

# SLIGO GATHERING

// 28 & 29 MAY 2024

PERFORMING  
ARTS FORUM



# WHERE CONNECTION CREATES CHANGE

## Connecting Producers

As part of our Sligo Gathering, we held a networking event for producers co-curated by our Producer Working Group and facilitated by Susan Coughlan. 58 producers attended.

## What were the Arising Themes

### Need for joined up thinking to address lack and loss of producers

- Producers database
- Forums
- Agency

### Isolation, visibility & sustainability challenges

- Need to build and see community
- Need for more peer learning opportunities across the producing community
- Need for support, mentoring and training
- Need for clear career pathways

### Role clarity and work practices

- Greater clarity about the role
- Support in navigating boundaries.
- Trust

### Funding system issues

- Touring
- Funding cycles
- Timing
- Demands of making funding application

## Specific notes taken from the group conversations and grouped by theme

### Producer role & Career Path

There's a lack of producers available

Many positive words describing the role e.g. enjoyable, alchemy

Lack of clarity in the producer role

Needs to be defined more clearly.

Sample Job descriptions needed

This leads to problems as producers become the default job taker

There are differing expectations of what a producer is and does.

See the job/role as being about 'making dreams come true'

Many don't choose to be a producer - it was out of necessity

Lack of career path

More involvement in/of creative producers needed

Need to get clear ourselves about the value we place on the producer role

### **Training, Mentoring & Support**

Training and mentoring are badly needed. Producers need to see and learn from how others do it

Support is needed to bridge the gap between producers and artists

Invest in paid time for more experienced producers to work with/mentor less experienced

Connect producers with venues more e.g. a Limerick /Cork network

Producers tend to bring and share the positive and absorb the negative.

Lack of boundaries is a problem

Note the option of the Lir course

### **Practical Resources needed**

Databases and information sharing – Promenade + Field Arts + list of people present today

Performing Arts Forum to share

### **Funding**

Arts Council funding cycles don't work for planning shows

Change the model e.g. touring. Look at Shared Ireland Touring Scheme

25% of producer's time is spent writing funding applications which is problematic

A bursary for grant writing - stipend

### **Touring**

There are failures around touring

Accommodation crisis is a major problem

### **Community**

Really value this opportunity to collaborate and work together on this

Sense of community is very positive

Monthly open space style gathering online would be helpful

There's need for more connection and to co-operate with each other more

Community-building

Attitude that everyone knows everyone is not so.

### **Other issues & opportunities facing producers & production**

Challenges are much worse for producers whose first language is not English

Uncertainty levels are acute at the moment and producers really need support

Need for greater balance between making art and producing

The nature of the sector/ work is way too Dublin centric

Arts Council request to engage with politicians in local elections about Arts Council budget

There's a need and an opportunity to build a better bridge with amateur drama.

## Flipchart notes Producer Working Group 'Connecting Producers' - 29/05/2024

Like	Dislike	Change
Making things happen	Uncertainty of the future	Funding models and timelines
Variety of projects	Absorption of negative energy/lightning bolt	Producer mentorship and training
Connection	Lack of boundaries	Centralised information about programmes and databases
Community	Juggling projects and timelines	More funding and resources outside of Dublin
Viable and real	Scapegoat	Young Critics programme or similar
Working with talented people	Personal/Professional relationships	Regional producers connected to venues
	Dublin centric	
	Reactive production model	
Making people's dreams come true	It takes approx. 10 years or more for things to go from an idea to getting funding, on stage and touring	Make it easier to get funding from companies. In Brazil, for example, they have a structure that a government body or an art company can support a company or artist to tour in Ireland. If an artist curates the shows, the company pays the body to help empower artists.
Be part of making ideas happen	Fundraising	More balance between Art vs Producing, which is currently at art 10% and productivity 90%
I love art and producing equally		
Producing is to be creative		
Bringing things to life		
Having a say	Lack of clarity in role	In the absence of job spec, have clear expectations, trust your producer (have a shared vision), and negotiate your role
Full arc of projects	Producing vs self-producing	
Fulfilment	Lack of career path	
Creative relationships		
Vision		
Making miracles, including HR in room/therapy	So many elements of producing	More time
Vision, bridging gaps & forging connection	Different expectations	More producers
Collaboration	Lack of boundaries	Mentorship
Working with artists	Anything that is not executive remit, becomes a producer's remit	Training/development
Tech week	Not your mother!	Shared info/knowledge
Audiences at preview stage	Working with people's various timelines	
Having fun!	Being stretched time-wise	

Like	Dislike	Change
Connection	Disappointment	Irish language producers
	Responding to climate change	Access to funding
		Outline role of producer
	Jumping into producing roles when you have other commitments due to lack of producers	Seek artists from different nationalities and different walks of life
	Producers underappreciated	Make producers compulsory, and their role funded
	Positive redundancy	Independent database - centralised (promonade.ie), and to list producers for aerial and street arts
	The time needed to make funding applications	Forum ideas - a digital noticeboard
Working with creatives and the artists and building on those relationships	Arts Council application system so labour intensive and outdated	Producer members model
	Lack of producer training/supports	Open space for producers (monthly zoom)
		A bursary for grant writing - stipend
Openness	Infrastructure scattered	Shared island touring scheme
Helping people out	Lack of venues	More joined up thinking between funders and the sector and its funding strands
	Difficulty of building audiences	
	Need marketing assets	
	number of visiting shows is reducing	
	Difficulty in navigating funding deadlines against presenting work	Bridge a gap between venues receiving work and artists presenting work to enable more touring opportunities
	Accommodation crisis	
	Touring part is very competitive, and not enough resources going into touring	
Independent artist accidentally a producer	Demands - not enough time	Financial parameters
I run a venue, but being an accidental producer provides opportunities	Lack of budget - high expectations	Greater balance
Bringing people together	Raising money	More involvement in creation process
The craic	The necessities	Producer role in venues
Creative aspect of bringing a vision to life		Producer training nationally
Making people's dreams come true	Time commitment/less art	Funding cycles need to be timely (AC issue)
Seeing new work come alive		AI
Getting bookings	Admin	Being more involved in the creative process
Seeing new work	Raising money from sponsors	Create official producer role in venues

