



Meeting of the Festival Implementation Group (FIG) on Friday 18 November 2005 at the offices of Highland 2007, Abertaff House, Church Street, Inverness at 1pm

Present: Ian Brown (HITN Chair), George Gunn (Grey Coast Theatre Company), Simon MacKenzie (Artistic Director, TOSG), Robert Livingston (Director, HI-Arts), Maggie Dunlop (Funding & Liaison Manager, HI-Arts), Muriel Ann Macleod (HITN Development Officer / Theatre Hebrides), Stuart Brownlee (HITN Marketing & Information Co-ordinator / sbworks).

Apologies: Dolina MacLennan (HITN Board Member), Julie Ellen (Playwrights' Studio Scotland), John Tiffany (Associate Director for new work, NToS), Cathy Shankland (Arts & Heritage Manager, Highland 2007), Matthew Zajac (Dogstar), Hamish MacDonald (Dogstar Theatre Company).

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies from George Gunn for late arrival.

2. Minutes of Meeting held Friday 28 September 2005

True record - approved.

3. Matters Arising

None not already covered by the following agenda items.

4. Festival and Forum - revised Vision and Aims - *confirmation*

Now have clear set of vision and aims. For the sake of clarity the Vision and Aims of the festival are as follows:

Vision:

“Celebrating the best of today’s theatre in the Highlands and Islands; offering a forum to learn, create and debate.”

Aim 1:

“To celebrate, share and promote the highest quality theatre and build links between the Highlands and Islands and national and international practitioners”

Aim 2:

“To create opportunities for the involvement of the wider communities, including young people and children.”

Aim 3:

“To provide an environment for Scotland’s theatre community to learn, debate, innovate and create.”

5. Research and selection of the work – implementation

Three items for consideration:

5.1 Programming Principles paper from Ian Brown

(IB) – the paper circulated reduced the discussions over the previous three meetings into a set of 11 principles. Areas that require confirmation – Principles 2, 4 and 8.

Principle 1 – agreed.

Principle 2 – (RL) – potential area of confusion - is ‘live arts’ (Scotland’s International Festival of Live Arts, held in Glasgow), there needs to be a clear distinction between FIG’s implementation and this national ‘live arts’ festival. 2nd line – change to ‘site-specific performance arts’ – otherwise agreed. (MD) – existing Inverness Film Festival, so change to ‘multi-media’.

Principle 2 revised – “The focus of the Festival is dramatic theatre, but Festival ‘theatre’ can include a mix of dance, music theatre, puppets, multi-media, site specific performance arts, design and so on.”

Principle 3 – (IB) question about the ordering of the Principles – art/audience before audience/art – agreed.

Principle 4 – (IB) key underlying point is that it allows the re-mounting of good work and new work in a secure context. (MAMcL) Can we go back 3 years for re-mounts? (SM) – 18 month period is satisfactory. This was agreed by those present. (MAMcL) 2 re-mounts, but what will the other 2 works be? (RL) work that is ‘premiered’ – are we commissioning these works? (RL) – if festival is not in position to commission it will likely become reliant on the Producers Fund, etc. If external funding sources drive this it could present a problem with timings, e.g. the Producers Fund won’t decide until April, which is really too late for a September festival. (MAMcL) – suggest need to allow a year for commissioning new work, so production funding would need to be released 1 year in advance – this would require a change in the existing criteria of the Producers Fund. (RL) Producers Fund as it stands is not sufficient and Promoters normally kick off tours in October. (MAMcL) – re-mounts are

costly unless use a partnership programmes, e.g. Mull Theatre and the Byre. (IB) – feels easier with re-mounting than with new work. New work is the issue.

Likelihood of sponsors? – not very likely. (RL) – could pursue SAC 2 project grants approach, but can't guarantee they would be H&I's work. NToS, 2 re-mounts, 1 new work (Producer's Fund), 1 other (SAC supported) – this might be do-able. (MAMcL) – NToS are looking at co-productions with H&I's based companies. (IB) – we haven't said that NToS will be there every 2 years. (MAMcL) – noted an SAC paper that indicated that anything funded by NToS won't get funding from SAC. (IB) – 2 re-mounts, 2 other works (could be co-production with NToS and/or SAC support) - 2 new work, including in principle 1 with NToS. (RL) – in theory then, the Producers Fund remains intact. (SM) – it is important to safeguard the Producers Fund – it is politically right to leave it untouched. (IB) – what is the selection process? Should a Selection Board invite commissions, or should companies submit proposals? Do we want to think what the selection process would be? (RL) – not at this stage – it will emerge as development progresses (need to involve SAC, Eden Court, etc.) (RL) Change to 'Members of HITN will present' – as the whole concept is for the ultimate benefit of the theatre community, wider than just companies. (IB) include '... agreed process led by the festival management'.

Principle 4 revised – “Members of the Highlands and Islands Theatre Network will present four shows in the official programme of each Festival: two will be remounts of the best work from the previous 18 month period, and two will be new work including in principle co-production(s) with the National Theatre of Scotland, selected by an agreed process.”

Principle 5 – (MAMcL) – for budgeting purposes, we need to agree whether or not there should be an incentive for smaller companies for supporting events – small chunks of money, say c£400 for individual artists/student showcases/play readings. For other fringe events – its up to the individuals/companies – can't fund non-HITN members. (RL) – supports this entirely. Letter of comfort for companies – if not selected, can still be part of the festival. (IB) – if we try to manage the fringe, we will take on too much – leave the fringe to look after itself. Follow the 'Dogstar' model, where a one-man show at the Market Bar became a full blown touring show the following year. (RL) – again change to read '... Members of HITN'.

Principle 5 revised – “Other members of the Highlands and Islands Theatre Network are free to put on their own work as a ‘fringe’ event at their own expense around and during the main Festival period.”

Principle 6 – agreed. (IB) should Eden Court be included? (RL) not at this stage, we should ask Eden Court to comment on this – IB and RL to set up meeting with Eden Court. (JE) – tabled comment regarding use of the word 'contribute', which might be construed as giving financial support, which the SPS cannot commit to. It was therefore agreed to change 'contribute' to 'participate'.

Principle 6 revised – “The Festival will develop with long-term partner organisations, including the National Theatre of Scotland and Playwrights’ studio who will participate in every Festival from 2007 on.”

Principle 7 – Suspect Culture is to be seen as an example only. (JE) – tabled comment that this had been raised previously in the context of the Forum element. It was agreed to reflect this in a revised version.

Principle 7 revised – “Each Festival will seek one-off partners to complement the contribution of the long-term partners: one example might be Suspect Culture in the context of the Forum events.”

Principle 8 – insert –‘seek to involve’ rather than ‘invite’. This might involve Traverse, TAG, Lyceum, etc.

Principle 8 revised – “Each Festival will seek to involve at least two companies from outside the Highlands and Islands to present performances to complement the work of the members of the Highlands and Islands Theatre Network, at least one of these being another Scottish company.”

Principle 9 – Committed to Sweden. What is new is that ‘Nordic’ isn’t specifically mentioned – leave open ‘say outside Scotland’. (MAMcL) – needing to know – Sweden, Dramaten – can we do this? Question about collaboration and the amount of work involved. (RL) – the collaborative project might not be fully realised, but can still be presented as work in progress. (RL) don’t funnel collaboration into the Festival – limits the projects – this is an ongoing process, we can’t assume a two-year timetable for the collaborative projects. (IB) – reminder that 2009 is the ‘year of homecoming’, might be, say, a Canadian element in that year.

Principle 9 revised – “Each Festival will select a particular partner country from outside Scotland – in the first place, Sweden.” remaining text as stands.

Principle 10 – agreed with revisions. Forum should be on a par with the Festival element.

Principle 10 revised – “Every Festival Forum will consist of at least three one-day programmes made up of key aspects of theatre development, including master classes, debates, developmental workshops and training.”

Principle 11 – agreed. (RL) lose the word ‘local’ in the context of students. Don’t want to give the impression that we are debarring H&I’s students who are now located outwith the region, we want to encourage these students to return. (IB) – can we test this – ‘local’ as in the locality of H&I’s. (SM) – see this in the context of the recent Irish/Gaelic summer school model, don’t want to close any doors, so suggest we lose the word ‘local’. Rather than ‘performances’ say ‘work’. (SM) – TOSG has started a residency programme for people who want to tutor at feisean as FnG are lacking drama tutors – 15 attended a recent course.

Principle 11 revised – “Each Festival should present work by students and youth theatres.”

(MD) – ‘Promote-YT’ would be interested in participating in the Festival. (RL) ‘youth’ is the clear message of what will hook THC in, need to look at including specific ways of representing youth work. ‘Promote-YT’ observer status on FIG to be taken under AOCB. Programming Principles – adopted with changes discussed. [Please note subsequent receipt of comment on the original principles 4 and 11 from Matthew Zajac: for Principle 4 he suggests changing number of shows from four to

'between three and five', with at least two of these being remounts, thus giving greater flexibility; and for Principle 11 he suggests adding emphasis to this along the lines of "existing text ..., giving some weight to the importance of this area and highlighting the excellent schools, college and youth drama work which has developed in the region in recent years." – these will be discussed at the next FIG meeting].

Action: Muriel Ann Macleod to contact Dramaten. Matthew Zajak's comments on the principles to be raised at the next FIG meeting.

5.2 FIG Action Checklist

See version at end of previous minutes – 1. in train. 2. reported back. 3. FST membership has been approved by HITN Board. 4. done. 5. done. 6. ongoing. 7. has been discussed – will be approaching Bruce Robertson in December. 8. done. 9. done. 10. deferred (JT not available).

New version tabled. (IB) - Ann MacKay has agreed to become a HITN Board member. If agree UHIMI presence as an observer on FIG, should Ann MacKay be that person? (RL) HI-Arts has a UHIMI liaison group and it was suggested to make use of that conduit. It was therefore agreed not to invite UHIMI on as an observer on FIG. Duration is still unclear – needs discussed with Eden Court. Item 8 – funding is being sought for an internal report – (RL) will sound out INBSE, as they are no longer funding a 'Highland Festival', they may be willing to assist – agreed. Progress has been made down to Item 10. (MAMcL) – looking at pathways – Ireland, Manchester, Birmingham.

Action:

- 1. Stuart Brownlee to update FIG Action Checklist and re-circulate;**
- 2. Robert Livingston to approach INBSE regarding possible funding for internal business case exercise;**
- 3. Muriel Ann Macleod to continue investigating future 'pathways' for post-Festival touring of works.**

5.3 Consideration of Festival Name

The circulated comments from Jackie Goode, Euan Martin, Colin Marr and Robert Livingston and the tabled comments from Julie Ellen were discussed. (IB) - lets forget acronyms. HIT Festival (supported by Julie Ellen), Inverness Arts Festival. JE – HITF and Fir Chlis (not supported). HIT has no meaning in Gaelic. (SM) a register of words that has come in from English and Gaelicised, e.g. gi'fier. HITF – too pop 'music' (RL & SM). H&ITF. Inverness Theatre Festival – too exclusive. (CM) – comment that a memorable name is key. (RL) – consider Perth Concert Hall – 'Horsecross' model is a good one. "Drama na h-Alba" – a genuine Gaelic phrase that is immediately recognisable – Highland and Scottish - explore. H&ITF as the company name, with **drama na h-Alba** as festival brand, with STAFF strapline. (SM) will approach Ryno Morrison regarding use of the name.

ACTION: Simon MacKenzie to approach Donald Morrison, Development Manager, Bòrd na Gàidhlig regarding possible use of the 'drama na h-Alba' name for the Festival brand name.

6. Methods of delivery - implementation

(MAMcL) – tabled paper. We need to consider the ability to pack your day – like the St. Magnus Festival, Orkney. There also needs to be a choice, aim for a staggered programme. Suggest 19 shows, with rest of the programme working around this, including a Festival Club, student showcases etc. The suggested format is as follows:

Festival of Theatre 2007:

<u>Core Structure</u>	<u>No. of shows/events</u>
Highlands and Islands Theatre Network members product - four mid scale shows, at least two remounts	6
One partnership production with NToS	4
Two visiting UK Companies – one will be Scottish	6
One visiting International Company	<u>3</u>
	19
Visiting Practitioners – 6 cross art form, national & international	18
Forum Events, including Scottish Playwrights' Studio Symposium	3
Supporting Events	
Playreading showcase – 4 plays	4
Theatre marketing event	1
Theatre design multi-media exhibition	1
Student showcase – 4 shows	4
Individual artist showcase	<u>2</u>
	29
	<u>23</u>
Festival Club	5 days/nights

7. Format of the Forum element of STAFF and International visiting Companies

Dealt with in terms of principles and methods of delivery.

8. Any other business

'Promote YT (Scotland)' representation on FIG? (MD) suggested Colin Bradie, Director of 'Promote YT' – agreed. (IB) to brief (GG) on the output from meeting.

(GG) – note of concern regarding Highland 2007 – for discussion. (GG) – is of the view that Highland 2007 is a PR exercise for THC. Issues of who does what and when – ongoing. Concern about how Festival fits with wider picture (RL) – financial support from Highland 2007 for the Festival will be £25k at most from the Regional Fund and not optimistic about them helping to find a sponsor. Nothing likely from THC in 2007.

(RL) - should we consider a model that consists of a 2007 launch event built around a NToS commission, fitting in with the predicted delayed opening of Eden Court, with the format as tabled by MAMcL in Section 6 happening in 2008, and then biennial? Advantage of 2008 – means FIG would have a festival in 2012 (the same year as the London Olympics and could benefit from promotional/marketing profile and activity of such a prestigious international event attracting many overseas visitors/participants, etc.).

(IB) – proposed that FIG defer a decision on this until March 2006. There are obviously some key reservations that are complementary to a range of other issues. Proposed 3 possible scenarios:

1. full 2007 launch.
2. go for first event in 2007 (whatever can practically be funded/organised in the remaining timescale) leading to a 2009 major event locked into the Year of Homecoming.
3. go for a first 'taster' event in 2007 with aim of launching full event in 2008. Use 2007 for awareness raising and build in steps to future full event.

Action: Ian Brown to write to Colin Bradie, Director, Promote YT (Scotland), YouthLink, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5EZ (Tel. 0131 313 6809 Mob. 07946 025154 e-mail info@promoteyt.co.uk

9. Date, time and place of the next meeting

Abertaff House, Inverness on either Thursday 19th or Friday 20th January 2006 at 1pm - tbc – **Can FIG members please let Stuart Brownlee know their availability/preferred date ASAP.**

LIST OF ACTIONS

1. **Action: Muriel Ann Macleod to contact Dramaten;**
2. **Matthew Zajak's comments on the principles to be raised at the next FIG meeting;**
3. **Stuart Brownlee to update FIG Action Checklist and re-circulate;**
4. **Robert Livingston to approach INBSE regarding possible funding for internal business case exercise;**
5. **Muriel Ann Macleod to continue investigating future 'pathways' for post-Festival touring of works;**
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8. **FIG members to let Stuart Brownlee know their availability/preferred date for the next meeting ASAP – either Thursday 19th or Friday 20th January 2006.**

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