

**FEDERATION OF SCOTTISH THEATRE
DANCE FORUM**

Friday 8 June 2018

Dance North Scotland, Findhorn

2pm-5pm

Chairs: Rob Heaslip & Emma Jayne Park

Attendees:

Karen Anderson (Indepen-dance); Emyr Bell (North East Arts Touring); Anita Clark (The Work Room); Suzi Cunningham (Suzi Cunningham); Christine Devaney (Curious Seed); LJ Findlay-Walsh (Tramway); Cath Giles; Chantal Guevara (Independent Dance Managers Network (IDMN)); Rob Heaslip; Andrew Hurst (One Dance UK); Karl Jay-Lewin (Dance North Scotland); Laura Johnston-Scott (plan B); Sara Kemal (Macrobert Arts Centre); Ruth Kent (Citymoves Dance Agency); Laura MacLennan (Eden Court); Louise Marshall (Eden Court); Frank McConnell (plan B); Emma McIntyre (Tramway); Niamh O'Loughlin; Ema Jayne Park; Vicky Rutherford-O'Leary (Curious Seed); Lynn Shaw (North East Arts Touring); Hollie Simpson (Eden Court); Steve Slater (Citymoves Dance Agency); Diane Smith (Dance North Scotland); Gail Sneddon (Beacon Arts Centre); Kathryn Spence (Citymoves Dance Agency); Jo Timmins (Lyra); Sharon Took-Zozaya (Dance North Scotland); Peter Vallance (Universal Hall Arts Centre); David Williams (Dance House).

In attendance:

FST: Anna Broomfield, Fiona McCurdy

Creative Scotland: Paul Burns

1. Welcome and introductions

Rob Heaslip (RH) and Emma Jayne Park (EJP) led introductions and thanked Dance North Scotland (formerly Bodysurf Scotland) for hosting the forum. The next Dance Forum will be led solely by Rob Heaslip, and FST thanks Emma Jayne for hosting the 2017/18 forums.

2. Group exercise: Reflecting on your own role in the sector

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'.

Prior to the meeting EJP and RH circulated an anonymous survey with these statements and shared some comments from the survey:

- 'I feel valued' – Freelancers need to work an unhealthy amount in order to be relevant
- 'My work depends on the decisions of other people' – Dance is collaborative, issues around funding
- 'There is a national strategy for Dance in Scotland' – If there is a strategy, it doesn't reach independent artists so I don't know how I fit in. Dance organisations which support the sector tend to work independently.
- 'I would like there to be a strategy for Dance in Scotland' – Generally yes, but it needs to be the *right* strategy.
- 'I believe I have power within the structure of the Dance sector' – Certain organisations can hold artists back.

3. Group exercise/discussion: Identifying potential pathways and barriers for independent artists

The journey of an independent artist was physically represented on the floor of the venue split into 8 different strands/themes, such as: Making & Touring Work, Developing a Team, Professional Development, Artistic Practice.

Participants were invited to choose a strand, and pick up an instruction at the first step of the strand. Participants moved through the different stages and encountered various different setbacks – for example, after completing many steps of the “Making & Touring Work” strand, being told that your work does not qualify for any of the available funding streams, so you need to return to the “Developing Your Artistic Practice” strand.

Participants agreed that it is extremely difficult for independent artists to survive in the current climate in the Dance sector.

4. FST Update

Upcoming Training

[Communicating Dance](#)

5 October, Glasgow. Free to FST and Workroom Members. This is a day-long event aimed at anyone involved in communicating about dance performances. This hands-on training will

be based on the findings of the EU project [360](#) Building Strategies for Communication in Contemporary Dance.

Upcoming meetings

[Members' Meeting and AGM](#) | Wednesday 26 September | 10.30am–5pm | Perth Theatre

The next FST members' meeting will take place in the Joan Knight Studio in Perth Theatre, on Wednesday 26 September. The meeting will include the AGM and FST Board elections in addition to ordinary business. The AGM Agenda, candidate statements and proxy voting forms are available on the FST [website](#).

[Touring Forum](#) | Thursday 18 October | 2pm–5pm | Beacon Arts Centre (Greenock)

The next Touring Forum will take place on Thursday 18 October 2018 at the Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock. The Forum will include an information session from Creative Scotland on the Touring Fund and discussion on what is required from an audience development/data agency in Scotland.

Support for Individual Members childcare costs

As part of our commitment to equality and diversity and reflecting our strategic support for Parents in Performing Arts, we are pleased to be able to offer new financial support of up to £50 for Individual Members to assist with childcare costs to help them to attend FST meetings and events. Funds will be allocated on a first come first served basis, please request an application form when booking. 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 us](#).

Touring Fund developments

FST has been working closely with Creative Scotland to develop proposals for the new Touring Fund. Dance was represented in the working room, with both RH and EJP taking part in both days, and Belinda from Barrowland Ballet as well as Aiyana D'Arcangelo from Scottish Dance Theatre. The group produced principles to underpin draft guidelines.

Since the Dance Forum took place the Touring Fund has been launched by Creative Scotland: <https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/targeted-funding/touring-fund>

5. Creative Scotland Update

Paul Burns, Interim Head of Dance, provided an update from CS:

Laura Cameron-Lewis (Head of Dance) is now off on Maternity Leave. There have been a variety of staff changes at Creative Scotland, including a new Dance Officer who will be announced soon (now confirmed as Emili Åström).

CS are currently undergoing an internal funding review. In addition to the new Touring Fund, CS are reviewing the Open Project Funding procedures in order to make the process more straightforward and transparent.

CS has funding to pair with artists in 5 different regions to undertake research on what needs to change, and to take action in these areas. 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. These artist-led groups will be tasked with actions. PB will be meeting with the artists in the five geographical regions identified.

6. Discussion Groups

The group split off into five different discussion groups:

- What is strategy making and how can we make strategy?
- Conversations between programmers.
- What skills does a producer need in order to listen effectively?
- Where does the role of the community dance artist sit at the FST forum and similar events?
- What ways can we be together in a competitive environment? How can we maintain and amplify generosity?

A summary of feedback from each group is provided below:

What is strategy making and how can we make strategy?

Can we list our needs and available support to address them in any future strategy?

Does strategy = fixed = bad?

Is it better to discuss direction instead of strategy?

When is strategy useful? Why does it come up so often as absent in context of questions around a Scottish Dance Strategy?

Perhaps the idea of a national strategy being formalised is not useful and should let go of Creative Scotland having one but expect them to have some goals/ vision and in the sector in the ways/ the direction.

We are the strategy if we connect and support.

Strategy for the future could be some sharing but aiming towards similar goals?
Was interesting to hear programmers and how different they can be.

Would it be useful for artists/ organisations to share/talk regarding their own in order to realise our bigger collective strategy?

Support is needed from organisations. We should build a strategy that starts small and builds.

We need a strategy that enables artists to work together.

Strategy is invisible – like branches of tree.
Where is Creative Scotland? Where are we? Can't see each other.

Is strategy relevant for an individual artist?

What support structures do artists need in order to be able to work strategically?

Are values and principles more useful than a strategy (particularly with relevance to how we work together and foster generosity)?

The best strategy is more like a manifesto.

Using the word sector gives what we do weight and validity but sector and community are not mutually exclusive.

Conversations between programmers.

Why do dance shows cost more than theatre shows?
- Will the new touring fund address this?

A dance show may well produce less income for a promoter than theatre.

How to get audiences into a dance show:

- Have participants do a workshop and be in the show.
- Have participation for children and include performance for adults.
- After a 5 year process is Tourbook "working"?
- How will the new touring fund support promoters to develop audiences and put on dance?

What if we considered other forms of support? For example, coaching is maybe more valuable than 'producing' support.

Active listening is valuable – how do we encourage this?

Interesting to hear how different programmers approach things whilst aiming towards similar goals.

What skills does a producer need in order to listen effectively?

How do you apply your producing practice to different artists in different contexts?

Where does the role of the community dance artist sit in the FST dance forum?

There is a disconnect between the professional dance sector and community dance sector.

Community artists feel less likely to shift from community dance artist to choreographer or dancer.

Artists need to feel included.

FST's framework should include community dance work.

Can we change the vocabulary for community dance artist to reflect where their work sits?

What ways can we be together in a competitive environment? How can we maintain and amplify generosity?

Credit others where possible for their ideas, inspiration, teaching, leadership, generosity and support. This travels upwards, downwards, sideways, not just from the top down.

Are we a community or a sector or both?

A community rather than a sector.

Celebrating what is going on in the edges.

Transparency.

Does language make an impact?

Consider giving feedback – how can we place value on the individual and their efforts?

How can an organisation help artists to support each other?

Respecting intellectual property/ ideas and giving credit appropriately.

Some people flourish in more competitive environments – others do not.

How do we ask for the support we need? What systems exist for us to ask?

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS (collated into relevant subjects):

There is still healing and strategy needed around operational funding, project funding and the gaps in between.

Support is needed for mid-career artists not eligible for emerging artists funding or for established artists/ company funding.

How/ when do we ask for the help we need?

Got less out of small group conversations.

Even more independent artists voices would be great.

Loved coming to Findhorn for this event.

Such a great event/Findhorn is a beautiful and extra special place to connect.

Well-structured meeting. Inspiring facilitation.

How do we celebrate what is going on at the edges?

Date of next meeting: 25 October 2018