



FST Dance Forum

Thursday 25 June 2017 2.30-5.30pm
Tramway, Glasgow

Attendees

Jade Adamson (The Work Room), Yolanda Aguilar (Shaper/Caper), Angus Balbernie, Danielle Banks (Indepen-dance), Leah Black (Creative Scotland) Laura Cameron Lewis, (Creative Scotland) Anita Clark (The Work Room), Kate Deans (Creative Europe Desk, Scotland), Miriam Early (Scottish Ballet), Nick Fearne (plan B), Melanie Forbes-Broomes (The Work Room), Ashanti Harris (Indepen-dance), Bush Hartshorn (Dance Base), Susan Hay (Marc Brew Company) Rob Heaslip, Paul Michael Henry (Unfix Festival), Sara Johnstone (The Work Room), Tim Nunn (Tramway), Vicky Rutherford-O'Leary (Curious Seed), Saffy Setohy (The Work Room), Liam Sinclair (The Byre Theatre)

In Attendance: Amanda Liddle and Fiona McCurdy (Federation of Scottish Theatre)

Chair: Liam Sinclair (The Byre Theatre) – standing in for Emma Jayne Park (Cultured Mongrel)

Networking Tea and Coffees

1. Welcome / Introductions

Liam Sinclair welcomed the group and gave a huge thanks to Emma Jayne Park for her work on the agenda and who was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting. The group introduced themselves then undertook a short statement session agreeing or disagreeing by physically placing themselves in the circle to statements such as 'I am being paid to be here', 'do you feel valued in your role'.

2. FST Update – Amanda Liddle

Next Members' Meeting on Wednesday, 21 June, at The Festival Theatre, Edinburgh - 10.30am-3pm. In addition to ordinary business and update from Creative Scotland the next members' meeting will include a session focussing on 'Audience' from Lisa Baxter (The Experience Business) who undertook the forthcoming 'Review of Touring Theatre and Dance' for Creative Scotland. In addition, we will be allowing an extended lunch so members have ample time to meet our new Director, Jude Henderson, who takes up post on 30 May.

Producers Forum – 29 June, 2.00 – 5.00pm National Theatre of Scotland, Rockvilla, Glasgow

The next Producers Forum will take place on 29 June and will be chaired by Kate Nelson from Nutshell Theatre. The full agenda will be confirmed nearer the time but discussion topics will include resource sharing and career sustainability and CPD. There will also be a short presentation from NTS staff who will update the forum on the resources available to producers via NTS. Book your place by emailing hello@scottishtheatre.org

Next Dance Forum – Provisionally 19 October – Horsecross Perth – AL asked the group to provide feedback on the timing of the forum. Action All

Apply now to become a Mentor – app deadline: 19 June

The Step Up Mentoring Programme is currently open for applications from potential Mentors. As a mentor, you will receive comprehensive training and support throughout your mentoring. It's a great opportunity for professionals working in the performing arts sector to develop their coaching and leadership and to develop skills which will enhance your workplace

Made in Scotland 2017

The Made in Scotland 2017 showcase launched earlier today, featuring 24 shows across theatre, dance and music which will take place during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Please take some brochures with you] The full listings can also be found on www.madeinscotlandshowcase.com

3. Presentations: Sustaining Your Practice-
An International Perspective-
Speakers:

Angus Balbernie – Independent Artist

Please see written statement as Appendix 1

Kate Deans - Creative Europe Desk UK - Scotland, Culture Officer

You can download the PowerPoint presentation via the resources section on FST's website [here](#). Main discussion points below:

- Creative Europe Desk exists to signpost to EU opportunities and encourage cross border working
- There is funding open to non EU countries working in partnership and the advice on 'Brexit' is that it is currently business as usual and there will be open funding opportunities even after leaving the EU.
- There are different levels of networks, organisations and projects, Look at what network and projects may be a good fit for you
- There are 2 programmes relevant: the media sub programme and the cultural sub programme (which covers a broad range of arts disciplines)
- Co-operative projects require at least 3 organisations to partner and match funding is not required to be confirmed at point of application
- It is recognized that the funding process can be arduous and KD is available for 1:1 meetings to assist
- Legally binding co-operation agreements do need to be established between partner organisations

Useful networks include [IETM](#) and [European Dance House Network](#) (although issues around finding the right contact in this disparate network were expressed and [On the Move](#)

Discussion was held around the lack of opportunities for individuals to apply for funding and although it is the case that EU funding is only open to registered companies further discussion was held around the benefits of sole traders setting up as companies. A possible training session providing advice on this process was suggested (possibly in partnership with the Cultural Enterprise Office and CS. **Action FST**

The additional benefits of being a company also include rights to apply for [Theatre Tax Relief](#)

4. Group Discussion -The group were split into 3 groups to discuss:

How can we turn the gig economy into a sustainable way of working?

- Previous Work Room research found that 90% of income came from within the sector with a near equal balance between choreography, dance and teaching
- We need to open up opportunities for other areas of practice i.e. leadership – how do we showcase dance leaders to make them more visible?
- Leah Black suggested use of the ‘Make Works’ model which provides practitioners with a methodology for identifying how to protect their practice and earn from other sources.

How do we address the perception that international is always better?

- Is there a perception that international is better?
- Audience doesn’t necessarily see it as better
- International work is a massive investment that gets more prominence and can sometimes overshadow other work
- An international perspective in creating work is important
- We need to support local artists more
- The driver to do international work is sometimes economic (project or teaching work)

How is Scottish dance visible internationally and how do we build upon this?

- Networks are key
- Made in Scotland is potentially beneficial but looks skewed towards organisations
- Possible need for a shared marketing resource or consortium
- Many dancers not visible even locally – Individuals can’t afford to market internationally
- How can dance be more equitable and celebrate diversity better?

5. Presentation: Sustaining Your Practice -

A Local Perspective –

Speakers:

Bush Hartshorn - Dance Director, Teatro Sardegna

Sustaining your practise, provocations to bear in mind-

1. Do I have a practise?
2. What is it?
3. Do I do it?

4. Can I explain it?
5. Can I disseminate it?
6. Where will this practise be in 20/30 years' time?
7. How many artists are able to practise into their later years?
8. Can/should you sustain your practise by becoming involved in Higher Education?
9. Are theatres the best place for sustainable dance practice and why is the ambition to end up in the largest space?

Creative Scotland – Laura Cameron-Lewis

General CS update and focus on Review of Touring Theatre and Dance

- Strong Made In Scotland programme and as it is also a British Showcase year everyone should take the opportunity to connect with international promoters.
- Less open funding.
- Less money for next RFO round – it is anticipated fewer organisations will be funded.
- There will be a review of Open Project Funding later this year and it is anticipated that lottery funds will decrease
- This will mean reduced resources for dance at a programming and marketing level.

6. Group Discussion:

What resources are being wasted and why? How do we resolve this?

- Laura Cameron Lewis – further Creative Scotland dance specific strategy researching/documentation would be a wasteful use of resources given the restrictions in funding.
- Is there a way of encouraging financial transparency? Can this be done as a sector through FST?
- Artists often not understanding the costs of running a venue and therefore risks attached to making a loss – perhaps this could also be more transparent? Wasted opportunity with open dialogue with venues.

What is the PR issue with dance? How do we tackle this?

- Is there a problem with artists communicating their work to audiences?
- Do they need to think about it more from the outside?
- Is it more about audience investment in the work?
- Bush Hartshorn – there's an issue when marketing spend is more than ticket sales

The world is evolving rapidly. How can we create infrastructures/resources that are flexible enough to remain relevant?

- Could there be shared dance marketing resources?
- Look outside the standard venues for different artist opportunities and audience experience.

End of Meeting

Appendix 1 - Written statement as presentation from Angus Balbernie

I wish I was there and listening to others talk, and learning from them...

You asked me to maybe try to explain my practice in Europe, and how I sustain it?
And how I've somehow managed to work without really, any connection to the usual funding bodies, institutions or forms of economy?

And, in a rare flash of daylight, I realise they answer each other, (or perhaps cancel each other out!)

Because there is no pattern to this. There is no plan.

In a world that grows ever darker, I try to remain positive about the arts.
As a medium for hope, and as a site of exchange, at many levels.

I am in awe of the many artists I meet everywhere who have found a way to sustain their practice. pretty much all of them work in a very mixed form of economy, and in a jigsaw puzzle of juggling their art, their lives, forms of economy, forms of developing and sustaining practice, interaction with those needed to help sustain and support their work, or not, and finding viable and exciting ways to focus and site their art-making in relation to both forms of production, and forms of reception.

I have little interest in much of the funded stuff, the spectacular, the preconditioned.
But, everywhere I go I meet fine folk, involved in the arts at many many levels, and exploring these many and varied forms of exchanging our "perceptual grammar" (as Ramachandaram defines it) as ways to share information on what is to be alive, human, non-human.

This art-stuff is ok. It can help us be human.

Because I found out had none of the right equipment to develop my art through the "normal" channels of funding bodies, interaction with funders, producers, or any of these norms, I went west...

...I went to Europe, to the west coast of America, initially to take workshops, and meet folk in similar places, and then, step-by-step, through joining small projects, and running workshops, and finding the most fluid places of exchange, (often then the local Contact Impro jam!) met and developed connections to many fab people, and we began to find ways to make work together, and found way to support this work, and found venues offering support for lok-ey experiments and so things developed....it took years!

And I guess this way of "being an artist" that most of the folk I met and worked with in the west coast stayed with me, a kind-of imprint, a way of definition, outwith anyone else's definitions....

There was no plan.

When I returned to try to work in the UK, I found interactions with arts councils to be deadly for me, and as much to do with my dyslexia and lack of definition as their lack of empathy

and vision. We both sucked!

So I just got on with teaching and finding similar folk in europe, in offering something as a “teacher” that (then) seemed to connect to training needs, and working with and talking to people who did things. in whatever form, place, system and situation they had created to work with and in...

Everything I’ve done just evolved through the doing, through meeting great people, and working with great people and keeping a tool sharpened...something that bought an economy.. (For me this was, over 25 years, ideas on how to get folk to compose, choreograph and direct)

Now that tool is used up, and it doesn’t matter, as generations have passed and younger, far more alive folk explore other ways, other forms, other generative structures.....it’s as ever an ecology that must change...

I managed to exist and sustain myself as an artist precisely because of a total lack of organisation and planning.

I finally became aware of other energies, other ways to define myself as an artist, through finding there are always layers below and above layers, and that the institutions and funders are just small parts of a much bigger, and far more exciting whole..... You just need to keep searching for it....

Barry Lopez writes....

“How is one to live a moral and compassionate existence when one is fully aware of the blood, the horror inherent in life, when one finds darkness not only in one’s culture but within oneself? If there is a stage at which an individual life becomes truly adult, it must be when one grasps the irony in its unfolding and accepts responsibility for a life lived in the midst of such paradox. One must live in the middle of contradiction, because if all contradiction were eliminated at once life would collapse. There are simply no answers to some of the great pressing questions. You continue to live them out, making your life a worthy expression of leaning into the light.”