

Proceedings from the kedja Vilnius seminar

Saturday May 10 2008:

Workshop: Introducing an Independent Dance Company to the International Dance Market.

Keynote speakers: Lene Bang Henningsen, WEGO, Manager (Denmark), Tine Rude, Jo Strømgren Kompani, Project manager (Norway).

Workshop, share, dialogue.
Circle

Bring home, contribute
Tools, examples
Tine and Lene work in non-profit organizations.

Tine works in Jo Strømgren Kompani which this year has 30 employees. There are 2,5 people in the administration.

Lene works for Wego – a band and a dancecompany. An international constellation with performers from many countries. Funding from DK, previously from The Netherlands

Lene:

Step 1. Ask yourself these questions:

What are my ambitions?

Why tour?

Lene then presented the **SWOT** analysis tool.

The idea is to get a snapshot of the organization, its

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats (T)

Then participants spent 10 minutes analyzing their position, using the SWOT model.

Another tool introduced was **PESTILIED** analysis. Start with your base. The letters stand for:

Political

Economical

Social

Technological

Legal/legislative

International

Environmental/ecological

Demographic issues

The general advice was to think about:

- How to build strategies together with others.
- Identifying how we do that.

- To acknowledge that the competitors are TV, cinema, going to the beach, not the other choreographers.

Comments from participants:

Being a small company can be a strength because it means less administration.

But when you deal with big companies, as a choreographer you have to face and answer numerous issues and there is a lot to handle.

Lene:

There are no simple or definite answers, as you have to identify your art, your context etc.

Recommendations: British arts council website document: "mapping the future".

Another tool for narrowing in your goals is to follow the **SMART** procedure by making your plans and success criterias:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Agreed**
- **Realistic**
- **Timetabled**

In general: Use your network, professionally and personally.

Tine Rude (Jo Strømngren Kompani (JSK)):

Ask yourself where you want to go internationally:

Examples:

- Big prestige festivals
- More underground places
- Platforms
- Competitions

Do you want co-producers?

Create networks!

Through working with others they can share their network with you!

Tine presented some examples from Jo Strømngren Kompani:

Strømngren Kompani had a wish to tour in Eastern Europe - they developed their network this way.

It is important to be able to plan a performanceschedule with gigs that are linked to each other geographically and therefore financially.

JSK went to Jacobs Pillow but it didn't create more US- or other touring but it looks good on the resume.

Auro Nova – one month's stay in Edinburgh, created 60 performances.

It is always a negotiation.

Investments and risks are part of the game.

When you perform it is important that other presenters see it.

Fun to create and nurture long time relationships with festivals and venues.

Jo Strømngrens common theme: **isolation.**

The company went to Belarus; they were the only international company.
1200 seats in opera house, they usually perform for 250 persons.
But it made sense for the company and the theme.
They have recently performed in Beirut as it also made sense.

On the question of agents:
The company is better at selling Strømgrens performances.

It is important that everybody in the company have the same goals; - to tour, to show your performance to as many people as possible.
Touring nationally sometimes pays better than internationally.

Lene Bang Henningsen on WEGO:

They took a chance by hiring Lene.

The board members are important, dare to put people who ask questions.

A journalist does sporadic textwork for them.

A task for the participants was put forward:

“Imagine the next two years”:

- “I found a co-producer, showed it in Sweden and abroad”.
- “Good base network/contact”.
- “to work and like the work, to have a working family”.
- “collaboration with other choreographers in Denmark, collaborative company, produce together, have an administration, go to Japan”.
- “residency, 40 artists across artforms, create a performance. Do a residency in NY, tour a production”.

Question: How do you find the venues, co-producers etc.?

Tine Rude:

Establish meetings:

- One to one
- Networks

When travelling professionally and privately:

- Locate what is going on
- Is there someone you know already who you can ask
- arrange a meeting
- sometimes we talk about other things and very little about business
- be yourself, the meeting is between two PERSONS
- respect differences
- believe in the company
- prepare yourself before the meeting. What do you know, what do want to ask about
- remember that the people you meet also love dance and art!

Before network meetings:

- identify who is coming and who could be interesting
- attend many sessions, listen for useful information
- every place is a meeting place
- think of keywords about yourself

When you get home:

- keep the contact
- update the people you meet
- have fun

NB apply for FUNDING to attend meetings. One example is: Nordic Culture Point www.kknord.org

Lene:

- present full video documentations
- be honest with the collaborators
- think how an opportunity can create new opportunities

Terhi Mikkonen (of Tero Saarinen Company):

- 6, 5 office persons employed
- Project based in Helsinki at the Alexander Theatre
- 30% from state subsidies, rest is from income
- 70% of performances abroad; the company's main income
- International co-productions can consist of funding, space, techniques

PR material:

- Building and maintaining your "brand"/"image"; what you are and want to achieve
- Journalists, venues, festival, decisionmakers, dancers, collaborators need this material
- be ahead timewise when engaging new PR people
- adjust according to your changing goals
- at the same time think of consistency
- how do you want to be presented and exposed, think ahead
- key –messages, words, issues about your art. Use them consistently
- Plan your PR activities 1,5 years ahead.
- It is ok to say no to media if they want something different from you than you want to give
- make the life of the journalists easier. Short, concise; target group
- different ideas and angles for different target groups
- ask to check articles before publication. Important with interviews.

Key issues when starting up:

Basic press kit:

- Short summary, 5 sentences max
- Larger background section, different relevant information
- Credits
- Biographies; -short ones.
- Press quotes, -update them!
- Inform the ones who are using the kit.
- Images. Good quality, resolution for print.
- Imagebank on the web. Short videoclips here is also useful.
- Make press releases maybe once or twice a year. Think of media as network

- Build the right expectations

See Terhi Mikkonen's power point.

Sunday May 11:

Welcome by Lithuanian Dance Information Centre / Arts Printing House (10.00)

Speakers: Audronis Imbrasas Lithuanian Dance Information Centre, Director (Lithuania).

Audronis Imbrasas welcomed everybody in Menuspaustuve, an old printing house originally from 1585, now under construction. He told about the future of this great cultural centre, which will eventually house:

3800 kvm
2 venues
4 rehearsal studios
Offices
Infolab
Guesthouse for residing artists
Café-club
Other theatre players
Art Cinema 100 seats
More info on www.menuspaustuve.lt

Vilnius City Fund and Structural fund for European Union support the house; it will be housing an IETM meeting in Oct 2009.

Then he introduced Gintaras Sodeika, viceminister (Lithuanian Ministry of Culture) who welcomed everybody and confirmed that the Nordic Ministers Fund from 2009 will be open for applications from Baltic citizens.

Different issues were addressed by Audronis regarding contemporary dance in Lithuania, the issue of mobility and the role of the Lithuanian Information Centre for Dance.:

Funding
National networks
Residencies
Festivals today – good and badly organized
The need of mentors
Confronting audiences
Developmental impact on the arts
The importance of personal contact
The role of the organization
Co-producers
They are trying to be distinct
Pulling resources
Splitting the risks
Overexposure
Wrong audience, not prepared
Underpaid, over stretched

Benefits:

Extra exposure, more media attention
Generate demand
Core audience
New partners
New admirers, advocates
Strengthening your position at home

Audronis also spoke of the goals of the centre:
To bring contemporary dance to Lithuania
Show it exists
To be an instrument/place to tour for foreign companies
Klaipeda and Kaunas, national touring
Encourage productions and co-productions
Planned to stop it, but achieved 3 year support
The known names in Western Europe are not known here
Educating the audience

Panel Discussion: Touring and Mobility in Nordic-Baltic countries: festivals, residencies, structures, venues, partners, financing (10.30)

Panel: Lars Eidevall, Dansstationen, Artistic director (Sweden), Hanne Svejstrup, ProjektCentret, Dansens Hus, (DK) Katarina McAlester, artistic director, JoJo - Oulu Center for Dance, Finland

Lars Eidevall talked of the national touring schemes in Sweden:

- Copenhagen-Malmö - the bridge has changed the working conditions
- 4 main cities: Göteborg, Stockholm, Umeå, Malmö (?)
- How can we strengthen the dissemination of dance?
- Touring circuit between 3 venues
- Performances that didn't tour previously
- 3 weeks, 3 cities - Dance Net Sweden: residencies and then touring

Other existing networks in Sweden:

- Dans Slingan Dance in new regions and new venues
- Dansspridning Mellansverige for children and young people
- Salto network

Dance is recognized and subsidized - the demand is growing.
(30% Swedes wants more dance to choose from).

Gilda Stillbäck is an example of a choreographer that has been helped by the networks.

They suit different times in the career of the choreographer.

Lars also mentioned MELO a democracy project, a live art collective of dancers, musicians and actors initiated by the Swedish Institute

Katarina McAlester:

comes from Oulu a 130.000 people city in the North of Finland.

There are 5 regional dance centres in Finland, initiated in 2004 by the Ministry of Education. They are all different.

The Jojo organization is 10 years old and presents:

- 5-6 productions a year
- a festival
- residency programmes and find that the visiting artists develop their art while there

they have initiated co-productions with France and took part in the EU-funded TRANSDANCE ??? and have initiated a Barents touring initiative and performed in a jail in Murmansk, Russia

International co-operation is hard

The Jojo centre also works hard on building local audiences, competing with ice-hockey, and wants to build more national as well as international networks

Risks are challenging and a learning experience

The idea of the regional centres is to work for many and create networks, -but they have to work!

There is political will to support the centres and there are audiences in several Finnish cities.

Debate:

Dragan Klaic commented that international work is regarded as prestige and it is important to identify which level is responsible for what.

Annika recommended to match international ideas – funding matching and to make state and region work hand in hand.

Marjana Karanti questioned this and asked who is taking the risk?

Torsten Schenlaer asked whether there shouldn't be a national cultural policy before a local and an international?

Andrew Holland from Pro Helvetia and in Switzerland mentioned their Danceplan (Project Tanz) which made contracts with dance companies and was supported by cantons, cities and the government all working together and that dance is now mentioned 42 times in their legislation.

Dragan commented that in some countries cities and regions are collaborating

Randi Urdal mentioned that Bergen wants to make a national dance centre to disseminate dance internationally

Karene Lyngholm mentioned that there is bad dissemination in Norway and that success is not always international touring.

Inger (NO) said that feedback to presenters would be nice and could help regions. Dissemination of information is important.

Summarizing the possible role of Dance House was mentioned, there will be a new Finnish one! The example of The Place, Artists Development was mentioned.

Encounter 1: Mobility: Where do we want to go? Why touring? (13.30)

Moderators: Sanne Rekola, Dance Info Finland, Director (Finland), Heli Lampi, Dance Info Finland, International Affairs Manager (Finland).

All participants introduced themselves and raised some interesting questions for a discussion:

- How to bring the Iceland contemporary dance companies back home? Most of artists studied abroad and stayed there. Problem: educational. (Sanna Rekola),
- How to build the international network in Japan? Problem: organizational. (Atsuko Hisano),
- How many networks should there be? Problem: quantity. (Kirre Arneberg),
- How to tour to survive as a choreographer or an artist? Problem: monetary. (Per Roar),
- How to make Estonian contemporary dance companies one's mark by having a very strong neighbour, Finland? Problem: competition. (Tiina Ollesk),

- Is the Eastern creature in contemporary dance interesting for the West? Problem: interests. (Tiina Ollesk).

Why touring?

- new market – more performances,
- new audience – cultural exchange,
- reflection/context,
- professional development,
- income expectations.

Difficulties:

- difficult access to funding,
- funders' aims,
- certain funding leads to certain performances,
- funding for performances, but not for managing dance companies,
- impossible to be a choreographer and a good seller at the same time,
- low level of government funding leads the artists to private sector,
- no interests of media for dance companies' activities abroad.

On the other hand:

- balance between input and output: is this worth it?
- international touring – success and/or quality?
- question of distance: neighbours vs. distant countries,
- cultural context: some works based on local or national features.

Audience development:

- public seminars about working style,
- about inspiration,
- about creature process,
- workshops,
- talks after performances etc.

Funders' counts:

- good reputation of the company/choreographer,
- good plan of the company,
- companies' participation in good/bad festivals,
- probability, that the dance company comes back regularly,
- public activities of the company etc.

Problem: not much cooperation in Nordic-Baltic region. Why?

Solution: one regional policy with the contemporary dance as a front-runner.

Conclusion: mobility within one Nordic-Baltic region based on sustainability.

Extended value:

- cooperation (more than just showing of performances),
- residences,
- centers of knowledges (learning),
- sustainable art form.

Encounter 2: Getting on the Road. Issues on economy and planning (13.30)

Moderators: Ása Richardsdóttir, Iceland Dance Company, Managing Director (Iceland), Lene Bang Henningsen, WEGO, Manager (Denmark).

Summary 1:

Ása was laying out the elements of financial preparations for a tour and of financial negotiations. Followed by the attention needed for the technical details and technical specifications of the production to be communicated to the venues covered by the tour.

She was also discussing the publicity and the communication in general that the company prepares for a tour, with all the risks to misunderstand the local communication standards and habits abroad.

She was pointing out the importance of using tours to build long-term relations and to evaluate the touring experience properly, in order to draw lessons for the future, avoid repeating mistakes and improving logistic and communication details. While companies often accent the financial impact of a tour, the learning experience is centered in the sphere of artistic stimuli and intercultural competence boost.

Lene was concentrating on the inner dynamics among the members of a touring team, especially on a protracted tour that could be very demanding and exhausting. Distance from home, repetition, and alien environments could cause frustration, irritation and cultural disorientation.

She was pleading for humbleness in communication with the local hosts and understanding of the local circumstances that could be inferior to those at home. The main point in this case is whether the local host is really doing his/her best. In evaluating the hospitality and the quality of arrangements and of the public and critical reception, the members of the touring team need also to grasp the specifics of the receptive culture and not measure everything with their home yardstick.

In the discussion, there was attention to the breach of contract, if the hosting organizations fail to fulfill the promises as stipulated in the contract. In most cases, negotiations help more than protest and for juridical arbitration there is no time. Lawyers and courts cost too much time and money. Troubleshooting must take place at once. One can write off what the host has not delivered or insist that some compensation is paid afterwards as damage. Most companies have no means to pursue a real court case with a partner that disappointed them or betrayed them and the dance work. In fact, the performing arts world in Europe has no arbitration instances set up.

Working with standard contracts and developing some diplomatic skills, avoiding cultural arrogance - those were the success ingredients mentioned in the discussion.

Touring schedules do not match always-funding cycles. Tours should be derived from a careful mapping of the dance infrastructure, from checked contracts, trustworthy relationships and artistic needs the company foregrounds.

DK adds: one could consider developing a standard touring manual for smaller dance groups going abroad, with all the attention points listed and various options to be negotiated fully explained.

Summary 2:

In her presentation Ása Richardsdóttir went through the economy and planning of touring with an example of three steps. Lene Bang Henningsen, who gave insight into the aesthetics and human aspect of touring, followed Richardsdóttir's presentation. The topic raised discussion, which concentrated mainly on management and leadership skills.

The **first step on getting on the road** is economy and planning, solving financial and technical issues. The **second step** is thinking broader about market expectations, marketing material, the number of performances and making the most of going on tour by searching for other potential buyers in the area and inviting buyers

to see the performance. **Do your research:** find local partners, find out their agendas, and discuss the potential for working together.

The third step is about evaluation. What were the results of the tour? What mistakes were made? Did the venue or buyer understand you? Is this your market? As touring is about learning as well, writing down observations, even small ones, makes it easier to continue the learning process and passing on the know-how. It is important to think why and how you are touring. For instance, is the festival co-operation pure business or are you trying to establish a long-term relationship?

Understand the context of the performance when negotiating with the buyer and other local partners and avoid cultural arrogance even when matters don't proceed as you are used to. Respect the host country's culture and its habits. Be flexible. It's about finding the right balance between humbleness and directness. Contextual understanding is also crucial when choosing the right piece for the buyer.

There is not only one rule on how to negotiate the right fee, because the perception of the buyers varies. It was pointed out that the Western Europeans seem to get better prices than the East Europeans. Another point was made about the buyer using the performer if they have funding. Therefore, it's not good to be too humble, nor underestimate your value.

Tell your price but understand that the fee is only one part of the negotiation. There are also the accommodation, marketing, technical issues, and so on to consider. You should understand the performance in its totality. When you understand the buyers' situation as well, you know where you can negotiate and where you can't.

Clear communication is essential when dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds. Write in the contracts, what your tasks and the venues' tasks and responsibilities are. For instance, the amount of marketing might be difficult to realize without clear decisions on who does what.

Technical staff with good communication skills is important in international touring. A lighting designer suggested that you should get hold of the venues technical rider first and after this it's easier to discuss your own rider. Remember to be realistic in scheduling, and schedule also enough time for the unexpected. For instance, the essential rigging time varies to venue and country.

It can be straining touring with the same people for a longer period of time. The team should be able and willing to communicate with each other, so the problems can be solved if and when they appear.

The conclusions:

Unlike generally understood, cultural differences do not bring such a great challenge to touring, as do lack of management and leadership skills of the producer and the choreographer. As everything around the performance is different on the road from that at home, the producer's and the choreographer's ability to create the right frame for the performance become very important.

Touring is about fitting your work into local context. If you want to prevent performing at a venue one time only, build your relationships keeping a long-term view on your mind. Genuine partnership will bring sustainability in your work, build a steady network for discussion and changing ideas, and most importantly, it will leave a greater impact on the local audience.

A list with a selection of websites for cultural producers to study was handed out by Ása. It is available on www.kedja.net - Vilnius - seminar resources.

Encounter 3: Artistic concerns vs. commercial value? Does the necessity to sell the product influence the creative output?

Moderators: Tine Rude, Jo Strømgren Kompani, Project manager (Norway), Hooman Sharifi, Impure Company, Choreographer (Norway-Iran).

The main issue discussed was:

When has the artist made too many compromises? How much can the package be changed in order to make it sell better, without changing the content, the substance?

In the beginning of the session Tine Rude defined what the word commercial means for her: the ability to make money in order to present the artistic work also in the future. This definition made the important point that words like commercial and selling are just words, they can be defined in many different ways. This also led to the notion that being a success does not necessarily mean the same thing as commercial. In this case the word commercial is defined in the traditional way.

Jo Strømgren was presented as an example of a choreographer who has accepted certain economical limitations. These limitations are set by the fact that his company is a touring company and gets over 60% of its income from touring. For example the set has to be easily packed, the number of performers on tour is limited, the size of venues has to be biggish etc. However, Mr Strømgren does not find these to be obstacles, instead he has adapted his creative thinking to the limitations. And most importantly, the wish to reach big audiences is also his own. Thus he tries to make his works as easily accessible as possible.

In other words, to make a work easier to sell is not the same thing as selling out on artistic principles. A work should always be introduced to an audience in such way that the audience can see a point of entry into the work.

In order for this to happen there has to be a lot of communication. Hooman Sharifi for example said that it is not his job to think about the audience. In stead it his job as a choreographer to try to make his work has clear as possible and to communicate enough with his producer, so that he can do his job, which is to find the point of entry.

Mr Sharifi also pointed out that if the work tries to please everybody and tries to speak to everyone, it has entered the zone of real commercialism where artistic values have given way to money making. But he also said that it is impossible to think that one is not at all influenced by the audience reactions. An artist cannot be an island; the audience reaction always somehow affects the artist's work.

The issue of money making was also addressed from a US point of view. Martin Wechsler from the Joyce Theatre in New York said that they have to deal with a completely different situation since in New York the commercial scene and art scene co-exist. People are faced with situations where choreographers from the art scene are hired to work in Broadway musicals etc. It was concluded that the key issue here is not so much where the money comes from but instead where does it go to: sometimes one has to make commercial projects in order to finance the art works.

All in all it was agreed on that if an artist wants to reach audiences, he/she has to consider the way the work is presented and introduced. If one wants to reach big audiences, economical issues and marketing have to be taken into consideration even more. This does not, however, mean that one has to make artistic compromises. The package can be changed without tempering with the contents.

Encounter 4. Evolving touring and mobility in 8 countries? Picking up from the morning session.

Moderators: Lars Eidevall, Dansstationen, Artistic director (Sweden), Kamma Siegumfeldt, DanceInformationCentre, keđja Projectleader (Denmark)

Notes:

The issue of how to promote an upcoming choreographer was discussed, the role of the agent mentioned. A keyword is collaboration, a need to confront the world, also other art forms.

We are organized according to nations, this must be transcended.

- A vision and structure is needed.
- There is a need for knowledge/information about venues.
- Info on residence programmes etc. to be exposed.
- Create mentorship relationships
- Grassroots co-productions
- A flexible funding system
- Countries that have national touring networks should open up for dance companies from abroad. To work politically for this.
- Showcases and fairs on a regular basis.
- NB Sweet and Tender artists network

Encounters' sum up discussion (15.30)

Moderators: Torsten Schenlaer, Embassy of Sweden, Swedish Counsellor for Cultural Affairs (Lithuania), Marianna Kajantie, Helsinki City Cultural Office, Deputy Cultural Director (Finland).

Marianna Kajantie introduced, mentioning that there is now work being done to create a Dance House in Finland

Group 1: "Why touring?"

They had been discussing:

- Professional development
- Income expectations
- In east it is necessary to tour for funding, in the west it is an expense
- Demand to think like business companies
- Change the educations in this direction?
- The Nordic-Baltic region "We are now a region"
- We want to offer companies from far away to perform 15 times in our region
- Mobility in our region, sustainability
- Extended value
- More exchange than only performances

Group 2: "Getting on the Road"

- It does affect the artistic output if you want to tour
- The artist doesn't have to compromise
- Good communication between team and artist so everybody can communicate the wished information
- Offer a point of entry into the work
- How much does the artist wish to adapt to the situation and financial matters
- The package can change but the substance can stay the same
- You can be a success without being commercial
- We are privileged as we don't have to deal with "real" commercialism as in the US

- When the commercial overlaps with the commercial, -Cirque de Soleil and choreographers
- Actors appearing in the commercial world may strengthen the actors' tools but it is different for dance
- Offering an entry point for the audience
- Use the limitations as a challenge, enabling yourself to be seen
- Leadership, planning and social competences are needed

Group 3: Artistic concern vs. commercial value?

- List of do's and don'ts
- Expectations and purpose
- Evaluation, learn from experiences
- The values and important soft things to consider during touring
- How do you pass this information on?
- Continuity of know-how
- The importance of the soft and social values, respecting each other, cultural differences etc.
- Be humble but not too humble when negotiating

Group 4: Evolving touring and mobility in 8 countries? Picking up from the morning session.

- A vision and structure is needed.
- Info on residence programmes etc. to be exposed.
- Create mentorship relationships
- Grassroots co-productions
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- NB Sweet and Tender artists network

Comments:

The commercialism has to adapt more culture.

When the economy is good we have more artistic freedom.

Important what concepts artists use about themselves and their work, artistically and practically/promotion wise.

- Presentation by Milan Vracar about European Off Network – EON. See EON power point.

Monday May 12th:

Lecture: International co-operation: defining the difference, reaching collaboration

Speaker: Dragan Klaic, Theater Scholar and Cultural Analyst (Netherlands).

See Dragan Klaic's power point.

Lecture: Mobility in the Performing Arts (9.00)

Speaker: Cristina Farinha, Independent researcher and consultant (Portugal).

The bottom line:

- Are we free to move?
- art as a laboratory,

- artists in the scope of mobility.

Mobility:

- choice,
- need,
- freedom,
- aim,
- mean,
- constraint.

Only 1,5-2% of EU citizens are working in other EU countries.

New Pioneers:

- students,
- retirees,
- highly qualified people (only 3%, artists belongs to this group).

Market demand:

- flexibility,
- mobility,
- creativity,
- long life learning,
- innovation,
- adaptivity,
- autonomy,
- responsibility,
- entrepreneurship.

Why is it interesting to move?

- basic need: national market became too small,
- expansion of residences,
- exchange of ideas – meet other artists,
- experience of the world,
- a need to be inspired,
- finding the discipline,
- representation of own country – social, educational etc. role.

Obstacles:

- taxation (social security, visas, copy rights),
- education and qualification,
- professional activities,
- family life,
- custom/migration affairs,
- finances,
- culture,
- linguistic,
- information shortcoming.

Long term planning:

- language,
- addresses,

- people,
- finances,
- international rules.

Mobility is not a solution of the problems!

Challenges of mobility to European societies and to the arts:

- freedom,
- risk,
- common “ground”,
- face/interact with differences,
- displacement,
- discrimination,
- vulnerability,
- border new citizenship,
- sustainability/environment concern,
- instrumental use of the arts,
- new role of the arts,
- European artists’ social status.

Info session. EU and Nordic options of funding for mobility.

- The EU pilot project on artist mobility.

Speaker: Sheamus Cassidy, *European Commission, Unit Culture Programme and Actions (Belgium)*

No notes available

- Nordic Cultural Cooperation Today.

Speaker: Riitta Heinämaa, *Nordic Council of Ministers, Senior Advisor (Denmark)*

No notes available but read Riitas report here: <http://kknord.org/?pageID=54>

- The Mobility and Residency Program.

Speaker: Annika Söderlund, *Nordic Culture Point, Advisor (Finland)*

The programme will from Spring 2009 open up to Baltic citizens so they can apply.

The next application period for the mobility programme will app. from Oct.15-Nov.5 2008. Check

www.kknord.org

Moderator: Sanna Rekola, *Dance Info Finland, Director (Finland)*

Case study 2. Touring outside EU: USA, Japan, China, Switzerland (10.15)

Speaker: Martin Wechsler, *The Joyce Theater, Director of Programming, (USA)*, Atsuko Hisano, *Saison Foundation Tokyo, Program Director (Japan)*, Andrew Holland, *Swiss Arts Council, Head of Dance Department at Pro Helvetia (Switzerland)*, Jin Xing, *Shanghai Dance Festival, Artistic Director (China)*. **Moderator:** Heli Lampi, *Dance Info Finland, International Affairs’ Manager*

Japan:

Atsuko Hisano, Saison Foundation Tokyo, Program director

Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Session House (Tokyo), - ST spot (Yokohama), - Dance Box (Osaka).
Large festivals	- Tokyo international arts festival (TIF),

	- Springs arts festival in Shizuoka.
Medium festivals	- Hot summer festival in Kyoto, - Dance triennial Tokyo Aoyama, - Yokohama Dance Collection R, - JCDN “We’re gonna go dancing”.
Funding	- total for arts 620 mil. €; for international activities – 11 mil. €, - 23 private foundations for various arts, - KMK – Kigyo Mecenat Kyogikai – supporting arts association, - only “Saison Foundation” is supporting contemporary dance: a) long-term support, b) compound support system, c) improvement of the performing arts.
Advices	- find Japanese partners (most founders prefer a collaboration with Japanese partners), - apply in autumn, - be clear with your aims (What do I want to do in Japan? To perform? To present a new piece? To find a residence? To win a competition?).

USA:

Martin Wechsler, The Joyce Theater, Director of Programming

Audience	- people don’t go to see someone they don’t know, - people go to see better commercial performances.
Difficulties	- a very small fee from the presenter, - hosting, visas and sometimes stage paid by the dance company, - the performers have to be in the dance company not less than a year from the application date (if not – automatic rejection), - some Arabian artists in the company – very difficult to get visa or assent, - some Cubans in the company – automatic rejection, - costs start from 3000 \$ for one person.
Advices	- own funding, - good planning, - patience in papers’ management.

Switzerland:

Andrew Holland, Swiss Arts Council, Head of Dance Department at Pro Helvetia

Festivals	- ADC Geneva, - Dampfzentrale Bern, - Fabriktheater Rote Fabrik, - Festival de la Cité Lausanne, - Kaserne Basel, - Tanz>Faktor>Interregio, - Tanz in Olten, - Tanz in Winterthur, - Tanzhaus Zürich, - Theaterhaus Gessnerallee Zürich, - Théâtre Arsenic Laussane, - Théâtre Sévelin 36 Laussane.
System	- in a small country like Switzerland dance can’t survive, dance have to tour, - all financial support from the government,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promotion for very young artists, - Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia coordination of artistic projects in Central and Eastern European countries in Warsaw, www.prohelvetia.pl
Advices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - apply with the small 10-12 min. performances, - start with little steps: workshops, educational level, residences etc.

Panel Discussion 1: Agents: keywords to successful global dance exchange

Speakers: Åsa Edgren, Loco Motion, General Manager (Sweden), Bruno Heynderickx, CAMP AI VZW, General Manager (Belgium), George Skalkogiannis, International Dance Agent (Canada).
 Moderator: Ása Richardsdóttir, Iceland Dance Company, Managing Director (Iceland).

In the beginning of the session it was discovered that most people present had a mutual **goal: professional development**. This led the session to be also about keywords to successful professional development and not just about keywords to successful international collaboration.

The three speakers who were initially named as agents actually all defined themselves to be more managers. The two terms were defined as follows:

A manager is someone who commits him-/herself to actively promote and develop the career of an artist or a company. A manager therefore also takes part in discussions and decisions about artistic concerns. They are the people who make art happen.

An agent does not get involved in artistic debates and development. Their role is to know where to sell and where to present productions. They have a knowledge of different markets, venues etc.

Following issues were addressed during the discussions:

The importance of personal contacts: All successful collaboration and exchange is based on personal networks. Without personal contact there is no trust and without trust there will be no real collaboration. Personal contacts are also the way to ensure that the right people see the work. The hard fact is that doing great art is not enough to launch a successful career; it is also necessary to have the right spectators at the right time.

In addition to this theme the guest speakers stressed that also the artist has to have networks. If the choreographer is not committed to the international work, the manager cannot do his/her job. The beginning of a network can be one person and residencies are a good place to start.

It was also stressed that mistakes do happen. It is not important to try to avoid mistakes but to analyze them and to learn from them. It is possible to create success out of failure.

The manager should know the work of the artist he presents well. If one does not know the work it will not be possible to know who are the potentially most interested presenters. In order to find the potentially interested the manager/agent has to do a lot of research, e.g. look at the programmes of previous seasons/festivals etc.

Successful international career also requires that the artist has a strong identity and sees clearly what is the core of his/her work, what makes them unique. If this is not clear, people tend to set themselves unrealistic goals.

When asked how they select the artists, which they work with, the guest speakers gave slightly different answers. For Mr Skalkogiannis it is important that the work of the artist speak to him, that it passes the “gut-feeling-goose-flesh” test. On the other hand Ms Edgren said that for her it is more important to feel that the collaboration between her and the artist works.

In the end of the discussion it was pointed out that one big problem in the field is the lack of managers, period. Therefore it was suggested that one very concrete result of kedja could be an informal short-term internship program.

Summary 2:

Before the session the below texts were sent out to participants:

Task at hand – homework before the session:

You want to get established with your artistic work on new markets outside your own country.
How do you do it?

What infrastructure would you need in your organization?

How long time would you consider that you need?(5, 10, 15 or 25 years) What are your goals, artistic, financial , market wise (give us 10) How do you want to work with your audience? (3 examples)

About the session:

Keywords for a successful global dance exchange.

This session will involve three experienced agents, Asa Edgren, director of Loco Motion, Sweden, Bruno Heyndrickx, long time agent of Rui Horta, director of Campai and newly appointed artistic director of Carte Blanche, Norway, George Skalkogiannis, International Dance Agent, Canada.

All three have for a number of years successfully navigated their artists through the world of global dance exchange.

Moderator is Asa Richardsdottir, executive director of Iceland Dance Company and initiator of various performing arts projects in Iceland and member of the Kedja management committee.

The four of them will share with the seminar participants their personal experiences in building up a reputation and international collaboration on behalf of dance artists and in a working session with all present aim to identify the key success factors in the 21st century dance exchange.

Participants will be asked to share their goals and aspirations for international collaboration and the keywords of "The artistic core, Know your market, Motivation, Time, Plan before you act, Political infrastructure, Knowhow, financial resources" will be untangled in what we hope to be a lively, "constructive session".

Notes from the session

The session touches on various points in the work of agents and the reality of contemporary dance companies.

At the beginning a discussion on the definition of the word agent, and what it involves, came up, which resulted in the agreement that perhaps an Agent is someone that works on promoting artists but is not involved in the artistic process, where a Manager has many hats and has a holistic involvement in the work and development of arts. All three speakers felt they rather belong to the latter group.

We agreed that

- A strong relationship is needed between the artists and the manager which is based on a shared passion for the art
- Both parties need to have mutual understanding and knowledge of each others work
- TRUST is a keyword in the working relationship of artists and managers as well as that of the presenter.
- The manager is a KEDJA

- It is OK to jump into the big pool and learn from your successes and failures – through that you can learn to plan (which is crucial in international collaboration).

We agree that there is a need for

- Better conditions for artists to be able to hire and work with managers. There is a lack of funding, for certain, but also culture for artistic /managerial relations that are based on equal ground
- More know-how on artistic markets
- Better qualified managers in, at least, some countries - educational opportunities can certainly be improved.

A sum –up of concrete ideas from the session:

- The creation of the kedja management internship
- An investigation of the curriculum of art schools in relations to management skills, presentation skills and the ability to speak up for yourself.
- kedja meeting place at kedja encounters for artists/managers to find each other.
- We could start a “Butterfly project” - (exchange based on homestay /workstay between organisations).

Panel Discussion 2: Business and art of the dance: Mutual benefit? Responsibility for community?

Speakers: Lars Holten Petersen, Carlsberg A/S Properties, Vice President (Denmark), Ausra Balciunienė, Philip Morris Baltic, Director Corporate Affairs (Lithuania), Raoul Grünstein, Image Match, Chairman of the Board (Finland). Moderator: Vaidas Jauniskis, Arts Printing House, Programs’ Director (Lithuania).

Vaidas started out by asking if business and arts are opposing elements.

Ausra Balciunienė explained that different companies have different strategies in their way of supporting arts. For Philip Morris it is important to look at the *needs* and *deeds* of the local community. The main question is: What is the value you can give your country?

Since Lithuania is a new country, Philip Morris believes that contemporary dance matches both the country and the strategies of Philip Morris well, since contemporary dance is synonymous with something new, inventive, and dynamic – all qualities that are positive for the company.

Also, Philip Morris is interested in creating long-lasting partnerships rather than single-day partnerships. Investment in culture is not for gaining back. But to *give* back to the community!

Raoul Grünstein believes that the corporation between arts and business is increasing these years. Today 10-30% of the arts budgets come from sponsorships. The public funding is not increasing anymore, rather the opposite. Sponsorships from private companies don’t only include money, but knowledge of new ways of doing things regarding media, marketing, web etc.

Business is no longer about materials, but about branding, the immaterial, about telling stories: all of which is already present in culture.

Lars Holten Petersen is hoping that contemporary dance can be part of strengthening Carlsberg’s image and branding. Carlsberg’s old breweries in Valby, Copenhagen, is being created into a new city, hosting amongst others a new headquarter for Danish contemporary dance, Dansehallerne, which includes studios, performance space and administration. The overall strategy for the city is to create a city within the city, where people can live, work, consume and enjoy. And to create a vibrant and pulsating place for many and different people. Therefore culture, eg. dance is important.

Carlsberg wants to act as a responsible company and a member of society that communicates with society and gives back to its employees. The company pays interest in the way their customers view the company.

Carlsberg chose contemporary dance because they felt that it was innovative, provocative and creative. They could feel the *energy* of the artform. Also, they wanted to create something that was not already there.

Raoul: about 70 % of all sponsorships are for sports. In these kinds of sponsorships the companies get media attention. In relation to arts-sponsorships, it helps create an image of the company, to create a kind of sex appeal for the company. In these sponsorships the companies show social responsibility, they reach new audiences/customers.

Question from the audience; **Hanne Svejstrup** from Dansens Hus, Denmark:

Is there a risk that companies sponsoring art will at the same time want to control/have influence on that art?

Raoul: has never experienced private companies censoring or intervening in the content of the art they are supporting. That would rather be the case with public funding institutions.

Lars: Tip for creating a sponsor-partnership with a private company: you have to establish a connection to the company. Never begin by asking for money.

Panel Discussion 3: International players: festivals, venues, residencies and co-productions (12.30)

Speakers: Serge Peyrat, Theatre de la Ville Paris, Programme Director (France), Martin Wechsler, The Joyce Theatre, Director of Programming, New York City (USA), John Ashford, The Place Theatre, Director (UK). Moderator: Karene Lyngholm, Artistic and Administrative Director, (Norway).

How a dance artist should approach the speakers to get her/his work presented in their theatre:

Questions:

- 1) Presentations of their venues and where they get funding
- 2) How they find performances: informal and formal networks
- 3) How they programme you. How to approach them to get your work presented in their venue.
- 4) Questions from the audience

1) Presentations of the venues and funding

Martin Wechsler: The Joyce Theatre is a 500 seat venue for dance in New York. There are 6 to 7 performances per week during 48 weeks per year, presenting app. 40 companies of which 9-10 foreign companies. Most of the companies give 7-8 performances during a week's time.

Joyce Theatre is a leading dance presenter in NY and has developed an international reputation even if the technique and the theatre are quite modest ones.

The funding: From a trust. 6 % come from city/state/federal government

John Ashford: Leader of the Robin Howard Theatre within the Place for twenty years. It was an important presenter of international companies at the beginning. Now the theatre is developing young local artists.

The Place has 11 studios, a theatre, an artist development centre, London Contemporary Dance School and Richard Alston Dance Company. The house has 80 full time employees.

The funding comes from: National Arts Council/local funding/ box office/trusts/sponsorships.

Serge Peyrat: dance is only one of the four artistic programmes of the Théâtre de la Ville. The other programmes are theatre, dance, world music and classical music. Dance has been in the programme from 1967. There are two venues; a 1000 seat theatre and Théâtre des Abesses with 400 seats.

At first we invited, now we also co-produce. We programme 25-30 different companies per year and show about 450 performances.

Support from the city.

2) Networks

The most important networks are **informal**, person to person based. All three change ideas with similar presenters.

MW: There are some formal networks in the USA such as National Performance Network, Californian Presenters and Pennsylvania Presenters.

JA: In England, there is a national network: eight national dance agencies. They differ from each other - some of them have venues.

An other important network is Aerowaves. It has existed 12 years now. It consists of 30 partners from different parts of Europe.

SP: There are formal networks as IDEE-project of seven European Dance Houses, IETM (International European Theatre Meeting).

3) How they programme dance and how to contact them?

S.P.: Every way is suitable, but the best way is to send information about a performance: when and where the company performs.

J.A.: I wish no standard emails. Better and easier is to present short works for me. We concentrate on showing the works of young artists.

M.W.: Send material, though I get every day about 5 DVDs. There is no time to see them all. If John and Serge are already making plans, it helps.

Most of the artists seen in Joyce Theatre rent the space and pay about 1/3 of the rent. If the company or artist is invited a fee is paid and commission grants, if the piece is commissioned.

The Joyce Theatre has 4-6 artists in residence. It is very difficult in New York to find rehearsal space; our residence programme provides e.g. rehearsal space.

Opinions on agents, showcases, festivals:

MW and JA: Seeing works is very important. Agents help organising, but we want to speak directly with the artists.

SP: I want to see whole piece, not extracts, and contact directly with the company. No company has ever come to perform through an agent.

Questions from the audience:

1) Do you ever get tired?

SP: Have seen performances for the last 40 years, every time he wishes to see something wonderful. And after 3 minutes you know that....

MW: Of course. But has to keep in mind the work the artist has done and appreciate it.

JA: New works interest always. (Beginnings)

2) Have you seen anything interesting here by Lithuanian choreographers?

SP: Everything has been Ok. I need to see more works. If you bring a work too early, you can kill it if the audience is not ready for it. **JA:** If an unknown company visits, no one is coming to see it. **MW:** In New York, there are about 30 performances per day, so I ask myself several questions, eg. if there is something unique in the piece, why I should bring this to NY.

3) How much can they take responsibility for the artistic quality and development?

JA: sometimes can follow the projects, or when knows artist for a long run. **SP:** Dialog with the artists, discussing about the piece. **MW:** artists do not care what I say.

NEXT PAGE:
from the “idea-wall”

Sponsoring
maybe easier
if wider networks

messe/
Showcase

Information
about venues
- remote areas
knowledge
before going
on the road

study on the
current nation-
al networks
and their
collaboration

involve the
academic
community

Nordic Baltic
web-page?

Use
current
national net-
works to form
international performances

look to
Mediterranean
models

flexible
and
versatile
support from
Dance Houses

Micro and
macro
levels:

exchange
between
mentors and
mentees

Maybe a
known
project?

knowledge
sharing from
companies

choreographers
forum
Role of the
dancers/choreographers
associations?

open application
for non-resident
mobility all year!
Not 6 months ahead!