



FST Dance Forum

Thursday 12 October 2017 2-5 pm
Anatomy Rooms, Aberdeen

Attendees

Ian Abbott; Mhairi Allan; Laura Cameron Lewis (Creative Scotland); Joan Clevillè (Joan Clevillè Dance); Aiyana D'Arcangelo (Scottish Dance Theatre); Hayley Durward (Citymoves Dance Agency); Eowyn Emerald; Rosanna Irvine; Karl Jay-Lewin (Bodysurf Scotland); Sara Johnstone (The Work Room); Ruth Kent (Citymoves Dance Agency); Jenny Langlands (Dance Base); Laura MacLennan (Eden Court); Helen McIntosh (Dance Base); Anna Meldrum (Eastwood Park Theatre); Emma Jayne Park (Emma Jayne Park); Steve Slater (Citymoves Dance Agency); Matthias Strahm

In Attendance: Jude Henderson and Amanda Liddle (Federation of Scottish Theatre)

Chair: Emma Jayne Park (Cultured Mongrel)

Networking Tea and Coffees

1. Welcome / Introductions

EJP welcomed the group and gave thanks to CityMoves for hosting the forum. The group introduced themselves then undertook a short statement session agreeing or disagreeing by physically placing themselves in the space in response to statements such as 'I am being paid to be here', 'do you feel valued in your role'.

Apologies were received from Tim Nunn who submitted comment on the need for some form of online tool for dance artists and dance promoters to communicate.

It was noted that [tourbook](#) has just re-launched as a touring showcasing platform.

2. FST Update – Jude Henderson

Market Day 2018

The next Emporium (Early Dialogue Day and Market Day) will take place on 20/21 March 2018 at The Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh. Booking for the event is now open via the [FST website](#).

Made in Scotland

Applications are now open for Made in Scotland 2018. Made in Scotland is a curated showcase that promotes high quality music, theatre and dance from Scotland-based artists, to international promoters and audiences at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The funding available will not fully fund a run at the Fringe, but it can be used to contribute to some of

the direct costs of presenting work (such as venue rental and technical hires, access, marketing and networking costs) to allow artists to present work at the highest standard, in the best possible conditions.

The deadline for applications is 5pm, Wednesday 22 November. For full guidelines and application information visit the Creative Scotland website:

<http://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/targeted-funding/made-in-scotland>

New FST Training Offer – now online includes:

Theatre Tax Relief

2pm–4.30pm, Wednesday 29 November 2017

Working Towards Wellbeing

1pm–4.30pm, Wednesday 17 January 2018

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Surgeries

10am–5pm, Thursday 25 January 2018

Royal Lyceum Theatre Offices, 30b Grindlay Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9AX

Introduction to Finance

2.30pm–5pm, Thursday 22 February 2018

Tramway, 25 Albert Drive, Glasgow, G41 2PE

Introduction to Funding

2.30pm–5pm, Thursday 15 March 2018

Tramway, 25 Albert Drive, Glasgow, G41 2PE

Tech for the Non-technical

10am–5pm, Monday 5 March 2018

Dundee, Venue TBC

Winter School will be on week of the 5th February – Programme to be announced

3. Discussion

EJP introduced the topic for the forum and that a discussion on the future landscape of the sector was triggered by previous discussions around perceived waste. Also noting that Chatham House rules apply to forum discussions.

Steve Slater – Citymoves Dance Agency

SS welcomed the forum to the Anatomy Rooms and introduced the theme of this year's Dance Live Festival – 'Art is the new Oil'. Citymoves recognized their need for new premises in order to expand and become more independent. The Anatomy rooms were identified, as they had been a previous venue for DanceLive. It provides space for Citymoves to operate year-round and offer space to other artists. Working with other artists allows us to look at how we operate in the wider sector and work with other art forms such as visual arts. It was important to have a venue in the North East to allow artists to make work and encourage artists to live and work in Aberdeen – with the oil industry diminishing. Culture should have a role in the conversation about the future of the city. Art has always been a minority and poorly paid profession but artists should have a respected and paid roles.

Vicky Rutherford O'Leary – Written contribution

Catalyst was founded as a pilot dance management project. A portfolio of 3 established small companies who had previously received project funding were selected to receive administrative and managerial support. In essence, it was conceived to help dance artists and choreographers to flourish and be inspired - allowing the time and space for the creative process, by alleviating some of the stresses and challenges faced by trying to manage all elements of their work and to take on some of the administrative burden.

There was a focus on providing services in tour booking, budgeting, financial and company management and organisational development and it quickly became evident that there was a skills gap in all of these areas that was now in part being fulfilled by Catalyst. Sitting within Dance Base, Catalyst was able to access administrative resources and a wealth of knowledge for the benefit of the companies in the portfolio, as well as managing a small budget which allowed project funds to be bolstered and crucially to provide a more stable cash flow scenario for each project that was managed. This was invaluable to relieve stress and risk for the artists at the helm of each company.

Inevitably, as a small outfit, there was not enough administrative capacity to support more than 3 companies at any given time, and it quickly became obvious that there was a gap in provision to support a rapidly growing number of dance artists who were making their own work. These independent artists had no infrastructure and much less experience of the funding context.

Alongside this, it was also evident that the role of the 'manager', whilst very necessary, was not always offering enough and that of equal importance, was the need to develop a long term relationship with a producer, who would also provide a more nuanced pastoral, strategic and creative support and to help to develop a context and a profile for the work. This was identified as a key area which Catalyst could further develop with the artists in the portfolio.

In response to this emerging landscape, Catalyst began to offer artist surgeries; meeting with individual artists and collectives to provide the time and space for artists to talk about their work in a supportive environment, and to receive advice around planning projects, making funding proposals, budgeting and signposting potential partners and collaborators and avenues for professional development.

Because of these changing situations it was necessary then to bring in additional administrative support, which remained a key feature of Catalyst's work, and the team of one grew to smaller teams, with some of this fixed term / project support through integrating roles into funding applications and also by providing traineeship opportunities for emergent producers. Thus, responding to a growing need for producing support on many levels.

The role of the 'manager' also developed with the longer term artists; time was given to strengthen the artist / producer relationship through working together, building trust and respect for differing approaches and practices. This way of working and evolving organically made it possible to be more strategic, to find space for dialogue around sharing work for audiences in differing contexts, to learn from each other, and to respond to an ever shifting landscape and to face challenges (and opportunities) from a position of greater strength and confidence.

Video Contributions – Various:

- Artists encouraged to make larger productions but not resourced
- Last 10 years has seen an increasingly diversified work force – perception that dance is middle class – need visibility of other classes and an open discussion around this issue.
- Need to improve dance audiences across the country. Dance needs to be more visible and valued as an art form.
- More engagement/collaboration between dance artists and funded organisations
- Resources going to established organisations vs emerging ones needs to be regularly and transparently assessed - we run the risk of losing really important artists
- Artists need transparency and emerging artists need as much information as possible and to know who to go to
- Companies need to know who their work is for – work needs to nourish the community
- What are we doing to make space for our successors
- Great to have opportunities for dialogue

4. Group Discussion

The group were given a practical task with props and asked to take representations of current resource (finance, management, artists and buildings) and imagine a different landscape.

Discussions points:

- Good to think about structures differently
- More equality of admin roles and artists
- Need to support independents outside central belt
- Current funding would approximately only support 280 individuals on a 25K salary
- Need to support dance roles throughout Scotland – expensive for artists to live in major cities
- Buildings need to put money into creating dance spaces

5. Creative Scotland Update– Laura Cameron-Lewis

General CS update and discussion on working groups

LCL noted that the Dance Sector Review was currently being updated in parts.

CS wish to set up communities of interest to provide feedback on what needs changing and then to take action in these areas. A community of interest could be geographical or not. These groups could look at questions such as what would a dance sector would look like if it wasn't situated around buildings; or look at particular regional need etc. There is some funding available with the possibility of 5 groups. These artist led groups would be tasked with actions.

Further discussion was held around areas such as Dumfries and Galloway where there has been a lot of research but little action. The sector has to look at how it takes leadership in these areas.

Good to have artists coming together outside of sector organisations.

6. Additional Discussion Points

- Issues were raised around the Made in Scotland Showcase and its role as a flagship for the best in Scotland given that only 2 companies (with 3 pieces by one company) were included this year. Concern was also raised around the role of FST as a membership body sitting on the decision panel for MIS applications. (JH will take this into consideration going forward)
- Need to look at showcasing and its purpose – CS are looking at this in relation to its international strategy
- We need to not just look at how we make good work but how we make good artists
- Concerns raised about appropriate spaces for dance at Fringe

AOB

Thanks were given to EJP for all her work as Chair of the dance forum during 2017. Forum chairs are rotated yearly and anyone interested in taking up the position for the 2 forums during 2018 (Spring and Autumn) should contact amanda.liddle@scottishtheatre.org

Per the forum's request please see appendix below for anonymised comments circulated during the May forum meeting.

Appendix:

- There is too much focus on equality and not enough focus on quality.
- There seems to be the same artists getting the same opportunities and not because of the level of work they make but because they can be social and confident with members of the sector that make decisions
- There are too few venues willing to take dance - and even fewer taking a diverse programme of dance.
- It is good to have dance agencies in key cities that help to promote and support dance.
- There is visible resistance to addressing issues of equality in the established institutions, national dance agencies and schools.
- Independent choreographers are increasingly marginalised to small platforms and site specific work leaving the big stages to the NGOs, classical ballet companies and big funded works.
- The current infrastructure places the majority of resources towards everything surrounding the life of a dance piece, rather than the creation of it.
- The public now connects through venues and promotional material rather than the artists themselves.
- Overall the infrastructure for dance is functioning.
- There are gaps in our current infrastructure such as: lack of producers; lack of long term partnerships with venue based organisations; gaps in careers, e.g. moving into a career after graduating, sustaining a career in later life (60+) and moving into 'leadership' positions.
- People are working really hard but a lot of time is wasted because of ineffective systems.
- Artists are so busy being managers their work is suffering.
- There is a cultural dissonance between those in positions of power and the real landscape of Scottish dance.
- There are so few dancing jobs that young graduates are encouraged to become choreographers before they are ready. Too many graduates think they are choreographers without ever having a job.
- More proper professional classes are needed. Cunningham is outdated. We need good real professional class. Free class.
- We need dancers.
- We maybe need to be thinking outside the box of 'professional class' in a landscape that no longer has a standard technique.
- We need to acknowledge the administrative tasks of independent artists which are

constantly pressurised by diminished budgets. This results in lots of work being carried out for £0.

- It feels like Dance is less subsidised than other sectors, such as Drama, by Creative Scotland.
- Dance needs to be programmed every six to eight weeks if there is any hope of building regular audiences.
- Dance training needs to have a teaching strand as most people have to teach and bad teachers exist.
- There is a genuine need for more BAME representation and women in key roles. Empower these people and you not only address the bias and balance of cultural power, you feed the economy.
- Every publicly funded organisation should be required to have a minimum of two artists on their board or steering committee.
- The sector needs to look at work as a whole unit - with organisations and venues collaborating together. This should not be done through the introduction of more administration, but rather through constructive streamlining and identifying with artists what would truly benefit them.
- Can we learn more from the private dance sector on working more effectively together?
- We need a more intelligent approach that brings together organisations without artists having to do all of the leg work.
- The national dance agencies have become stale and self-serving.
- There are administrators who do not care about the arts. These people are damaging to the sector and only serve as an obstruction between artist, work and audience.
- NO ONE LISTENS.
- European dancers come to Scotland and leave surprised that the training is so outdated.
- There seems to be a trend of performance art dance (not much moving) which is completely valid and needed. But when these artists are getting supported far more than artists that choreograph movement, there is a problem.
- Scottish choreographers are not getting enough opportunities to teach master classes/ workshops to earn money. Lately there has been more choreographers brought in from England to create on companies/ youth companies/ professionals. Scottish choreographers have a lot to teach as well!!
- Female choreographers still getting pushed aside for men with little or no choreographic skill, the boys club need to stop: let's look at the quality of work not gender or personality.
- Programmers, be braver.

- Trust your audiences.
- Work with us.
- Dance programming power is held by a very few individuals who seems to support and programme work based on their own relationships and personal aesthetic preferences. This leaves the majority of dance artists effectively begging for scraps.
- The artist is becoming decreasingly seen and heard in the trajectory of dance in Scotland.
- Dance work needs to connect with participants and audiences, don't create work in isolation from your 'public'. Involve them in as many decision as you can then you will create a community around your work that has strong support.
- There is a fear that if you speak out that you will sever potential for future work. Often you can't challenge a system without it looking like you are challenging the artist who was successful in the system.
- Visiting companies used to generate an additional revenue for venues, now they are expensive. Programmers simply do not have the money to pay people guarantees.
- In most venues nobody knows enough about dance to programme it.
- This doesn't mean it shouldn't be programmed.
- How do we recognize the logo or the brand of dance? People go to see NTS because it is an NTS show – why is this not happening with dance?
- Programmers become used to their space becoming their world and need to recognize that dance makers lead more transient lives.
- Who are we scared of and why?
- Who is choosing what work is seen internationally? Made In Scotland, British Dance Edition, British Council