & Islands), Robert Softley Gale (Birds of Paradise), Roz Bell (Eden Court), Saffy Setohy (The Work Room), Scott Kyle (Bathgate Regal), Susan Hay (Marc Brew Company), Verity Leigh (Magnetic North), Victoria Beesley (Terra Incognita), Vince Hope (Ayr Gaiety), Viviane Hullin (Fire Exit Ltd).

FST: Jon Morgan, Amanda Liddle, Agnieszka Swida, Ruth Johnston, Emma Beatt

1. Introductions

SE introduced the meeting and conducted round circle introductions. SE also sought agreement from the room to re-order agenda items 4 and 5 which was agreed.

2. Welcome and FST Update – Jon Morgan

FST Getting Started Training: through the Creative Scotland funded Producer's Hub programme, FST is able to offer three new FREE training sessions aimed at early career artists, established artists who want to produce their own work and artists/organisations who want to work with a Producer. First session is on 14th July 2016, at The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen.

'Arts, creativity and Integration of Refugees in Scotland Seminar' on 20 July 2016 (Edinburgh). The Scottish Government in partnership with Creative Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council and the Federation of Scottish Theatre are holding a free one day seminar on how the arts and culture can support the integration of refugees in Scotland. This event coincides with performances of Queens of Syria at Assembly Roxy on 19 and 20 July. More

information and booking details, including applying for a travel bursary can be found [here](#).
Deadline for bookings 11 July.

[Euan Turner Training Fund](#):: FST launched the fund on 12th May 2016 with an application deadline of 28th June 2016.

3. Creative Scotland Update

LD provided the update for Creative Scotland noting that CS are committed to analyzing touring data going forward. They are also currently looking to commission a piece of work to research baseline data with the intention to tie this in with the RFS statistical return.

4. Discussion on building meaningful relationships with audiences:

How can artists and promoters embed an audience focused approach in their work?

Key Points:

Early Audience Engagement

We need to know our audience in statistical terms but also engage with them at the earliest stages of artistic development and get artists to understand who they are engaging with. An audience model similar to Early Dialogue Day was suggested or using social media to share early work (produce an early stage video or presentation by the creator). Small community audiences like to meet the company but this is not always possible in larger venues, but audience engagement should not begin and end with the performance. It was also suggested that there should be more engagement with marketing departments around work in progress.

Network

We should look at establishing more networks to promote shows during a specific time period/geographical area.

Development

It was noted that too often audiences can predominantly be made up of members of the dance and theatre sector – our audience reach can be narrow and we have to encourage a more radical approach to audience development. Do we need to change our model of audience development and do we need to be creating work more in line with what audiences want – and how do we find this out? We need to think longer term, developing audiences over a longer time period. We also need to consider whether touring is the right model to develop audiences and create new work?

Marketing/PR

From a venue point of view it was noted that there was not always a marketing budget available depending on the contract. Companies are not always aware that there is a need for them to market their shows on tour. It was noted that whatever arrangement is made around marketing this has to be made clear at the contract stage. Where venues are unable to provide marketing with costs attached they can liaise with the company to provide shareable data and local knowledge. Venues and companies need to communicate and be transparent around marketing responsibilities. Companies also need to look at the

materials they produce to be sure they really sell the show appropriately, particularly when it's a new piece of work when it can be hard to articulate it to audiences.

5. Audience intelligence:

Case study presentation by Julie Tait and Nick Parr (Board Member) Culture Republic on using data to deliver results. The full presentation is not available to share outside the forum for rights reasons but related useful information can be found at <https://www.culturerepublic.co.uk/resources/>

As understanding of who our audiences are and who they might be is essential this is why Culture Republic collates data from over 3.5 million Scottish households. Data sources include websites, surveys, ticketing etc.

We all use data and should be sharing data more effectively. As the population has not changed in over 10 years the issue is to find the gaps in the data we already have. We need the data on the people we don't know or understand so that we can engage them earlier.

We should also be sharing data more readily across the sector as the competition is not between each other but rather the issue of audiences not knowing the work that exists.

There is a huge amount of accessible market data from sources such as the census; Scottish Household Survey; Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation etc. which provides a demographic profile of the population. Creative Republic exists to gather and interrogate this data for the sector. This information can be used to assess the potential market place and the risk.

Nick Parr detailed how a venue could work with touring companies to jointly gather data so that it could be shared between them legally. In this model the venues took overall responsibility for the data and ensured that ongoing updating of personal details was appropriately managed across the companies involved.

You can share data as long as certain procedures are followed and the appropriate permissions are sought, companies and venues should consider investing in a more long term data sharing contract for future audience development.

It was also noted that ticketing information only provides data on the ticket buyer and that more meaningful audience intelligence can be gathered across departments such as fundraising and education.

Discussion

It is a question for the sector as to when it will respond to the trends we already see as there is a pattern of attendance and considerable data on audience profile. What are we going to change as a sector in our audience development practice – we're good at selling one ticket once but not at ensuring longer term engagement and we're not engaging with trends. These are lessons we have to learn collectively.

In response to a question around gathering data on a UK wide basis, it was noted that CS are in discussion with other agencies such as Audiences Northern Ireland in order to capitalize better on the wider data available.

JT noted that Culture Republic can offer a certain amount of free advice and can also interrogate data for individual organizations.

6. Discussion on mitigating audience risk:

Some practical steps

Test out messages – companies can run several versions of an ad over social media then evolve their marketing campaign appropriately.

Gather more qualitative data on what puts audiences off to identify the barriers.

Look at different models for audience initiatives.

Go where the audience is! Outdoor work etc.

It would be useful to have some data and resources collated for smaller companies who don't have marketing teams.

Look at different ticketing models – such as pay what you like.

It was agreed that we need to think long term rather than 'show to show' in regard audience development and that responsibility for the success of this lies with companies, venues, artists and funders.

LD noted that CS would facilitate a smaller working group, to identify what research is required, which will then feedback to the forum.

Topics for future forum: please email [Jon](#) with suggestions

Useful background reading / resources:

[Minute of Touring Forum on 21 April 2016.](#)

<http://www.phf.org.uk/publications/imagining-arts-organizations-for-new-audiences/>

<http://www.ruraltouring.org/work/rural-touring-dance>

ARC Stockton [Pay What You Decide Toolkit](#).

Next Forum Meeting – 20 October 2016 – Venue TBC