

Producers' Project

End of Project Report

1. INTRODUCTION BY JAINE LUMSDEN, CREATIVE SCOTLAND

The Producers' Project was a programme of mentorship which was developed in collaboration with host venues across Scotland to build capacity of freelance producers in Scotland.

The programme was developed in response to recommendations in the sector reviews of theatre and dance which identified the challenges for career development in the sector in Scotland.

The Theatre Sector Review identified

"...the mid-career theatre artist finds it hard to make a living in Scotland" and "producers (and venues) review their skills base for touring"

And the Dance Sector Review identified:

"...building the resource of strong, confident, knowledgeable, skilled and experienced producers for dance is important to the future development of the art form."

These art form sector reviews underpin the Creative Scotland 10 year plan which also includes a commitment to supporting the workforce more broadly:

- to bring ideas to life by a diverse, skilled and connected workforce by strengthening the talent and skills needed to develop sustainable careers
- to support excellence and experimentation through the work produced
- to increase access by the public to high quality work.

The overarching aim of the Producers' Project was agreed as: to build the producing capacity of the Scottish dance and theatre sectors by developing the skills and knowledge of the hosted producers. A secondary aim was to develop a network which would allow the vibrant exchange of best practice, mutual support and information. It was anticipated that the professional relationships established would sustain beyond the fixed time period of the project.

The model was developed with personnel from five building-based organisations. who each hosted an established freelance producer for a fixed term of two years. During this time, each established producer would mentor/train an emergent producer. These two-person teams would work collaboratively to produce the work of Scottish-based dance and/or theatre artists and companies. It was anticipated that different relationships would develop organically between the host venues and their producers, which might support the venues' particular interests. While the project involved very close working with venues neither producers were employees of the host venues.

The Project was instigated by an internal Creative Scotland team led by Jaine Lumsden. The team identified potential host venues that would collectively represent a good variation of rural, urban and city locations and in the scale and nature of their operations. Following initial meetings with the Creative Scotland team the host venues who agreed to participate were Aberdeen Performing Arts, Cumbernauld Theatre, the Tron Theatre and Woodend Barn.

The project was initially funded for one year as a strategic commission in response to the issues raised in the Theatre and Dance sector reviews. Following this a subsequent proposal for the use of the strategic commissions' fund made the case that the project would meet its aims more fully if it was extended. The Creative Scotland Board agreed with this and the project received a second year of support.

Jaine Lumsden, Creative Scotland.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Hubs

The programme involved four hubs – each consisting of the host venue and the producers located there. This term was used to reflect that the work wasn't solely focussed on the host venue, it was about developing work that was independent as well as work that might feed into the venue programme. Each venue was responsible for the recruitment of the producing teams using an open call basis, with input from Jaine Lumsden, Creative Scotland. One hub had a slightly different set up. At Woodend Barn there wasn't an emerging and established producer relationship but two equally experienced producers whose skills and experience complemented each other.

The hubs and producing teams were:

Aberdeen Performing Arts, with particular focus on The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen

Established Producer – Lesley Ann Rose

Emerging Producer – Helen Milne

Cumbernauld Theatre

Established Producer – Sarah Gray

Emerging Producer – Cat Tyre

Tron Theatre, Glasgow

Established Producer – Dani Rae

Emerging Producer – Michael O'Neill

Woodend Barn, Banchory

Producers – Heather Fulton and Jenny Phillips

2.2 The Setup

Timeline

The project officially started on 17 October 2014 with an initial meeting at Cumbernauld Theatre. All of the producers and host venues attended with the exception of Woodend Barn, which had a later recruitment date for its producers. The project was initially funded for one year. The project was then extended to two years (see Section 3.1 and introduction) The project was fully completed in March 2017. This was longer than planned to accommodate maternity leave for one of the producers and because Woodend Barn started later than the other host venues.

Budget

A project budget of £280,000 (for Year One) was initially awarded to the project and each hub received a budget to cover:

- Producer and Emerging Producer fees
- Venue overheads so that the venue was not out of pocket
- Seed funding for projects

- Training and professional development
- Travel.

A project co-ordinator, Karen Shaw, was appointed to oversee the project, support the hubs and review the project.

Venue Plans

Each hub was asked to create a plan for each of the projects, identifying outcomes that were personal to each producer and that fed into the venue's own plan. There was no uniform approach to how the aims of the project should be implemented in each area, instead it was the responsibility of the producers and the venue to create a plan that worked for their particular interests and ambitions within the overall framework of developing capacity and skills of the producers.

Mentoring

Each emerging producer was placed with an established producer to create a mentoring relationship to support their development throughout the project (except for the project at Woodend Barn – see Section 3.2.4).

Networking

It was agreed that the networking meetings needed to be useful and relevant and should rotate around the venues. The content of the meetings should be based on the work happening in each hub and provide a forum for any challenges or questions. It would also be an opportunity for more formal skills training led either by a member of the group or by an external professional.

Monitoring and evaluation

Each producer was asked to complete an annual skills development tool to benchmark how they felt their skills developed over the project and to identify common areas of development as well as possible skills exchanges within the group.

Quarterly reporting was set up to capture a range of information - from the type of support/advice given to artists, the range of artforms and details of the work developed/created/produced. This was supported by a brief written report on activity.

The skills development tools and quarterly reporting were submitted to the project co-ordinator who shared the information with the Creative Scotland lead for the project.

Biannual evaluation sessions were planned with the project co-ordinator to check in and review aims and objectives as identified by the hubs in the annual venue plans.

3. THE PROJECT IN DELIVERY

3.1 Timeline

Initially the project was funded for one year only. Woodend Barn started later than the other projects (in January 2015, as opposed to October 2014). This was due to both a new Director at the venue and problems recruiting for the role in a rural area where accommodation is expensive and limited.

In April 2015 Creative Scotland's Board confirmed an additional £280,000 of funding to extend the project for an additional year and it was agreed that in order to have the greatest impact the producing teams would remain the same in each hub. The context for each hub was very different and it takes time to build relationships, set up projects, raise money and see projects through to a full production. Changing producers in year two would not have allowed the teams in place to produce work, this was particularly important for the Emerging Producers.

3.2 The Hubs

3.2.1 Aberdeen Performing Arts (APA)

The established producer, Lesley Anne Rose was seen as a key member of the staff team at APA and the projects developed by her influenced and integrated into the Lemon Tree programme. She was previously based in the central belt and it was only through additional support from APA to provide accommodation that she was able to take on this role.

Lesley Anne was clear in her aims that she wanted to develop local talent and networks in the North East and this corresponded directly with the venue's aims. Overall the creative infrastructure in Aberdeen was less established than in other cities, and she understood that a grassroots approach was essential to developing capacity in the North East. This matched with her own ambition to support new talent and create the foundations of a producing infrastructure in the North East.

For Lesley Anne this opportunity was "less about skills development and more about learning to produce in a different context", away from the central belt and understanding what is right for the place, developing something sustainable and not simply parachuting in. Achieving this knowledge would have been impossible in one year as a considerable period of time was required to understand the context, develop relationships with potential partners (for example, the University of Aberdeen and Creative Carbon Scotland) and create access routes to the organisation for individuals based in the region. Through this strategic approach the majority of her producing related directly to the venue.

Emerging producer Helen Milne produced some of the work planned by Lesley Anne and APA to develop grass roots contacts with the creative community locally, for example through Scratch Nights. These projects were good for Helen's learning and developing skills and knowledge. For her the greatest learning was having practical experience of working in the sector – it launched her further forward in her career

and she feels ready to take on a wider range of work as a result. If the project had not been for two years she would not have got to that stage as the first year was so rooted in setting up projects and creating connections without any delivery (outside of the venue activity).

Helen was also committed to producing work created in the North East, and had previous experience of working in the area. As the project developed she was increasingly aware that to develop a sustainable career in producing she needed to also be working in the central belt where she developed relationships with companies such as Tidy Carnage.

For APA, they could evidence the impact of working with Producers early on because it resulted in a new model of producing for the Lemon Tree. Within six months of the project beginning the impact could be demonstrated through new programme content: including the Scratch Nights and a new co-production for the 2015 Christmas show with Visible Fictions. By the end of the project a clear producing role for APA, routes in for local organisations and new co-producing opportunities were all established.

3.2.2. Cumbernauld Theatre

Sarah Gray started at Cumbernauld Theatre from a producing role in-house at Macrobert in Stirling. Seeing the project as the opportunity to take the freelance step, Sarah brought to the project several companies she knew she wanted to work with as a starting point. It was an opportunity to work strategically with these artists and projects. From a delivery point of view this meant that she was able to hit the ground running, and quickly take advantage of funding opportunities such as Made in Scotland.

For the emerging producer, Cat Tyre, it was a fast path into writing funding applications, marketing plans and budgeting. At the end of the two years Cat feels that the project has given her the tools to continue as an independent producer. For Sarah as well as developing more strategic goals with artists she has developed her own skills in managing multiple projects, timescales and expectations as well as building relationships internationally.

The projects developed by Sarah Gray and Cat Tyre were primarily outside of Cumbernauld Theatre. There were several reasons for this: an established commitment to some artists prior to the project starting; a lack of physical space to work in at Cumbernauld; and the Artistic Director being on secondment during year one.

The lack of space at the theatre was addressed in year two by reallocating budget to enable the two producers to have hot desks in Glasgow and Edinburgh, somewhere they could both work together - but this still restricted co-working. At the end of his sabbatical, Cumbernauld Theatre's Artistic Director Ed Robson introduced a more structured framework for the producers within the theatre to feed into planning etc. He was particularly keen to support the producers in their plans beyond the project.

The producers introduced performance company Fish and Game to the theatre, who subsequently went on to be commissioned for a Christmas show for under-5's – a new venture by the theatre, and one which was continued in year two by commissioning Fiona Manson of Fish and Game's new company Elie St Productions. They also worked on sector development events such as People Parenting in the Arts.

3.2.3 Tron Theatre

The timing of this project was ideal for experienced producer Dani Rae as she considered her career options, either as a freelance producer or seeking an employed position with an organisation. As an established producer Dani brought with her some existing relationships and developed new ones through the project. During the first year Dani had a baby and for her the project became quite personal, figuring out how to balance a freelance career with being a mother. There was the realisation that a lot of 'business' takes place in the bar after a show and as the mother of a baby these aspects didn't go together.

Emerging producer Michael John O'Neill took a very different approach to his peers and offered up his time to artists through his "Spare Person" initiative. It was a very deliberate approach to spread the word widely that he was in a position to meet with artists and offer support/advice/skills. This also assisted Michael in understanding the full range of skills a producer needs to have and introduced him to new artists whose work he went on to produce.

Dani and Michael John set up Tron Creative – initially as new ways for artists to engage with the venues through Scratch Nights and Tron Lab. The Tron Labs were set up to provide residencies for artists/companies which culminated in a private sharing of the work at the end of the week. A budget was attached to the residency and support from the producers and venue was provided. Influenced by Michael John's "Spare Person" approach, Dani ensured that all unsuccessful applicants to the programme received constructive feedback on their proposals.

Quickly this became an established part of the Tron programme and introduced new artists to the venue. There was a clear "ladder of opportunity" for artists to engage with the Tron at different levels and a clear route of progression should the project be the right one. Not all projects had to become Tron projects and it allowed the theatre to support work that otherwise would not have been produced there. Having producers involved helped strengthen relationships with other organisations and the venue is now producing touring work.

3.2.4 Woodend Barn

A different model was in place at Woodend Barn. Both producers were considered to have complimentary skills and experience and so were engaged at the same level rather than established and emerging. The project also started later than the other three hubs due to initial recruitment difficulties (related to geography) and a series of changes within the organisation itself (with a newly appointed Director).

Geography continued to be a challenge for the producing team. Jenny Phillips was committed to working with artists in the North East but as the project developed it became clear that she would also have to venture closer to the central belt. With a dance background, Jenny was particularly keen to work with dance artists.

Heather Fulton, likewise, was committed to working in the North East and found geography challenging from a home/work basis even although she was based in the region. Part of her focus was to develop producing skills in line with Frozen Charlotte, a children's theatre company she jointly runs, based in the North East, as well as work with other artists.

There are a lot of demands on available space at the Barn and in the first-year time in the space itself was limited, but this improved in year two as there was a longer lead in time. The producers developed a balance of their own initiated work alongside developing and integrating work in the Barn.

The Barn was keen to develop work for family audiences and working together the two producers developed new projects for children and young people. This included a new Festival – MiniFest - which they produced in 2015 and 2016. The pair are now working with the Barn to extend the reach of the festival out into the region.

From the Barn's perspective, the project has developed their reputation outside of the immediate area, it has also exposed the organisation to new artists and highlighted how best to support the needs of theatre and dance organisations. Participating in the project has provided something to build on.

3.3 Mentoring

The project was set up from the outset in the expectation that each hub would develop organically. To reflect this approach there was no formal structure imposed for the mentoring. This allowed each producer pair a level of flexibility in identifying the professional development needs of the mentored producer, which varied between individuals. This approach also recognised the value of "learning by doing."

Each hub had a different approach initially with more formal approaches through specific tasks and projects. Generally, it was informal with the support coming from the knowledge that there was somebody to ask if stuck or particular advice was required. The project took an on-site work place mentoring approach and did not provide formal training for mentors.

3.4 Networking

The group met mostly on a quarterly basis to share their experience and if appropriate explore a particular topic of interest which was led by a member of the group or by somebody external. These included: co-production; live streaming and alternative producer funding models. Most importantly from the feedback the sessions were an informal opportunity for the producers to share their experiences. It was an opportunity to reflect on achievements and discuss any challenges and celebrate highlights.

Networking also continued informally within the group on a one to one basis, with producers in other hubs being able to offer advice to their peers.

Beyond the group, networking extended to the Federation of Scottish Theatre (FST) Producers' Forum which the individual members attended.

3.5 Learning

Each Hub had a training budget, and each pair of producers decided what this should be spent on. In year one the budget was generally spent on formal training courses run by FST or ITC. In year two it supported attendance at conferences and more informal training and networking opportunities.

All the producers reported that the main way their skills developed was through doing – simply getting on with it.

Lesley Anne Rose (Aberdeen Performing Arts) reflected that the opportunity was less about skills development for her but about context, learning to work in a different setting – a large organisation with multiple venues - and the impact of geography and the locale on the work.

Nearly all the producers credited being an individual member of FST as an important part of their learning. Cat Tyre's (Cumbernauld Theatre) previous experience of working in a bigger organisation meant that she missed out as only a few people could attend FST meetings. Being an individual member allowed for more engagement and better networking opportunities.

For year two, both experienced and emergent producers also delivered training for artists starting out; artists who want to produce their own work and help to artists to identify what they want from working with a producer. Some of this was delivered in partnership with FST.

3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

As well as the skills benchmarking the producers' hubs were asked to report back to the project co-ordinator on activity on a quarterly basis, providing quantitative information and a brief context report.

From these returns, over the two-year period the four hubs engaged with a total of 237 artists and 74 organisations. The contact varied from one-off advice sessions to project development and touring productions.

Whilst the impact of the project was never to be measured by numbers the work carried out by eight producers resulted in the following: over 572 advice sessions; audience figures of 28,137 and 108 funding applications. The genre of work artists sought advice on broke down as follows:

GENRE	PERCENTAGE
New writing	50%
Devised	20%
Children's	13%
Dance	8%
Other (physical theatre, classics, cross-art form)	9%

The majority of advice was about artistic development, but fundraising and touring were frequent sessions too.

The project engaged with artists from 16 different local authorities in Scotland as well as artists based in England and from outside of the UK.

4. PROJECT STRUCTURE

Everybody involved in the project remarked on two things:

- the project was successful because it was extended to two years. One year, particularly for the emerging producers, would not have allowed them to get to delivery stage – an important experience for all producers
- the project was successful because it was not an overly structured framework, it allowed for organic development within each hub and therefore could fit each producing team and venue as required.

This feedback was gathered from a variety of sources: at the quarterly meetings and network meetings, individual interviews with each producer and host venue at the end of year one and at the end of the project.

Some challenges from both producer and venue perspectives included the freelance contracts sitting within venues with formal organisational structures, which caused some teething problems. Venues also had to be able to host more work and find a way of supporting that in other functions of the organisation (such as technical and marketing). None of these were felt to be insurmountable.

An additional challenge for the producers was learning to say no to projects. The teams felt obligated at first to say yes because their roles were publicly funded and they appreciated they were in a privileged position. Saying no is an important part of producing, understanding why you want to work with an artist, and why an artist wants to work with you is essential to establishing a successful working relationship. If a project wasn't suitable for a producer then they would refer the artist on to other producers in the hubs or outside of the project (if appropriate).

The seed-funding was a very important aspect of the project structure, it enabled the producers to begin supporting work early on and for artists to test out ideas before deciding to complete funding proposals. It offered an opportunity for risk-taking and experimentation and this was valued by all the producers.

5. PROJECT IMPACT

Everybody involved in the project reported that it was successful and that it had impact on individual skills, venue programming, development and reputation - but also more widely in the sector, by supporting artists and improving quality of work produced.

Some of this success can be evidenced by ongoing relationships between some venues and hubs - although it is important to highlight that a lack of ongoing relationship does not mean a failure, as it was never the intention that the project would lead to permanent posts within a venue. At APA there was a restructure of their senior management team and Lesley Anne Rose is now Head of Production and Technical - a new role recognising the importance and priority for producing within the organisation. The Tron have retained Michael John O'Neill for an additional year to build on the Tron Creative programme. Woodend Barn are looking at how they can create a partnership with Heather Fulton and Jenny Phillips to develop further Minifest.

Helen Milne has since relocated to London. She continues to work freelance instigating producer-led projects and supporting a number of Scottish and London-based artists. Sarah Gray and Cat Tyre are working under the umbrella of Scottish Theatre Producers and Dani Rae is continuing to develop her portfolio of artists but is keen to continue in a more strategic role.

Further evidence of the skills development of the producers was through the training sessions they devised and delivered for FST, sharing skills and knowledge more broadly in the sector.

The project also impacted on the artists the producers worked with (see Section 9 Case Studies). The fact that it became a two-year project allowed for a lot of development and in Eilidh MacAskill's words – *“It has taken two years to make a really massive difference, just think what can be achieved in an even longer period of time.”*

6. BUDGET

The project cost £280,000 each year. In Year One each of the host venues was invited to put forward a budget for the costs for their hub which included the fees for the producers. The producers' fees were set at £30,000 for the established Producer and £20,000 for the mentee Producer. In year two the budget savings in recruitment, producers' CPD and venue overheads were allocated towards providing training for the sector.

The budget was allocated as follows:

	Year One	Year Two
Established Producer	120,000	115,000
Emergent Producer	80,000	85,000
Recruitment of posts	3,500	0
Venue overheads	21,500	17,370
Seed Fund	36,000	40,000
Producers' expenses/CPD	14,000	11,630
Project Manager fee	3,600	3,600
PM expenses	0	675
Evaluation	1,400	1,400
Producer-led training (Yr 2 only)	0	5,325
TOTAL	280,000	280,000

7. REFLECTIONS

There are challenges to producing in Scotland. Location is important as expenses increase if producers and, equally, artists are based outside of the central belt. There is also limited capacity to develop skills within Scotland as a producer in relation to producing larger-scale work, particularly from a freelance perspective.

Remuneration for a producer is often not included (or is significantly underestimated) in projects' budgets. The case-studies for this project have demonstrated the strategic development that can take place if a producer is involved in the longer-term.

The project also raised expectations of producing in Scotland – of opportunities for producers, artists and venues. The continuity of support and having advice easily available instigated this.

There remains an unanswered question, is a career as a freelance producer a sustainable one without some other financial support either through a venue, family or a funded project?

8. SUMMARY

The project successfully developed the skills of the producers. It also increased the capacity of the venues in terms of engagement with and support for artists and development of their work and developing audiences.

This success was due to a lightness of touch in structure, each hub was able to develop its own way of working. Bringing the producers together regularly provided an informal way of sharing skills and knowledge and this was important to both the established and emerging producers. Producers were then able to continue with advice and support outside of the networking meetings.

Whilst formal training is useful, the principal way people learned was through doing and getting on with the job. The project structure benefitted this approach because there was support available from other producers and the venues. FST is also an important resource for producers through training, networking and the Producers' Forum. Cat Tyre, emerging producer learnt these three ways of working as a producer: join FST and get to know venues; interrogate the project and understand the wider context for the work and; work on projects/with artists that excite you.

The seed-funding was a vital aspect of the project allowing the producers to invest in artists and allowing artists to take risks.

9. CASE STUDIES

To illustrate the wide range of work and relationships developed and delivered over the two years there are eight case studies, one from each producer. The producers were asked to put forward a couple of artists to include in the evaluation, the final choice being made by the project co-ordinator. These case studies illustrate the different approaches to producing across the project.

Aberdeen Performing Arts

Artist: Allie Butler, Tidy Carnage

Producer: Helen Milne

Allie Butler is a director who founded Tidy Carnage in 2012, a Glasgow-based theatre company working within various art forms.

She met Helen Milne at an FST forum when she was looking for a producer to work on *Netting with Morna Young*¹. Butler was aware of the Producers' Project because the earlier development of REaD had received support through Tron Labs (it originated through a scratch night at The Arches in 2014).

Allie was nervous about working with a producer, about letting some of the control go, however, working with Helen '*was a really good experience...above and beyond*'. It started off a less collaborative relationship but as the pair got to know each other it became collaborative and creatively fruitful. Allie felt that working with an emerging producer for this first experience was beneficial – it wasn't as intimidating and they could both be open about learning.

With Helen on board, applications were made to Creative Scotland to tour the work. A first funded tour for Allie felt like a big step and whilst they deliberately kept the budget small (the application was submitted to under £15k category) it was demanding to create a tour on a relatively small budget.

Allie realises that a large barrier to working with a producer is financial – not necessarily having funding committed at the early point of development when a project benefits from having a producer on board. Involving the producer early allows them to have ownership and be involved in the development of the project. Geography wasn't necessarily a barrier as Helen was able to travel and the relationship with APA resulted in touring to the Lemon Tree.

Allie was fortunate to have benefitted from insight and support from producers across all the hubs through different projects she was involved with – from funding support and advice to development time and full production support. For her the Producers' Project was clearly valuable and hugely beneficial – "*providing access to a high level of expertise and knowledge.*"

¹ *Netting* was produced at the Producer's Hub at Woodend Barn.

“It was lovely that Creative Scotland did something that everybody felt really positive about.”

The producing relationship between Allie and Helen will continue beyond the Producers’ Project.

Artists: Cameron Mowat and Adam Coutts, 10ft Tall

Producer: Lesley Anne Rose

Cameron Mowat and Adam Coutts had an ambition to create a theatre company that was rooted in the North East of Scotland and formed 10ft Tall. They came into contact with Lesley Anne through the Scratch Night series run by Scrapyard in collaboration with APA: artists are mixed into teams and have to create a performance in two weeks which culminates in an evening of performance.

From here the pair participated in the artist in residence programme at APA and through this had the opportunity to work with Lesley Anne to look at how they could start producing their own work – producing regular work with people in the North East. Cameron and Adam also benefitted from the Producer’s Project at Woodend Barn where they took their sharing of Videotape to the Curious programme.

Through working with Lesley Anne as a producer they set up their own Limited Company, became members of ITC and secured Creative Scotland funding for remount of “Videotape” with support from NEAT. This all arose from an initial discussion of *“how to get something on.”*

“Lesley Anne helped create a company with a long term vision”, the development was possible through formal and informal discussion – having somebody available that they could contact without the constraint of worrying about budget was essential to this.

They also gained the confidence to experiment with format and wanted to develop work outside of the theatre space. Through Lesley Anne’s links they partnered with the new venue at Brew Dog with support from the APA Box Office and funding from Aberdeen City Council and produced Chekhov Shorts.

None of this was expected from their initial conversations with Lesley Anne. Cameron thought that as an actor he was always in early in the process, he was not aware of the timescale of making things happen that a producer is involved in from very early on, how important they are and equally, how important it is to share with them.

Cumbernauld Theatre

Artist: Adura Onashile

Producer: Cat Tyre

Adura Onashile is a performer, writer and director. She was selected for the National Theatre of Scotland Emerge Programme in 2012/13 where she first met Cat Tyre. In June 2015 they began working on Adura's new play *Expensive Shit*, for the Traverse Theatre 2016 Fringe as part of the Made In Scotland showcase. It was invited for additional performances to the Southbank Centre and then followed by a Scottish tour and performances in London at the SoHo Theatre (April 2017).

Adura was looking to put together a team for her new project which was also her debut as a director. Cat attended a sharing of her work and had an initial conversation about what Adura's plans were. Adura recognised the value of the experience of Sarah Gray and whilst Cat was less known as a producer felt that the fact there was a mentoring relationship with an established producer made it easier to take a gamble on working with a less established producer.

From the initial meeting, Cat helped Adura select a creative team, developed funding proposals and sat in in the rehearsal room. Cat was quick to see what didn't work, what should come next and created a safe relationship with Adura. In her head Adura thought the Producer would be involved at the start and then perhaps not be as present in the rehearsal process, but the relationship was "*symbiotic and entwined.*" Adura developed a view of the relationship very much as a partnership.

The relationship produced more than she expected it to, Cat was a motivator, a positive influence and force, not phased by problems and had infinite patience. As a first time director this was Adura's second experience of engaging a producer. At the outset it would have been beneficial to understand what the expectations were of herself as a director and Cat as a producer. She expected that the producers job was mainly to project manage the production and for herself to be the creative lead but "*in reality it's everything...I think the relationship with the producer is the most important an artist can have.*"

Expensive Shit benefitted from Cat's time as part of the Producers' Project, it wouldn't have happened at that time if it hadn't been for Cat's initial approach. Learning from this experience Adura would have discussions early on in the project development about expectations of the producer role. Adura had a contract outlining her roles and responsibilities and this would be useful for the producer role.

Adura would like to continue to work with one producer but realises that on a project to project funding that may not be possible, the role of the producer extends beyond that timeline. Her aim now is to develop a relationship with a producer outwith a particular project and on a much more long-term basis.

Artist: Eilidh MacAskill, Fish and Game

Producer: Sarah Gray

Fish and Game is a Glasgow-based performance company producing the work of Artistic Director Eilidh MacAskill and her collaborators since 2005.

Sarah Gray had an existing relationship with Fish and Game through her previous role at the Macrobert Arts Centre where she produced Polar Bears Go Wild in 2012. The show subsequently toured in 2013 and when Sarah joined the Producers' Project she continued to work with Fish and Game.

Polar Bears Go Wild presented at the Unicorn in London in January 2015. Having a producer on board from early on, with a great understanding of the work and the company, meant that Sarah was able to set up a meeting with the Unicorn to propose a new show. Through being based at Cumbernauld, Sarah also created a proposal with Fish and Game, to create a new Christmas show for under-5's, a new programme addition to the Cumbernauld festive offer. In 2016, this led to a further commission at Cumbernauld for Elie St Productions - run by Fiona Manson, one half of Fish and Game. In addition, the original show was re-mounted at the Macrobert.

Eilidh describes the relationship with Sarah as an organic one, changing as they got to know each other and became more familiar with how each person works. It is also an energetic one – the energy provided by a producer to move things on, to think about the work from a different angle and to represent the work. Together they are very clear about the role of the producer and whilst it is not about having another artistic role in the work, the producer is very much a creative involvement. Working with a producer who has a wider portfolio was also reassuring.

For Eilidh working with a producer has made things possible that she didn't even know to think might be possible, she is less afraid of trying to plan or have ambition for the work because she is not the only person thinking about it. Having one other person to work with who has a different role makes it feel like a company, that there is a team and that offers a sense of security and makes you braver in terms of seeking deals.

Having benefitted from the project, Eilidh reflects on the lack of opportunity for artists to work with a producer. In her own words *"everybody could do with collaborating with a producer."*

Tron Theatre

Artist: Matt Regan

Producer: Michael John O'Neill

"From a weird gig to a theatre career accidentally"

Matt Regan is a classically trained musician who had existed on the periphery of theatre in Glasgow and was looking for a new way of developing work away from being a gigging musician.

Although he knew Michael O'Neill previously, it was Michael John's "Spare Person" call out that chimed with a new idea Matt had about writing about his hometown of Belfast. Matt's experience is an excellent illustration of how the Creative Tron programme can work. With Michael John spearheading the project, Matt tried out his idea at a Tron Scratch Night. From here he applied for the Tron Lab: expanding his material to a 30-40 minutes performance and a four-night run in the Tron Changing Room, providing a public platform with audience feedback and invited guests from the sector.

It was from this platform that Regan's work Greater Belfast was picked up as a co-production with the Tron and the Traverse and went on to be a sell-out show at the Fringe.

This was Matt's first experience of working with a producer, he didn't have anything to compare it to – he describes the role as "*indispensable*." As for expectations of the project and working with a producer, he didn't really have any but the development of Greater Belfast went beyond his "*wildest dreams*." Matt sees being fearless as a core quality of a producer but most importantly – they should have an emotional connection to the artistic idea.

The value for Matt of working with a producer: an authority on how things work; industry knowledge; authoritative voice – it allowed him to be creative.

Matt was successful in his application to the National Theatre of Scotland programme Starter for 10; with Michael John he is seeking funding for a UK tour of Greater Belfast and is working on a new piece of theatre as well as composing for other theatre companies.

Artist: Rick Conte

Producer: Dani Rae

Rick Conte is an established performer based in Edinburgh, he has worked with many leading companies but had never developed his own project. Rick wanted to develop a new version of HG Wells' The Time Machine working with classical bunraku puppets. He came into contact with Dani through another director who knew about the Producers' Project.

Initially Rick wanted help with funding applications and assistance to get started. Having Dani on board led to a development period, a trailer and the growth of the project. For him, establishing a working relationship early on in the process was important. Working with a producer enabled him to get on with the project and identify additional team members. It meant having somebody advising on what

needed to be done, creating alternative budget plans to adapt to funding successes, *“there was always somebody to hold your hand.”*

The Time Machine will tour in September/October 2017.

Woodend Barn

Artist: Rosie Gibson

Producer: Heather Fulton

Rosie Gibson is a Fife-based visual artist with an established socially-engaged practice and has known Heather Fulton for over 10 years. It was Heather who approached Rosie about working together. Rosie had engaged in many different communities over the years but had never worked in her own community and wanted to set-up an exploratory and open-ended engagement in Inverkeithing.

Rosie knew that Heather understood her work and would be supportive. Working with Heather they developed an application to Creative Scotland which was unsuccessful. However, in the interim Rosie was commissioned to create a project Trading Wisdom for the Luminate Festival 2015 building on an earlier research and development phase. For Rosie, Heather was instrumental in supporting the project and collaborating in a final event which if left to Rosie she may not have felt resourced to carry off. Working with Heather as a producer provided a sounding board and longer-term development and collaboration as well as delivery and evaluation.

The energy and commitment from Heather and her belief in Rosie’s work were crucial aspects of the relationship – there was the right type of support at the right time. The challenges were the funding and Rosie feels that there was perhaps a missed opportunity in seeking funding away from Creative Scotland. Geography was also challenging and being located closer together could have been more beneficial.

Rosie had experience of working with producers on previous projects but not for the long term - something that the Producers’ Project enabled - and she would therefore intend to work with a producer in the future.

“As an artist not having a producer is a lack...the success of the Producer’s Project was that it was person based not project based.”

Artist: Rob Heaslip

Producer: Jenny Phillips

Rob Heaslip is an established dance artist from Ireland, based in Edinburgh. He had an existing relationship with Jenny from when she worked at City Moves, the dance agency for the North East of Scotland.

He was frustrated with being successfully funded to create new work and tour it but not be programmed in Scottish venues and when he heard about the Producer's Project he approached Jenny.

Rob had never worked with a producer before, other than Catalyst helping with funding proposals. It was an organic relationship between the pair and Rob did have expectations of what a relationship with a producer might look like: a dedicated relationship (which he then realised was not possible as Jenny had other artists she worked with) and a voice and an advocate for his work and tour booking. With an understanding of his work she was able to write about it and her knowledge informed direction for Rob. Over two years they collaborated on the development and delivery of three projects.

There were challenges. Geography was difficult but they were able to combine face to face meetings with phone and email dialogue. It also became clear that programmers wouldn't travel to see the work (although this also happened within the central belt). Whilst funding applications were successful and there was a presentation of work in Tramway the Scottish touring aspect didn't work. Rob thinks in part this is due to Scottish venues being afraid to programme dance, that they have no obligation to programme dance so therefore don't, and that this is a wider issue for dance in Scotland. Equally, in the future he would engage a dedicated tour booker who had existing relationships rather than starting from scratch.

Unexpected outcomes from working with a producer were an increase in funding received and creating a company, which Rob describes as being "*really empowering.*" Jenny's input and skills brought a structure to Rob's working life and allowed him to get on with creating the work. In the future, and after two years of working together, he would like it to still be "we" and not "I" when discussing and developing new work, he appreciates that this requires budget and is keen to look at ways of making this work which still gives a long term, strategic approach rather than project by project.