

**FEDERATION OF SCOTTISH THEATRE
TOURING FORUM**

Thursday 26 April 2018
Dance Base, Edinburgh
2pm-5pm

Attendees:

Carla Almeida (Dundee Rep); Viktoria Begg (Dundee Rep); Roz Bell (Eden Court); Alex Bird (Tortoise in a Nutshell); Anna Derricourt (Catherine Wheels Theatre Company); Sam Eccles; Michael Emans (Rapture Theatre); Alex Fthenakis (Rootstock Arts); Louise Gilmour Wills (Catherine Wheels Theatre Company); Sarah Gray (Scottish Theatre Producers); Luke Holbrook (Assembly Roxy); Andrew Jeffrey (Catherine Wheels Theatre Company); Belinda McElhinney (Barrowland Ballet); Ondine Oberlin (Tricky Hat); Freda O'Byrne; Susan Robertson (Ayr Gaiety); Magdalena Schamberger; Liam Sinclair (The Byre Theatre); Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh (Zendeh); Mairi Taylor (Birds of Paradise); Pamela Walker (Imagine); Jeremy Wyatt (Ayr Gaiety)

In attendance:

Chair: Simon Hart (Puppet Animation Scotland)

FST: Anna Broomfield, Jude Henderson, Amanda Liddle

Creative Scotland: Lorna Duguid

1. Welcome & Introductions

SH welcomed attendees and led introductions around the room.

2. FST Update

Upcoming Training

[Dealing with Difficult People](#) | Friday 22 June 2018 | 12-4pm | Perth – Horsecross

[Working Towards Wellbeing](#) | Friday 29 June 2018 | 12pm-5pm | Royal Botanic Garden - Edinburgh

If you have any queries about training events offered by FST, please contact our Training and Development Manager Fiona McCurdy on fiona.mccurdy@scottishtheatre.org.

Other Diary Dates

[June 2018 Dance Forum](#) | 08 Jun 2018 2-5pm | Universal Hall, Findhorn

[June 2018 Producers' Forum](#) | 14 Jun 2018 2-5pm | The Tron, Glasgow

[June 2018 Members' Meeting](#) | 27 June 2018 | Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

New Support

For 2018/19, we are offering new support for individual members in the form of up to £50 to assist with childcare costs that would allow them to attend FST meetings and events. We will be trialling other ways to support parents/carers to attend meetings during the year, so if you have any thoughts on this please do email [Amanda](#).

Reminder

We are currently completing membership renewal and all Individual and Associate members have been issued with an invoice to be paid as soon as possible. Full Members have received emails requesting their 2016/17 turnover for us to calculate fees for 2018/19. If you haven't done so yet, please contact [Anna](#) so your membership can be renewed.

3. Creative Scotland Update

Lorna Duguid provided an update from CS:

- Development of Touring Fund is underway, for funding to begin in 2019. Until March 2019, the main route for funding is Open Project Funding.
- The Touring Strategy Group, formed of FST members, has met several times. This group plus some other FST members will meet on 10 May and 17 May to develop the strategy for touring in Scotland and the criteria for the Touring Fund.
- International Touring: Momentum programme during Edinburgh Festivals in August. Information day on 5th June at 5pm at CS – an opportunity for those interested in international touring to find out more about Momentum. Past attendees find this is a valuable way to network with international people.
- Many WIP invitations have been issued but CS staff are often unable to attend. Can we come up with a process to schedule WIPs together, or use one venue? CS staff want to see shows but are often unavailable.

4. Touring Strategy Group

- Background: In 2017 two touring working groups focusing on code of practice and audiences met twice and released key recommendations. Three work streams: 1) Create a Touring Strategy group; 2) Fund and support a balanced programme of work; 3) Conduct audience research.
- The Strategy Group met twice prior to the RFO and Touring Fund announcements. The group is now co-designing the Touring Fund with CS.
- Lisa Baxter involved – fed into initial consultation. How can we use product design to model the Touring Fund?
- FST/CS will continue communicating plans to the sector and asking them to provide feedback. The fund will be tested against the strategy model.

- Initially the focus of the fund will be on work being made, rather than for development/support organisations. Some funding may be retained for strategic programmes which support touring – this balance could change throughout the course of the fund. The fund can grow and change as the context around us shifts.
- The workshops on 10 and 17 May will investigate the criteria for the application processes, along with a justification for how this fund can address the problems in Touring in Scotland.
- Guidelines for application to be published in June and first round of funding to be allocated in December 2018. December decisions won't be the full set of decisions for the year – more likely to use a staggered approach and the process will be open to feedback.
- Everything will still go through CS processes, e.g. justifying decisions to Scot Gvmt.
- We need make sure to explore audiences and how we can reach people we are not already reaching. Lisa's day job is The Experience Business – all about audiences. LS is confident that she will ensure that the group focuses on audiences.
- We need to take some ownership over the problem surrounding audiences. Funders need to hold makers to reaching wider audiences, and makers need to honour those intentions to reach wider audiences. One specific fund can't be relied on to do that.
- The fund is just one piece of the jigsaw. Both presenting and creative sides can often focus on transactions, how can we focus more on the audience? One big point of the review was that audiences are not at the heart of theatre – we need to make it so.
- Open Project Funding is ongoing but due to be reviewed in the next year. Budgeted until March 2019. LD anticipates that OPF will tail off after the Touring Fund announcement, but not that it will disappear altogether.
- Exactly how OPF and Touring Fund will work together is still TBC, but application processes will be clear. Open Funding will likely cover everything that the Touring Fund does not cover. There is pressure at the moment for people to make work that is able to tour because that is what gets funded – want to make sure that non-touring work can still be funded.
- Important to look at how all of the funds can work together, especially the crossover period to ensure people don't fall through the cracks
- Initial feedback likely to be gathered via online survey – allows FST/CS to see lack of consensus more easily and focus our discussion on those problem areas

- Important to plan how the sector will be consulted so that the sector can plan.
- In the first 3-4 months of OPF, the problems became very apparent but the system wasn't in place to change it – this fund is different, and will be open to change and grow. Likely to be a wash-up after the first round followed by an annual review.
- CS need to be able explain funding decisions. The fund needs to make this possible – e.g. not just asking questions in applications which everyone responds to in a very similar way. Bring the focus back to the piece of work itself.
- Need very clear reasons for why projects do and do not get funded in this fund.
- Really important to be clear on where things like development go, and respect how different people develop
- LS: There is an opportunity for Dance and Theatre to take a lead here. It is really positive that CS want to work so closely with the sector to design this fund – Dance and Theatre are first sectors to have strategic support in this way. Can this pave the way for how we work with CS more closely in the future?

6. Showcasing

- Difficult to get work in front of audiences. How can we showcase work to audiences? What might be useful to support this? What could this mean/look like for programmers, promoters and artists? What would be useful to you in showcasing, specifically with a focus on digital?
- WIPs are becoming more difficult to access (by programmers/CS staff) as everyone has less money/time. Often invites to sharings can be last minute. Go and See funds are great but people can't spare the time to go out and see things.
- Either digital films or one day full of WIPs would be useful. 3-5min reel plus a full length. Don't need lots of fancy introduction - even just a camera set up at the back of the venue is valuable.
- Some things don't come across properly in film, maybe we can't do the work justice if we're filming it. WIP is especially vulnerable to looking bad on film.
- Programmers are creatively literate enough to watch a video of a performance and understand that it is not the full picture – film is still helpful if it's the only way to view the work.
- If the other option is not seeing work at all, is film our best option?
- Are people with limited time still going to be able to view these videos?

- Often theatre is so much about sharing the experience with others
- Can there be guidelines for what a film should be? i.e. venues tell producers what they are looking for, then companies/artists can film that specific thing?
- Is it possible to have common standard on low budget? If there was a shared practice, would the quality of videos be better? Need clarity in what venues are looking for
- Pairing sharings with FST events – e.g. before/after forums/meetings
- The Touring Network has a spring gathering (to be moved to autumn) which promotes WIP. Imagine recently held an event showcasing four works in progress.
- Needs to be made very clear what stage the work is at - showcasing tour ready work vs WIP are two different things.
- Often work is programmed so early that there isn't anything to film.
- Can companies bring work back to tour again and again? Not always as simple as filming a tour and then those exact artists being able to tour. Is there a possibility to develop a full relationship?
- Sometimes filming work can be very transactional – getting specific shots which show very practical things (e.g. space) – and not necessarily about artistry of a show.
- There is some responsibility of programmers to be transparent and explain reasons for not programming a show. Needs to be very clear what programmers are looking for.
- Despite these issues, if programmers/CS can't get out to see a show, it is still useful to see a video.
- Often WIPs are filmed, even just for the artists themselves – that film is there, how can it be best used? Can this film be used for venue managers/programmers etc?
- Very rare that people will link to a WIP video in CS Applications but that would be useful for applications.
- Could live showcasing events be livestreamed? There is current technology that can add more info to a video – e.g. 360 images, google cardboard, etc. However, livestreaming can be very expensive.
- Promoters are already talking to each other during the fringe, but is there a way to structure this/facilitate?

- Could FST link up more with the National Rural Touring Forum? They have a showcase but it is largely English.
- Development work/WIP have their own set of challenges – perhaps this can be tied into the touring strategy chat.
- [Emporium Early Dialogue Day](#) - event where artists are able to discuss early stage work with promoters.
- Important to build relationships with companies who will come back again and again – often promoters will be in discussions with a company and it turns out they have a show coming up soon that they haven't mentioned
- Tourbook – platform for venues/producers to link. Going very well in Ireland but everyone needs to engage with it.
- The pay-for model of Tourbook can put people off. More people need to engage with it and feed back to Tourbook themselves. Note they are CS funded. It belongs to the sector but people need to use it. You can also use it to communicate with people that you already know.
- There was a free trial but it didn't seem to work so people are reluctant to pay for it.
- **FST Action:** Ask promoters what they want to see in promos/full lengths and communicate that to artists.
- **FST Action:** Discuss challenges of showcasing development work/works in progress with artists
- **FST Action:** Bring promoters together to formalise Fringe discussions