

EMERGING ARTISTS TRUST **EAT**

Producing in the Performing Arts
From Idea to Public Performance: *Imagine, Harness, Realise*
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ISSUES AND ACTION POINTS

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KEY POINTS:

- People get confused by the difference between producing and production management.
- Producer needs to have passionate drive to see production from beginning to end. That person can be the writer or creator.
- We are a small audience but there is always untapped potential in the market
- Exit strategy: projects don't always go the way you want. Can the work be developed into something else? Or do you walk away.
- Plan. Identify where the dry patches are in the year, and the skills you have to do other work.
- It is a about developing and planning a career – develop over time – rather than short term project.
- Who is your team? It is about people.
- You need to make the transition as producer from do-er to oversee-er. The producer needs to be able to take a step back.
- You are the best advocate for your project because you are across everything. Seize opportunities to promote your project.
- Producers run at a problem, not away from them.
- The main responsibilities for producers are relationships and communication with everyone you work with.
- Partnerships are important

- Think about whom the product is for and don't be afraid to stage it outside your usual environment.
- Money and people are the products of time. Managing time effectively is part of what makes a great producer.
- Local buy in/marketing support/local commitment crucial in successful touring.
- "My work is adhering to the purpose of the work we produce. Its core that we are passionate and can articulate that. But my taste ultimately has to take a backseat."
- "If you have an idea and want to make it happen – do it. Don't wait for someone to make it happen for you."
- A producer won't help you unless you have a clear picture of what you want to achieve to make your work come to life. Clarify what you want to do and identify what your gaps in knowledge and skills are. Then you can tailor the relationship more.
- There are already a variety of written and physical resources available for emerging producers – need collectivising and a home.
- When seeking advice from someone more experienced think about what you can offer them in return. This is the key to good relationships.

ISSUES:

1. Finding a Producer

There are increasingly more projects but not more producers, particularly with experience.

Most producers in the room are producers by need rather than desire. Bert van Dijk was Producer, performer, researcher, Artistic Director – not his own choice. Multiple roles means an inequality of power. Doesn't assist collaboration. Everyone needing to contribute his or her own particular skill set.

Caroline Armstrong represents an example of producer who isn't a practitioner – find the people around you who are passionate about what you do but aren't necessarily practitioners. Also, like Jan Bolwell, consider that as the creative you may be the best person to be the producer, but need to find other key staff to ensure you are 'overseer'. Identify skills you don't have. Have someone on deck from the beginning, even if they are learning on the job and doing it.

Enlist Mentors to guide the process, supporting individuals or teams.

2. Funding

Producers' Room currently under-resourced. Funds are also needed to ensure gatherings like this occur.

Bert Van Dijk notes that the funding structure currently doesn't recognise the voluntary nature of work sometimes in funding food and accommodation.

3. Producers need to have more strategies to work through different scenarios

Allows them to take an overseeing role. Pull out if need to. Use the best person. Create work that has a longer life.

5. The Sustainability of a Producer's Career

It's about a career rather than a short-term project. Good planning is needed to grow the business and survive fallow times. A longer-term commitment with little financial payback is an issue.

6. Regional communication

Outside of PANNZ forum, still operating in regional silos slightly. How aware are we of work in development in different regions? More information sharing needed. Room for more resources/infrastructure for this, or are we ready for agencies between producers and developers to develop and carried forward internationally.

7. The venues touring in and the types of work we're creating still in touring often don't match up.

Still inheriting old JC Williamson circuits. Do we develop more suitable works? Or cultivate more suitable venues with strong curation – recent CNZ touring strategy speaks to this. Mark Westerby noted the progress being made on this issue.

STRATEGIC ACTION POINTS

- Follow through from this forum with regular informal networking gatherings, which allows for informal mentoring.
- Make provision for this forum annually.
- Ensure structured, formal mentoring opportunities are available.
- Undertake development of best information sharing tools, be they digital or agency development, towards national information sharing between producers and presenters.
- Provide emerging producers with more strategic planning and business tools.
- Collate current producers' kit information and these notes in accessible information pack form, which is current.
- Research funding options for resource and networking development.
- Find tools to encourage identification by more practitioners of friends and colleagues in their midst with particular skill sets.
- Provide networking opportunities between current production management students training and the industry.

ENDS