

## Touring Forum

Festival Theatre, Nicolson Street, Edinburgh

Thursday 20 October 2016 2-5pm

Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

### Attendees:

**Tomek Borkowy (Universal Arts), Claire Dow (Stellar Quines Theatre Company), Lorna Duguid (Creative Scotland), Sam Eccles, Michael Emans (Rapture Theatre), Susan Hay (Marc Brew Company), Verity Leigh (Magnetic North), Sophie Ochojna (Visible Fictions), Nick Parr (Dundee Rep), Philippos Philippou (Ludens Ensemble CIC), Liam Sinclair (The Byre Theatre), Callum Smith, Gary Smith (Festival City Theatres Trust), Kate Taylor, Kirsty Taylor (Live Borders)**

Amanda Liddle (FST), Ruth Johnston (FST), Agnieszka Swida (FST)

### 1. Introductions

Sam Eccles welcomed everyone to the Touring Forum and thanked them for attending. FST specialist forums are led by those that wish to be part of it. It is there to allow for networking and skills sharing, including best practice, knowledge and peer support.

### 2. FST Update – Amanda Liddle/Agnieszka Swida

- **Members' Meeting and 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, 7 December, Assembly Roxy, Edinburgh:** The meeting will include a presentation /discussion with Janet Archer and speakers/discussion on Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion. The aim is to explore what we collectively can do as a sector to improve our work in this area. In the evening (5pm-7pm approx.) we will invite wider stakeholders to join FST members in a celebration event for FST's 40th anniversary. The event will include a small number of speeches including Fiona Hyslop MSP and hopefully some FST alumni.
- **FST Emporium 2017:** FST's annual Emporium will take place over two days on **15 & 16 March 2017 at The Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock**. This event allows for focus on both long-term planning and discussing ideas at the very early stages of development (Early Dialogue Day) and on short and medium term planning at our established Market Day. **Bookings open on 28 October 2016. Early Bird bookings will be open until 2 December 2016.** More info [here](#)
- **Mentoring Programme – Step Up 9:** applications for mentees close on **31 October 2016**. The Mentoring Programme is a great opportunity for those who would like to receive some support to look at their job, find time for analysis and reflection in order to progress in their professional career. This scheme is for individuals from all areas of the performing arts – artistic development, management, audience development, production, technical, education, etc.

- **Winter School – 7-9 February 2017, Pitlochry Festival Theatre:** We are now in the process of programming Winter School 2017. Please let us know what you would like to see programmed by completing this quick survey: [FST Technical Winter School Needs Analysis](#)

### 3. Creative Scotland Update (research project) – Lorna Duguid

- **Touring Working Group:** A small working group convened after the Touring Forum on 22 June 2016 to develop a brief for CS research into the state of touring over the past 5 yrs. CS are tendering for individuals and companies to be part of three focus groups to look at the issues surrounding touring, with a view to recommendations and models. The aim is for the report to provide a strong evidential base to justify decisions re. touring. The RFO Applications close in April and hopefully the report can feed into these.
- **Strategic Touring Fund:** CS are having ongoing discussions but with funding unknown as yet nothing can be confirmed. FST and CS will report when more is known.

### 4. Group Discussions

Forum attendees split into three groups to discuss the following questions

- **How do we develop new work in creative ways through different methods and connections?**
- **What can we learn from existing models when developing venue consortia – the good, the bad and the ugly?**
- **How can we create a constitution for the sharing of data? What should this look like, and how might this feed into a best practice guide?**

### 5. Discussion Group Feedback

- **How do we develop new work in creative ways through different methods and connections?**
- Is it the work or the language used to sell the work that needs to change?
- We don't always market but instead 'punt' copy and hope – identify how the need to market is part of the process
- Use of R&D: Can we use R&D periods to inform the work from a marketing and audience point of view? Get audiences involved in R&D/showcases e.g. children's theatre
- Should artists be involved in marketing at the point of sales/selling?
- Could Culture Republic freely circulate more information on cultural consumption?
- Marketing needs to speak to the human condition – what are the themes and hooks that appeal. What won't close off productions/shows to people?
- Have integrity in the process no matter what the process is – allow it to be an experience

- Explore the use of residencies e.g. Company of Wolves, for balance and development time
  - Use curated and moderated feedback
  - Trust the audience and artists to make the work: this is a symbiotic relationship
  - Work with different people and outside your comfort zone
  - Take time, leave room to fail, reflect
- **What can we learn from existing models when developing venue consortia – the good, the bad and the ugly?**
  - There needs to be a person or venue to buy into venue consortia, to push it forward and make it work and it needs to give enough back to justify the staff
  - Identify what venues have in common: venue data, budgets, staff – to match together appropriate partners
  - Identify connections between different consortiums: dance consortium, Dance Partnership (Warwick), Scottish Theatre Consortium

**How can we create a constitution for the sharing of data? What should this look like, and how might this feed into a best practice guide?**

The group identified issues, challenges and questions surrounding data:

- Issues of understanding the legal framework surrounding data, changes to EU law re. data sharing
- We need to identify the types of data collected, emails, demographics, equalities data, research
- Unsubscribes from company lists – there needs to be a mechanism for getting feedback to the venue. Could venues send follow up emails or join up directly with touring company's mailing list?
- Why do we collect data?
- Is it better to let venues communicate with audiences? This depends on capacity. Venues can only communicate with people who have signed up to their mailing lists
- Do we need data? Is social media replacing it?
- Does data sharing help audiences?

**6. AOB**

Forum attendees discussed topics/speakers for future forums:

- Getting marketers and programmers in the room to discuss their processes
- How to connect better with the Marketing Sector? Who might be the orgs/speakers to invite to future touring forums?
- An FST Marketing Forum?



- Info for small companies - understanding marketing/importance of marketing/budgeting costs for marketing
- Arts Marketing Association and FST – a conference/collaborative consortium?
- Encourage Producers, Venues and Marketing professionals to attend Touring Forum and promote attendance of local authority venues

This was Sam Eccles' last Touring Forum as chair. The Forum took the opportunity to thank Sam for her work.

There is now a call out for a new chair. Please contact [Amanda Liddle](#).

**Next Touring Forum Date 20 April 2017 Venue TBC**