

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

A report commissioned by the Festival City Theatres Trust with
support from the City of Edinburgh Council

By

Lucy Mason

October 2014

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

Contents	page
1. Executive Summary	3
2. The Brief	5
a) Context	
b) Methodology and timeframe	
3. The Research – who was consulted?	6
4. Findings from consultation with artists	
a) Background information	7
b) The challenges	7
c) The solutions	11
5. What is already in place to support artists?	
a) Existing partnerships	15
b) Findings from interviews with support organisations	16
c) What these support organisations offer	17
d) Other organisations	19
e) Edinburgh’s existing infrastructure of producing theatres	21
f) Festival City Theatres Trust	22
6. Action Research	24
7. What this Pilot Project helps us to understand	27
8. Conclusions	28
9. Recommendations	29
10. Costings	31
 Appendices	
1. List of those consulted	32
2. Models of good practice	34

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

1 Executive Summary

This study has enabled Edinburgh's community of independent performing artists and companies working on the small and mid-scale, to raise their concerns and pose solutions to the particular issues which they feel affect them as Edinburgh-based practitioners.

The intended outcome of the study was to identify:

- How the Festival City Theatres Trust could use its existing infrastructure to build the capacity of Edinburgh's smaller-scale performing arts sector
- How the work of the city's smaller-scale performing arts sector could become more effective and financially secure.
- How the City of Edinburgh Council could make some strategic interventions to support this sector of the city's cultural offering

The overall findings from the research are that the city hosts a community of artists which is active and successful but which operates with very little supported infrastructure and which struggles to achieve its artistic ambitions due to lack of three key elements: **funding, people and space**.

The challenge of working on a project-funded or unfunded basis is not specific to Edinburgh. However, there was a particular challenge identified by the city's artists about the perceived lack of involvement, awareness and intervention by the City of Edinburgh Council as a funder and enabler for the city's smaller scale cultural sector.

There is a lack of experienced administrative, business and project management support (referred to throughout the document broadly as 'producing' support) for all of Scotland's performing artists and Edinburgh's companies are not alone in feeling this lack of producing expertise. There are several schemes underway to address this shortage and to train up emerging producers to be able to facilitate the work of performing artists. However, without the funds to pay for it, the expertise of these producers will remain beyond the reach of most independent artists.

For a city which is adept at turning itself into a wealth of performance spaces for the Fringe in August, there are surprisingly few spaces available which are suitable and affordable by performing artists throughout the rest of the year. This is a key challenge which fundamentally affects Edinburgh's performing artists' ability to make their work in their own city.

This report addresses each of these outcomes, and makes recommendations for practical and cost-efficient ways in which these might be achieved. Key to this is:

- use of existing resources, infrastructure and expertise of the Festival City Theatre Trust and the city's producing theatres
- building on the ethos of shared resources which is already evident through partnership-working between the city's companies
- learning from the Action Research element of this study which proves the benefit to a small or independent company of working with an experienced producer, at no cost to the artist

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

- ensuring that the work of the city's support organisations is 'joined up' and made available to those who need it in an over-arching and managed way
- making the work of the City of Edinburgh Council's Culture and Sport and Children and Families teams transparent and available to the widest network of the city's practitioners

Individually and in combination, the recommendations on pages 29 & 30 are proposed on the understanding that they will need to be flexible and adaptable to changes in the situation of artists in the city and the local and national financial, political and cultural priorities and requirements that may develop.

It is hoped that through the partnership of the Festival City Theatres Trust and the City of Edinburgh Council these recommendations will be implemented, for the benefit of the city and its future health as both a centre of world-class large-scale cultural provision and a nurturer of small-scale creativity and partnerships.

Lucy Mason
Festival Theatre, Edinburgh
October 2014

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

2 The Brief

2.1 The Project Manager was engaged by the Festival City Theatres Trust (FCTT) to deliver a pilot project to 'identify a number of small arts organisations in Edinburgh, work with them to provide business support; advise on funding routes, applications and generally give a business focus to their operations'.

2.2 The expected outcomes of the project were to:

- Source funds appropriate to projects to achieve a high strike rate
- Source new funding streams for companies
- Challenge the companies about suitability and appropriateness of funding proposals and business presumptions
- Support selected companies with skills in financial forecasting and business planning around projects and funding applications

2.3 Anticipated benefits were identified as being measured against:

- Better value for funds currently being committed
- Investment in realising better quality product
- Enjoy efficiencies of scale through partnership working

Through discussion with the City of Edinburgh Council Arts & Events Manager and Convenor of Culture and Sport and General Manager of the Festival City Theatres Trust, the Project Manager expanded the brief to ensure that it was delivered within a strategic context and as part of a wider investigation into the specific needs identified by performing companies based in Edinburgh, which might then be addressed through the project.

a) Context for the Brief

2.4 The FCTT has experience of hosting and supporting a small arts producing company (Wee Stories) over several years and recognises the value this offers to Wee Stories with minimal cost to the FCTT. The organisation is also regularly approached by independent performing artists and small performing arts companies – including the amateur and semi-professional companies – for advice and information. This includes those wishing to perform or otherwise engage with the theatre, but who lack the financial or producing support required to maximise this relationship.

2.5 With the benefit of a small project grant from the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) the pilot project was established to explore how and if the Theatre might build on its existing positive experience of supporting a theatre company directly, whilst also helping to improve the level of resource and/or expertise available to other artists and companies in the city.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

b) Methodology & Timeframe

2.6 The project was offered for a period of 6 months, on a part-time basis and was undertaken between April and October 2014 over 45 days.

During this time qualitative and quantitative research was undertaken in an attempt to capture the issues and opportunities for Edinburgh-based small scale and independent performing artists. This was achieved through face-to-face and telephone interviews with 24 artists and producers as well as through a Survey Monkey questionnaire which was distributed to 50 individuals and companies and to 13 support and membership organisations who were asked to distribute it to their networks. Two companies were also given a period of direct consultancy in response to their particular development needs.

The work was hosted by the Festival City Theatres Trust at the Festival Theatre.

3 The research – who was consulted?

3.1 A list of those interviewed is attached in Appendix 1. The list includes those working across a broad range of performing arts and at various stages in their careers. Some of these were identified through the FCTT as a follow up to recent conversations or pre-existing relationships and the remainder were identified through the contacts and network of the Project Manager, and referrals from those spoken with. All consider themselves to be Edinburgh-based and to be independent and therefore not employed by one of the city's established building-based producing venues.

3.2 Twenty seven completed Survey Monkey responses were received from individual performing artists and companies. A further 3 completed surveys were received from large scale organisations and producers in the City. These 3 were not included in the analysis of data as the information submitted was not relevant to the focus of this study.

3.3 All of those interviewed were also sent the Survey Monkey for the purposes of capturing quantitative data which has a value in underpinning the overall findings of this study, but it is acknowledged that some views captured through the Survey Monkey will therefore be a replication of a conversation with the Project Manager.

3.4 The Survey Monkey asked two key questions:

- *'As an artist or company based in Edinburgh are there any particular obstacles or challenges which you feel prevent you from achieving your artistic goals?'*
- *'what do you believe would make the most difference to you in overcoming these obstacles?'*

The questions were posed as 'open' questions with no prompts given. The respondents were asked to list up to six answers but no priority order was requested.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

Those interviewed were asked the same questions but there was an opportunity for the Project Manager to gain a broader understanding of the context in which the artist or company works and to expand and clarify on points raised beyond what is achievable through a questionnaire.

4 Findings

a) Background information

4.1 From the 27 companies or artists who completed the Survey Monkey the following information was gleaned:

- The highest proportion of those surveyed (76%), define themselves as working in Theatre. 32% define themselves as working in Dance, with other defined groups being Youth Theatre (12%) and Music Theatre (8%).
- Between them over the last year, these companies have produced 93 productions, 579 workshops and 32 other projects. They have performed to a total audience of 38,473 and involved 20,832 participants in their work.
- In terms of core work force, the most common pattern (57%) is for a company to be run with one full-time member of staff. **33% of these people are working on a voluntary basis.**
- The second most common pattern is for a company to be run with 2 people working part-time (44%). **Only 30% of these people are paid for their work.**
- The majority of the companies are legally constituted and are registered as a charity. 11% have no legal status. 15% are sole traders or independent artists.
- 44% of those who responded have been making work in Edinburgh for over 10 years. A further 44% have been making work in the city for between 3 & 6 years.

4.2 These findings suggest that Edinburgh has an engaged sector of performing arts practitioners, with significant experience of making work in the city and of reaching a large number of people as audiences and participants in their work. Despite their experience and the impact of their work, however, the majority of this sector work with a very small work force and the majority are not paid for their contribution.

b) The Challenges

'It is very difficult, even with the greatest ideas, for projects to move on without proper financial support' (Survey Monkey respondent)

4.3 The overall picture drawn from the responses to the question: *'As an artist or company based in Edinburgh are there any particular obstacles or challenges which you feel prevent you from achieving your artistic goals?'* is of a sector which is challenged by the lack of funding for projects and/or between projects and the resulting restrictions this puts on their ability to achieve their best work artistically or administratively. These challenges are further compounded for these companies by the lack of suitable and available space in which to create and perform their work, an issue only partly related to their lack of ability to pay. Whilst an inherent frustration comes through the responses, the general feeling is one of informed but pragmatic insight and practised resilience.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

4.4 The findings were very consistent both across the two consultation methods and the range of practitioners interviewed, differing only by degree depending on the stage and scale or the artist or companies and their career trajectory.

The following is an analysis of the specific findings from the research.

4.5 Lack of funding was identified as the key obstacle for the majority of Survey Monkey respondents (70%). Whilst a lack of funding was assumed to be the starting point from which the brief for this study developed, it is useful to have this quantified. Many of the subsequent challenges identified by companies are directly attributable to lack of funding.

Specific issues highlighted in relation to lack of funding include:

- The fractured, unpredictable and inconsistent nature of project funding
- The lack of local, i.e. Council, support and general lack of schemes dedicated to small-scale/seeding projects

This finding is echoed through interviews with individual artists and producers, 41% of whom stated that lack of regular, consistent and sufficient funding was the main obstacle which prevents them from growing and sustaining their work and bringing it to an audience. For some – particularly those who have not been successful in raising funds - this results in a lack of self-esteem and a feeling that what they do isn't valued or valuable.

'Being project funded means everything is subject to funding and there is no continuity' (interviewee response).

4.7 The second main obstacle for those surveyed was the lack of studio space for a variety of activities. 60% of Survey Monkey respondents commented on the lack of space for: development of ideas, rehearsal/creation of new work and for technical rehearsals prior to opening.

Words which were used to describe the space which is lacking include:

- 'affordable', 'suitable', 'good', 'free', 'regular', 'accessible', 'warm', 'enough height' (for aerial work)
- Several companies identified the limited availability of paid residencies in the city

'Studio space with time to accommodate the sharing of working practice and methodologies not just a sharing at the end of a residency that often is pressured, particularly when the residency is one week' (Survey Monkey respondent).

36% of those interviewed also mentioned the lack of suitable space in the city as a challenge. The need is for space that is affordable, appropriate and flexible and suitable to the needs of performing artists. This includes the option to hire a space for a four week rehearsal period without having to clear a room every night for the Brownies or Bingo, and to be able to work in the evenings without incurring additional costs.

4.8 The third most frequently mentioned challenge in the city was lack of administrative support and staffing to support company development (37% of Survey Monkey respondents)

Specific areas of support which are identified as lacking include in:

- Fundraising and support with funding applications

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

- Producing (company development, creative development, financial management, project management)
- Administration

Two respondents specifically mention the challenge of having to work part-time in other fields in order to subsidise their work in theatre.

‘Being the producer gets in the way of making the work’ (interviewee response)

For 36% of those interviewed the lack of producing support was a significant obstacle. Whilst many artists work as their own producer or bring in a producer on an occasional basis, this is often for no or low fees. The main casualty of this way of working is the lack of time artists and producers have to concentrate on strategic or company development, including researching appropriate sources of funding and making suitably informed funding applications. There is a sense of intelligent and passionate people working very hard for very limited rewards.

4.9 The fourth issue raised by those Survey Monkey respondents was the lack of performance spaces (29%)

Specific areas highlighted include:

- The limited range and small number of venues actively programming work into their spaces
- Over-reliance on the Traverse as a receiving venue, and the negative impact for dance companies of the reduction in the Traverse’s dance programming to one week per year
- Lack of medium scale performing space (no capacity given but presumed to be approx. 350 – 500 seats)
- Expense of venues available for hire

23% of those interviewed also highlighted this issue as a limiting factor in the city and again particularly for dance and for the amateur/semi-professional companies, who need a space which has a large enough audience capacity to generate sufficient income (which is not found to be the case at the Studio) but not too large to be unaffordable (as is reportedly the case at The King’s Theatre). The high cost of hiring the Church Hill Theatre was mentioned several times. The challenge of generating an audience was raised by several artists – an issue which affects the work of all those interviewed but which is particularly challenging if a company is required to hire a venue and therefore to self-promote with limited resources.

4.10 Lack of affordable and suitable office space - 15% of Survey Monkey respondents and 23% of those interviewed mentioned this as a challenge.

The value of working in a shared space with access to other people doing the same thing and with basic resources provided (wifi, photocopier etc) is evident from those who have achieved this; and which is sought after by the 9% who mentioned feeling isolated and removed from the resource sharing that goes with a shared space. For some, expansion brings its own challenges - one company has expanded and now needs something larger than the garden shed!

However, for some companies who are based at a venue but who are project funded being able to afford the year-round rental can be a challenge, particularly where venues cannot afford to subsidise resident theatre companies due to their own financial constraints.

4.11 Lack of marketing support -15% of Survey Monkey respondents and 23% of those interviewed identified this as a challenge.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

The lack of administrative and producing capacity felt by many of those interviewed has a particular impact on company marketing and in particular web-site upkeep and sustained profile-raising. 23% of those interviewed felt that they lacked profile for their work and didn't have the marketing expertise to strengthen their communications.

For 23% of interviewees this was also related to frustration with the difficulty of communicating with promoters and the struggle to book their work into theatres (in Edinburgh and on tour) and to generate an audience for it.

4.12 Lack of networking or a sense of an artistic community or hub in the city (11% of Survey Monkey respondents)

For some artists, the feeling of isolation was indicative of a lack of a local artistic community. Others didn't feel part of the networks which they understood existed, but to which they were either not invited, didn't have time to attend or which were not aimed at them.

4.13 There were also a significant number of responses across both consultation groups which highlighted particular **art-form, demographic or geographic challenges**. These include:

- Older/mature artists – lack of opportunities compared to 'emerging' artists
- Artists working in Early Years settings – lack of profile or appreciation of the value of early years interventions
- Artists working with school age children – the challenge of engaging teachers or schools
- Artists working in the outlying areas of the city – the lack of local provision or access to city-centre opportunities
- Dance artists – lack of profile and audiences
- Aerial work – lack of trained artists and lack of technical facilities

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

c) The Solutions

'The lack of opportunities (or perhaps the perception?) for artists to have support in making work seems frustrating when one sees the potential – more locally-focussed arts money would help, but so would opportunities to have supported studio time, administrative support, a decently resourced arts office/studio hub, knowledgeable advice etc. etc.' (survey monkey respondent)

4.14 The responses from interviews and via the Survey Monkey in response to the question *'what do you believe would make the most difference to you in overcoming these obstacles'* were very consistent and displayed **constructive and creative thinking from those perhaps well-used to finding practical ways to deal with the challenges repeatedly faced**. The weighting of priority varied according to experience and particular development needs. **As expected, the provision of funding features as a significant means for achieving change and to help afford some of the resources currently lacking, notably people and spaces**. However, there are also some less financially driven proposals which derive from closer networking and cross-sector support.

The following is an analysis of the specific findings from the research.

4.15 **70% of Survey Monkey respondents anticipate funding in some form as being a significant driver in overcoming the challenges identified above.**

Specific suggestions include:

- Funding dedicated for small-scale projects and seeding projects
'Small amounts of money mean a lot to us' (Survey Monkey respondent)
- More support from and engagement with CEC about funding available, from both Culture and Sport and Children and Families
- More engagement with local Councillors and awareness by them of the work being done by small and independent artists/companies
- Support from CEC and local businesses in identifying and generating income from non-arts funding
- CEC asset transfer scheme for arts projects (in relation to space)

These proposals were reflected in the conversations with artists who felt that real difference could be achieved if their work had a higher profile and received more recognition from funders. This was mentioned as a particular challenge for those working with children and young people. For many, having more access to CEC officers and Councillors was seen as key to being able to communicate about and engender interest in their work.

'Lack of support or recognition from the council.... It is not transparent how the council supports arts organisations and how an organisation can be considered for council support. It seems that a lot of the support is historical. Very difficult to get any information ...' (Survey Monkey respondent)

4.16 **30% of Survey Monkey respondents anticipate access to studio space for development and rehearsals as being a significant driver in overcoming the challenges identified above.**

Specific suggestions include:

- Affordable, clean, flexible rehearsal space
- 11% specified the benefits that could be gained by existing venues hosting rehearsals by independent artists/companies
- A further 7% specified the need for more studio-based residency opportunities similar to those offered by Dance Base, which include a stipend *'providing opportunities to be visible as practising artists'* (Survey Monkey respondent)

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

These solutions were all echoed by those interviewed. Suggestions for releasing space including making use of University spaces at reasonable rates when they are not in use; and similarly making use of empty CEC buildings for rehearsals. As a city which turns most available spaces into performing spaces during the Fringe, it was felt that this should be possible at other times of the year.

'Recognition for the theatre being made in Edinburgh throughout the year, as well as the massive influx of theatre that arrives in August would really help the profile of the community'. (Survey Monkey respondent)

4.17 30% of Survey Monkey respondents anticipate access to more performance spaces as being a significant driver in overcoming the challenges identified above.

Specific suggestions include :

- A medium scale performance space
- Better organisational support from CEC for smaller venues, i.e. for the provision of technical or box office services to be included in the hire costs
- Space which can be used for technical rehearsals prior to opening a show

The need for more spaces with more flexible useage was mentioned by many of those interviewed. One company told of having to go to Aberdeen to tech. and open a show at the Lemon Tree in order to get a well-equipped and technically supported opening week – which was expensive for a company of 6 on the road.

Another spoke of it being cheaper to drive to Glasgow or Cumbernauld to make use of free rehearsal space at The Citizens' Theatre, The Arches or Cumbernauld Theatre, than to hire space in Edinburgh.

4.18 30% of Survey Monkey respondents anticipate getting help with administration being a significant driver in overcoming the challenges identified above; and 22% believed getting help with fundraising and making fundraising applications would make a big difference:

Specific suggestions include:

- Creating a pool or hub of shared administrative support for a number of companies
- Access to book-keeping/financial support
- Help or advice with finding out what funding opportunities are available and support making funding applications

For those interviewed support with the following specific roles and responsibilities were identified as being of value, and hard to achieve either by oneself or with a small and irregularly paid workforce:

- Helping artists to identify what they need help with
- Strategic planning and company development
- Tour booking
- Project management
- Financial management and book-keeping
- Creating a fundraising strategy
- Day to day administration
- Creative development – helping to ensure that work is ready to be shown to an audience

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

4.19 Mentoring was mentioned by both groups, with 15% of Survey Monkey respondents suggesting that better access to mentoring, advice and information would be beneficial

Specific suggestions include:

- An information and advice service
- Mentoring and support services (like that provided by FST which supports artists across all performing art-forms and was often quoted and generally felt to be a model of good practice)
- Web-based or intranet resources

4.20 Access to marketing and promotional support – 11% of Survey Monkey respondents felt this would help them to gain a higher profile and communicate more effectively with audiences.

Specific suggestions include:

- Access to marketing advice and support as required or on an ongoing basis
- An umbrella promotional agency

Several of those interviewed also identified the need for support with branding, image, website development and social media and acknowledged that even with training in these areas they do not have time to spend doing the work required to implement new learning. Having access to external marketing expertise was considered a priority for these companies.

4.21 Better partnerships between small and large-scale organisations in the city were seen as an opportunity by 11% of those responding to the Survey Monkey. This was also considered important by many of those interviewed. The suggestions for achieving this included:

- Meetings to schedule and plan repertoire, avoid clashes and encourage co-operative working
- More respectful relationships between small and large-scale producing companies
- Support for small companies negotiating fees and deals with larger companies
- Resource sharing between larger and smaller producing and touring companies
- For smaller companies to gain the benefit of being associated with larger companies, i.e. through a postal address
- Access to industry expertise, when they recognise an area beyond their skill-set, e.g. HR, financial, marketing, creative learning
- Introductions to promoters
- Opportunities for artists to connect with local producers and enablers, not to have to travel outwith Edinburgh to find this. One artist spoke of being asked by local authority officers in Fife and Glasgow to facilitate projects in schools and communities, but who would much rather be making work for the benefit of her local community in Edinburgh.

4.22 For those who wished to see more co-ordination and sharing of information across small and large-scale companies, and amongst smaller scale companies and artists, the following areas were proposed for consideration:

- Web-based point of focus for Edinburgh-based artists, giving details of opportunities etc.
- Access to IT and other equipment for production use
- More 'artist spaces' and networking meetings and opportunities in the city
- A shared resource in the city for small-scale, project based companies
- A hub of companies to create industry community
- Access to shared office & storage facilities
- Being part of a network through which to share experiences, gain advice and a sense of community

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

- Sharing of equipment between touring companies
- Access to contract templates and information / data for small companies
- Higher wage levels (for teaching and performing) paid by the city's larger organisations helping to increase the bar for all
- Creative encouragement and mentoring
- Help progressing to the next stage of work presentations

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

5 What is already in place to support performing artists in Edinburgh?

5a) Existing partnerships:

5.1 From the consultation it is clear that several companies and artists are already forging partnerships and developing opportunities in order to meet their artistic objectives and to share and maximise expertise and provision where it exists. Examples of this practice include:

- Wee Stories being hosted by the FCTT – a long-standing relationship which provides the company with access to free rehearsal and work space at the King’s Theatre and an office base at the Festival Theatre. The company’s finances are managed by the FCTT personnel, providing ‘reassurance and expertise’.
- North Edinburgh Arts Centre hosting of Licketyspit Theatre Company, providing the company with an excellent base from which to develop links with children, teachers and carers in local nurseries and schools and other support organisations also working to provide effective early years interventions.
- Lyra Theatre being given use of the theatre, studio and office space at Artspace in Craigmillar through support of the Castle Rock Housing Association which owns the building. This provision has enabled the company to become rooted in the community, providing a valuable link between professional artists and local children and families.
- Experienced puppetry producer Vision Mechanics supporting the work of A Blank Canvas, a new company set up by choreographer and aerialist Debbie Reynolds.
- Lung Ha’s Theatre Company is based at the Royal Lyceum Theatre which provides the company with an appropriate theatre-based context for its work, and access to people with similar issues and complementary skills and experience. Although the Lyceum’s rehearsal space is not available on the regular basis required by the company, creative partnerships have developed with other resident companies including a recent co-production with Stellar Quines Theatre company.
- Plutot la Vie providing the producing infrastructure for a new play by Strange Theatre, maximising the limited resources of both companies to achieve a production which would not have been possible by Strange Theatre alone.
- Magnetic North and Curious Seed sharing the cost of storage space rental; and Magnetic North and Plutot la Vie sharing an office at Out of the Blue’s Powerhouse in Portobello.
- Summerhall providing office space to Imagine who in turn offer use of the venue’s studios to artists on a paid residency basis.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

5.2 These examples prove that in a limited way the sector is already finding the means to work in partnership to achieve better results and to manage the obstacles faced. There is already evidence of some larger companies helping the smaller companies, and of self-sufficiency between some of the small-scale producers. This is an ethos to emulate and extend, with more recognition for the benefits and better resources to ensure wider impact.

5b) Findings from interviews with Support Organisations

5.3 To try to establish how some of the needs and opportunities outlined in 4 above might be met, and are already being addressed, interviews were held with eight organisations based in Edinburgh which provide support in different ways to independent performing artists. All of these organisations have a *national remit* and none is dedicated to supporting just those artists who are based in Edinburgh.

5.4 To help contextualise, and to see if it was possible to substantiate the findings coming from the artists themselves, each of those interviewed was asked to talk about the main issues, questions and obstacles which were brought to or identified by these organisations in response to the needs of artists based in Edinburgh.

5.5 The findings appear to be consistent with those which have been highlighted by the artists. In the opinion of these key support and development organisations, Edinburgh's independent artists lack:

- **sustained funding** to support artists to between projects – either artistically to develop their practice or practically in terms of financial support
- access to **affordable rehearsal space** in which to develop new work, share ideas and rehearse productions
- access to **office space** and a base away from the 'kitchen table'
- a shared experience gained by encountering others in a **shared location**
- **producing support** with relevant expertise and contacts on the small scale / mid scale
- **'follow through' on training for artists** – how to implement training and apply to specific situations
- **a tour booking service**, including booking of schools' tours
- experience of working in a venue
- **'back-room' skills and capacity** (and interest) to do this work
- **financial systems and knowledge of budget control**
- **support with creative development**
- contacts and knowledge of **local infrastructure**
- knowledge, confidence and skills **making funding applications**
- knowledge, confidence and skills managing **negotiations with venues**

5.6 Three of these organisations (Creative Scotland, Summerhall and Federation of Scottish Theatre) provide support for artists working across all performing art forms. The others (Catalyst, Puppet Animation Scotland, Imagineate, Flip and Catherine Wheels) provide specialist support to those working in specific art form areas: dance, disability, puppetry, work for children and young

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

people. **Between them these organisations are successful in helping individuals and groups of artists to overcome these gaps in resources. However, none of these organisations is offering a service which is focussed on local artists and none can help all of these companies and individual artists to overcome all of their concerns.**

5.7 There is a general feeling that where specialist agencies or support opportunities have been established – in response to the need to strengthen an under-resourced art form (i.e. dance or the children and young people’s sector) – the opportunities are more tailored and produce more effective results for the relative sector although demand still largely outstrips provision. 76% of those who responded to the Survey Monkey describe their work as ‘theatre’. However, theatre as an art form lacks the benefit of a targeted development agency, in Edinburgh or anywhere across Scotland.

5c) What these support these organisations offer:

5.8 Catalyst

Catalyst is a dance management resource based at Dance Base, the dance agency for Edinburgh which houses four purpose built dance studios. Catalyst is run with two part-time producers and when funds allow, with the support of an assistant. It was set up to provide support to dance-artists at differing stages of development. It currently provides company development, line producing and tour management to selected artists and companies. It has been in existence for 8 years and has developed in response to the needs of the dance sector. It can offer one-off as well as long-term relationships with artists. It runs on a flexible model.

The main benefit offered by Catalyst is a service to its dance artists for which they do not have to pay. The project is subsidised by being part of a larger cultural organisation, originally supported with ring-fenced funding from Creative Scotland and now absorbed into Dance Base’s overall operating costs. The other benefits offered are expertise, the continuity of relationship between artist and producer; networks and contacts; running the ‘business’ side of an artist’s work – finance, budgeting, fundraising, tour-booking.

5.9 Puppet Animation Scotland

PAS nurtures and promotes the art forms of puppetry and animation in Scotland. It provides a wide range of practical support to help the development of Scottish puppeteers and animators at all stages of their careers. It is run by three full-time members of staff. The support it offers artists includes mentoring, practical support to artists wishing to develop new work, and advising or writing funding applications. It has a Creative Fund which provides support for Research and Development which take artists a step beyond skills development. Its role is more about helping artists bring an idea to fruition than as a producer.

The main benefit offered by PAS is an informed, salaried staff team with contacts and expertise in the sector. PAS has a wide network of industry, venue and local authority contacts which has grown through its long-running festival of work across Scotland.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

5.10 Creative Scotland – the Producer’s network

From autumn 2014 Creative Scotland is introducing a one-year programme of producers’ hubs which will support two producers in each of four geographic areas (Cumbernauld, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Banchory) across complementary types of programming (dance, physical theatre, experimental work, new writing theatre). The hubs will be based in venues or arts organisations which will provide space, a context and learning and skills development opportunities for the resident producers. The four producing hubs will work as a network, sharing skills and experiences. They will be co-ordinated by a project co-ordinator. Each producing hub will be allocated a small development budget in the first instance. This scheme was informed by a report commissioned by Creative Scotland. It makes a useful companion to this study.¹

The main benefit offered by the producers’ hub network is the provision to independent artists of consistent, paid, experienced and well connected staff with access to venue expertise. It will also provide a valued skills development programme for producers. This is a robust scheme that recognises that one of the best ways to support independent performing artists is through paying for consistent producing expertise.

5.11 Imagine

Imagine is Scotland’s organisation dedicated to leading the promotion, development and celebration of the performing arts for children and young people. As well as providing performing opportunities within its annual Festival, the Development Director runs a year-round support service to artists and companies.

Through its Artist Development programme, Imagine provides business support to companies and artists, often at the basic level of helping them to set up a company or establish a legal status. Imagine does not produce but has been successful in getting FST bursaries (see below) to support assistant producers to help produce the work of the organisation’s Associate artists. Imagine actively seeks partnerships with organisations which can provide artists with business or producing support, and acts as a broker between these parties.

The main benefit offered to artists by Imagine is an informed, consistent, connected staff team and a series of structured schemes which support a range of artists at different stages of their development both with practical and financial support.

5.12 Federation of Scottish Theatre

As the development body for professional dance, opera and theatre in Scotland, FST fulfils a number of roles and functions for its members – both large and established organisations and independent artists and producers. Of specific relevance to this study are the schemes run by FST and currently funded by Creative Scotland to provide selected member organisations with bursaries to engage assistant directors and assistant producers on their projects in a learning role.

¹ <http://www.creativescotland.com/resources/professional-resources/research/creative-scotland-research/a-producers-hub-for-performing-artists>

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

FST is not a producing organisation and does not provide direct services to artists but **offers a wider strategic approach to capacity building and skills development for artists and producers at all levels of experience.** The successful Step Up mentoring programme is now in its 6th year and has trained many of Scotland's arts managers in mentoring which in turn has provided a structured programme of individual support and guidance for many arts workers. In recent years the number of independent artists wishing to be mentored has increased. It also runs 'Emporium' which provides a networking marketplace where artists and producers can meet with venues and promoters.

FST is a valuable resource which was often quoted during the course of this study as friendly, open and generous. *'FST have been incredibly supportive to me as an emerging artist in Scotland and have been key to my development'* (Survey Monkey respondent)

5.13 Flip

Flip promote disability equality in the arts and are active as advisors to companies and individuals working across Scotland. Although their work to date has mostly been informal and mostly delivered through Cultural Enterprise Office, they are due to launch a new scheme dedicated to supporting individual disabled artists in October 2014. Scotland's disabled artists are very much at the forefront of creative and access excellence compared to the work of disabled artists and promoters across the world. The majority of these artists are based in Glasgow, but it will be interesting to see how the project can support disabled artists in Edinburgh.

The main benefit offered to artists by Flip is a wealth of direct knowledge and experience of performance and producing specific to the needs of disabled artists and the ways in which their work can be made accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

5.14 Catherine Wheels

Catherine Wheels is an independent producing company which specialises in creating work for young audiences. As well as producing the work of its own Artistic Director, Catherine Wheels also provides administrative support and financial management to one independent artist whose work is closely aligned to its own and gives advice to other small companies and independent artists on an ad-hoc basis. Where a partnership is driven in response to an artistic connection, the company has co-produced and helped to facilitate the work of other artists and theatre companies.

In recognition of the challenge of finding suitable affordable rehearsal space in Edinburgh, the company has recently acquired an industrial unit which provides storage, office and studio space for its own use but which it offers to others at a free or low cost rate when not being used by them.

The main benefit offered to artists by Catherine Wheels is expert knowledge and experience built up by the Catherine Wheels key personnel over many years and a willingness to share this knowledge across the sector, where capacity and artistic compatibility allow.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

5.15 Summerhall

Summerhall has been operating as a cultural hub since 2012 in a building previously housing the Dick School of Veterinary Studies. The building hosts a number of cultural organisations as tenants and curates a busy programme of visual art exhibitions as well as a growing programme of residencies and performances by performing artists. It aims to be a social and creative community, where artists are inspired to create their best work. None of the spaces is equipped as a theatre or provides regular studio facilities, but the unusual nature of the spaces enables artists to be creative in response to their environment. The programme aims to facilitate artistic development, helping artists move through their careers including giving support to mid-career artists. It is also exploring ways to become more active as a structured producing hub, providing support to small companies seeking sector advice.

There is currently a waiting list for office space at Summerhall. A community is created through informal conversations between cultural tenants. The organisation has to charge for studio rental to cover costs but can offer a reduced rate if booked in advance or for longer term rental.

Summerhall is currently hosting the Physical Theatre Course accredited by Fife College which was previously hosted at The Arches in Glasgow. It also has an ambition to host the MA in European Theatre Arts run by Rose Bruford College.

The main benefit offered to artists by Summerhall is a building dedicated to artistic and entrepreneurial endeavour and a commitment to facilitating creative development.

5d) Other organisations in Edinburgh which are identified as providing a valuable provision of space to performing artists include:

5.16 Edinburgh's Palette – the use by a variety of visual and performing artists of St Margaret's House, a vast disused office block which can provide practical, low cost and basic studio and office facilities to artists, the majority of whom are visual artists or makers. They are gradually developing larger spaces into space for rehearsals and pared-down performances. The spaces are available at very low cost and payment can be made by donation.

5.17 Forest Centre plus – the re-generation of the Forest - a long-standing initiative which advocates an ethos of low-cost, democratic access to the creation of and engagement with culture within the city. The group currently works from a disused office block in Castle Terrace just around the corner from 'Edinburgh's Cultural Quarter' as defined by the Royal Lyceum and Traverse theatres, the Filmhouse and the Usher Hall. Like at St Margaret's House, spaces within the building are intended as offices and are not designed with performing artists' needs in mind but Forest are making adaptations and developing provision that is low cost to artists and audiences.

5.18 The Melting Pot – a social enterprise in the city centre which provides a hot-desk facility with an adjacent studio and meeting room for those working in the not-for-profit sector. The facility is available on a membership basis and provides a shared and well-equipped office in an excellent central location with maintained facilities, including phone, internet and printing facilities

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

and a postal address. Depending on the level of membership paid for, those who are part of the Pot have access to regular networking events, workshops and industry and social events. Creative Scotland has recently subsidised the cost of joining the scheme for four artists, one of whom, choreographer Emma Jayne Park, was interviewed for this study. The majority of those who use the facility are sole-trading social entrepreneurs or third-sector professionals.

Other spaces which provide working space dedicated for performing artists include:

5.19 **Dance Base in the Grassmarket** – four purpose-built studios, heavily used by community classes but available on a curated residency basis to professional artists throughout the year aside from August, when the studios are mostly turned over to presenting dance as part of the Edinburgh Fringe.

5.20 **Out of the Blue at the Drill Hall in Leith** - a range of office and storage spaces and a studio. All these facilities are widely used and are offered at rates which low or unfunded companies find a challenge to afford. The regular use of the studio for classes and workshops makes it unsuitable for sustained rehearsals by independent artists

5.21 **Out of the Blue at the Powerhouse in Portobello** - a disused office building which is being rented at cheap rates to artists whilst it awaits re-development through a commercial developer.

5.22 A range of studios and halls which vary widely in size, suitability, flexibility, cost and resource are used regularly by companies for rehearsals. A survey undertaken for this report identified costs ranging from £7.00 per hour to £85 per hour for use of these spaces. These rates are usually net of additional costs, which can include staffing, cleaning, heating and VAT. The Council's own buildings are amongst the most expensive to hire.

5e) **Edinburgh's existing infrastructure of producing theatres**

5.23 Through interviews with the executive directors of the **Lyceum Theatre and the Traverse Theatre** it is clear that advice is regularly sought from and given by the executive and artistic directors of these theatres. At the Traverse this is structured through learning programmes specifically aimed at developing skills amongst independent writers and directors, not exclusively for those in Edinburgh. The Traverse visiting company programme also enables discussions to take place between the theatre's producers and independent companies wishing to have work presented at the theatre.

5.24 At the Lyceum the communication with the independent sector is more informal, but there is a welcome to those seeking advice about creative projects from the Artistic Director and about funding and operational matters from the Executive Director. The Lyceum hosts a number of cultural tenants in the building, which currently include two independent performing companies. The benefit to these companies of being located within Edinburgh's largest producing theatre buildings is significant, as much for the company of the other artists and organisations who are based or working at the building as for direct support from the Lyceum team.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

5f) Festival City Theatres Trust

5.25 There is a generosity of spirit amongst the staff at the Trust for sharing their expertise with independent performing artists and this happens on a regular basis, particularly through the Learning and Participation team who are working most regularly with individual artists – both locally-based and those visiting with touring productions - to facilitate local activity with a range of constituency groups. As with the city's producing theatres, there is a willingness to make the provision of knowledge-sharing available more widely.

5.26 When asked about the suitability of the Festival Theatre as a host for any solution that might come from this study, or as a potential resource, the majority of those interviewed referred to the Studio. Originally intended as a rehearsal facility for companies performing on the Trust's main stages, it is now used more regularly for performances, providing an excellent and well-needed additional provision for the city. However, at £350 + VAT for rehearsal days and £440 + VAT for performance calls, it is a considerable cost for most independent companies and artists.

5.27 As a small-scale performing venue the Studio has made a significant difference to the small-scale theatre provision in the city – although for some interviewed, its capacity is too small to make it a viable financial undertaking for performances. In the year from September 2013 to September 2014 the Studio was used for rehearsal, workshops and performances by 37 separate visiting companies, some for several repeat bookings such as Scottish Youth Theatre and Scottish Ballet. 17 of these companies (46%) were based in Edinburgh. Of these, 5 could be considered Independent (Errol White Dance Company, Wee Stories, Catalyst (on behalf of Ros Masson and Jack Webb), Edinburgh Choreographic Project and Strange Town Theatre Company. Two of the support organisations listed above used the theatre for programming of independent artists work – Imagine and Puppet Animation Scotland.

5.28 Where advance rentals can be made, and space allows, it is possible to book the studio for reduced rates for extended periods. Wee Stories as a 'resident' company had an extended rental for a Christmas show in 2013 and Errol White Dance Company negotiated a deal to make use of the theatre for several weeks for its training and development programme for young dancers. This enabled the company to create a sense of a 'home' for an extended period of time, albeit on a 'commercial' rather than an 'artistic' basis and therefore without connection to the wider organisation which it would ultimately like to achieve. Without this connection the company feel it loses the benefit of a 'reputable' postal address to help lend credibility and value to the way the company perceives itself and is perceived externally.

5.29 Clearly the Studio is a resource which holds huge potential for the independent sector and which, should finances become available to offset the FCTT's need to generate significant annual income, has the potential to provide a valuable and well-used facility for artists to use for research and development, informal showings, rehearsals and for technical rehearsals, as well as for more regular small-scale performances.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

5.30 From the list of those interviewed and whose roles and activities are outlined in 5c – 5f above, there is clearly much good work being done to support independent artists to address and manage their way around and through some of the obstacles they identify as preventing them from achieving their artistic goals in and for Edinburgh.

5.31 The work of these support organisations should be acknowledged and valued more widely by local funders, particularly for the city’s established theatre-producing buildings where this work may be less visible than in the role of a development agency where the role is more central to their funded purpose.

5.32 From the interviews undertaken and the Survey Monkey results, it is clear that independent artists are largely aware of all of these organisations and initiatives and are calling on the support available:

- After Creative Scotland, identified by 81% of Survey Monkey respondents as the place they go for advice and information, 74% go to FST, 52% go to Imagineate, 22% go to Catalyst and 11% to Puppet Animation Scotland. 33% also go to Cultural Enterprise Office – a business support service for artists working across the cultural industries which is based in Glasgow but regularly runs workshops in Edinburgh and provides a free advisory service for those seeking practical advice about running a small business.
- Interestingly, 52% go to an industry peer or mentor. This could indicate a number of things – as a strength it indicates a healthy self-supporting sector and the value given to mentoring through schemes such as the FST Step Up programme. However, it could also suggest that some artists do not feel the existing support structure provides them with the advice and support they require.

5.33 However these results are interpreted, none of these organisations – nor any one new initiative developed as a result of this study – would be enough to cater for all the needs of all the independent artists in Edinburgh all of the time. Trying to distil the issues down to the ones of greatest priority for those artists who are based in the city is the purpose of this study.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

6 Action Research:

6.1 A key strand of this Pilot, was for the Project Manager to undertake direct consultancy to help selected companies and artists to increase their funding base and to investigate the value of partnership working. Support was provided directly to two theatre companies. These companies were chosen from all those interviewed due to the nature of the support required and the suitability of the time available by both the Project Manager and the individual company schedule.

6.2 A strategic planning exercise was undertaken with **Lyra Theatre** over a period of 3 weeks during which three sessions were held with the Artistic Director and a paper compiled which articulated the company's achievements, ambitions, fundraising priorities and key challenges for the future. The paper will form the basis of a Business Plan for the company and will inform discussions with the Board of Directors and with external stakeholders about securing the company's future. Seven days of the Project Manager's time was spent on this project.

6.3 Support with fundraising was provided to **Strange Town Theatre Company** which resulted in a successful application to the Scottish Community Foundation's Express Grants scheme for funding for a Stage Manager for its Christmas productions; and an application which is still pending with Awards for All for a bursary scheme to remove financial barriers to membership of its many theatre groups by those on low income. Seven days of the Project Manager's time was spent on this project.

6.4 In both cases, the work undertaken was a useful intervention for the company either by releasing existing staff to get on with running the company in the case of Strange Town, or to enable time for reflection which would otherwise not have been found for Lyra Theatre. It was evident that even a small amount of support and interest in the company was valued, and that a small amount of time given by a skilled practitioner could make a significant difference relatively quickly. It also served to give the companies an insight into the difference that additional support could make. Feedback on the project provides evidence of all of these observations:

- *'Strange Town has benefited from the support and advice given by Lucy Mason over the last few months. It has been incredibly helpful to have someone assisting with funding applications as this essential part of our remit is often difficult to fulfil whilst there are only two core members of management staff.'*
- *'Having Lucy's support, albeit for a finite amount of time, definitely meant the often overwhelming workload was shared. To have a part-time permanent fundraiser working for Strange Town would be transformative.'*
- *'To have your expertise in shaping the story of Lyra - where we've come from, where we are now and where we'd like to go - has clarified my planning for the future of the company as well as identifying where we have gaps and what we might do to about them. Although I know it's important, I rarely take the time to reflect on what has passed, so that was particularly welcome - I'm so used to rushing into the next project.'*

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

- *'[The] clear remit (to create business plan and fundraising strategy) was achieved in a relatively short period of time - it would have taken me ages to do this without your skill and it wouldn't have been nearly as valuable. I've become used to working out how to do all sorts of things but it is time-consuming and frustrating trying to figure things out on your own.'*

6.5 Lyra Theatre also listed the following as key benefits of the project:

- Benefit of an outside perspective
- Expertise that we don't have access to otherwise
- Helping to identify priorities
- Given confidence in what we've achieved
- Helped identify practical ways to move forward and develop our work
- Creation of a document which will help the Board understand and take more ownership of the company.

6.6 Marketing advisory surgeries were also set up for three companies with Nick Parr, Commercial Director of the Festival City Theatres Trust. These companies were selected from those interviewed who identified a desire or requirement to develop or improve their branding, communications or marketing function. The companies met with were All or Nothing Aerial Dance company, Dance Ihayami and Cutting Edge Theatre. Nick gave each company feedback on their website design, functionality and upkeep and helped each company to take stock of their communication needs and priorities. All of the companies found the meeting constructive and felt a lot had been achieved in a short space of time.

6.7 The key learning from the Action Research element of the programme is that:

- A small intervention can make a big difference to an over-stretched and under-resourced company
- A little can be achieved in a short time when appropriate expertise is applied
- Regular access to marketing (and other) expertise and advice would be valuable for small companies, ideally with follow-up opportunities built in.

6.8 In relation to the aims of the brief, this element of the project has largely met its targets by :

- Successfully identifying potential funds appropriate to projects to achieve a high strike rate
- Sourcing one new funding stream for an organisation with several others pending
- Successfully supporting a company with business planning
- It is not yet possible to say whether or not the funding sourced, or the investment of time by the Project Manager in support of improved business planning will result in a 'better quality of product' but it is to be hoped that this will be the case.
- An efficiency of scale was achieved by the Project Manager providing services to more than one company. The research undertaken into potential sources of income informed the work undertaken with each company and avoided unnecessary duplication of time and energy.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

'We got all the money from the Express Grants application. Many, many thanks to you for your hard work on this. We can now employ someone to help stage manage the Christmas shows.'

6.9 It is worth mentioning here that the role of the **producer** is understood to include a number of responsibilities, from day-to-day administration and book-keeping, through tour booking and project management, to company development, strategic planning, fundraising and financial management. Some artists have differentiated between these roles and some have used one word (producer, administrator) to assume all these duties.

6.10 Whatever the definition, it is clear from this pilot project and highlighted in the *Background Information* at 4a above, that having access to appropriately skilled and remunerated people to fulfil a variety of tasks would make a significant difference to the success and sustainability of a high proportion of Edinburgh's small-scale companies and independent performing artists. There are currently several schemes underway to address the shortage of skilled producers working with independent performing artists. However, without the necessary funds in place, access to consistent and high quality producing support will continue to be out of the reach of the majority of the city's project or unfunded performing artists.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

7 What this Pilot Project helps us to understand

Tangible issues

From all of the above research and findings it is possible to summarise the current situation for independent performing artists and companies in Edinburgh as follows:

- 7.1 There are a variety of performing companies working independently in Edinburgh, across a number of art forms and at various stages in their careers and therefore with varied needs. This group appears to be resourceful and pragmatic, but is generally operating with very limited producing capacity.
- 7.2 The lack of funding is a constant theme, but the lack of access to or understanding of the role, function and resource of the City of Edinburgh Council is clearly highlighted.
- 7.3 The city houses many spaces which can be turned to creative use by performing artists during the Edinburgh Fringe in August but which do not accommodate the rehearsal and performance needs of the city's resident performing artists for the remaining 11 months of the year. It isn't that there is a particular shortage of halls available for hire, but there are few that are dedicated to creative use and to providing an appropriate and affordable context in which to create work.
- 7.4 There are vibrant and effective national support organisations and venues in the city, not serving all the needs of all the resident artists but with the potential to act as part of a network which embraces all these artists in some way.
- 7.5 There is a perception that Edinburgh's artists lack a sense of community. In practice there appear to be a number of small communities based around specific venues and organisations – Dance Base, Imagineate, The Traverse, Summerhall, Edinburgh's Palette, North Edinburgh Arts, The Lyceum – but few opportunities to join up these communities or to welcome those who for reasons of art-form, the stage in their careers or lack of contacts, are not part of any existing groups.
- 7.6 There is already a healthy self-supporting ethos established between the city's small and larger organisations and amongst the independent sector.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

8 Conclusions

8.1 Any solutions to address these issues need to be proposed in the light of a realistic context. Due to increased demand for services and reductions in funding, the City of Edinburgh Council needs to find savings of £327 million over the next four years. Whilst the desire to make a tangible difference to the cultural community has been acknowledged at both Councillor and Officer level, the opportunity to commit to any additional resource in the current climate is not guaranteed.

8.2 Whilst some of the following recommendations will require investment, the majority build on the city's already positive ethos of partnership working. Through this study, a commitment has been achieved from the city's larger cultural producers and presenters to share their expertise with less experienced or less well-resourced organisations and artists in a more formalised way.

8.3 Subject to continued funding from Creative Scotland, there is also a strong commitment by the support organisations and agencies based in Edinburgh to continue to support the city's independent artists.

8.4 What appears to be lacking is someone to link up all the existing provision – of people, space, opportunities and potential funding – and to provide and hold an overview which is beneficial to those specifically working across the performing arts in Edinburgh.

8.5 By building on and enhancing the existing infrastructure – and in particular making more visible and engaged the work of the Culture and Sport Team at CEC – much that has been highlighted in this study could be addressed.

8.6 Without strategically applied and greatly increased funding there is no magic wand which can solve everyone's issues and challenges. And even with more funding, not everyone will benefit. However, more access to the right information at the right time and with the right amount of support and follow-through can be helpful; and better deals negotiated on spaces for hire by those with less to lose financially can also make a big difference.

8.7 The intervention of a skilled producer will always be of value to independent artists. The fortunes of most of those interviewed for this study may be about to change with the outcomes of the Creative Scotland Regular Funding decisions. Hopefully this will enable some artists to employ both themselves and a producer on a more permanent basis. There will still be many artists who will continue to work on a project-by-project – or unfunded - basis which provides no continuity or financial security for investment in artistic or company development. For these companies a way should be found to make occasional, effective and experienced high-level producing and lower-level administrative interventions, as required.

9 Recommendations

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

It is recommended that the following proposals be considered as outcomes of this study:

9.1 Space

- a. For it to be made a long-term priority of the FCTT to achieve a financial solution that will enable it to offer its studio facilities to local independent artists at a reduced rate or at no cost without compromising its overall financial position.
- b. For CEC to consider mechanisms to enable FCTT to make this transition.
- c. For CEC Culture and Sport to advocate with colleagues across the Council to release empty or un-let CEC buildings for use at low cost to performing artists on a regular, if temporary, basis. A directory of such spaces should be compiled, with a clear process put in place and made transparent for booking these spaces and the conditions required.
- d. For CEC Culture and Sport to act on behalf of the performing arts sector to research spaces which currently are and could become available for hire by independent companies and to hold up-to-date details and contacts for these spaces; and to negotiate use of other spaces (Commercial, University, Edinburgh Leisure, Schools etc.) in the city which would otherwise not come to the attention of individual artists or could be beyond the financial reach of such artists.

9.2 City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)

- a. For staff at CEC Culture and Sport to identify ways of becoming more visible and therefore more accessible to the city's locally based independent artists, even if direct funding is not available. Artists want to feel connected to a civic organisation which acknowledges and values their contribution to the city.
- b. For the CEC Arts department to take an active role in facilitating the networking of all the performing artists contacted through this study, and others on their own networks, with the support organisations based in the city to ensure regular social and industry connections are made and sustained. These meetings could be hosted at the Festival Theatre.

9.3 People

- a. For the City of Edinburgh Council to create a post to be hosted by FCTT at the Festival Theatre. The post would act as a broker and networker, holding an overview of the needs of performing artists in the city on an ongoing basis and with specific responsibility for:
 - i. Making introductions and 'referrals' for advisory sessions with a pool of staff at the city's established producing and presenting venues (FCTT, Royal Lyceum and Traverse) identified as willing and able (on a 'bookable' basis and subject to availability) to provide specialist advice and feedback on marketing, finance, fundraising and HR.

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

- ii. Pointing artists to existing training and support schemes which can meet their needs and, in conjunction with FST and CEC, running or co-ordinating complementary training sessions to address newly identified needs.
 - iii. Making introductions between artists and the relevant personnel and Councillors at CEC.
 - iv. Offering bookable advisory surgeries and mentoring to artists on a regular basis.
 - v. Establishing a pool of producing consultants who can take on short-term projects (fundraising, administration, tour-booking, strategic planning etc. etc.) with small companies, with funding from the CEC and at no cost to the company. Where the skill-set and time allows, this could also be delivered by the post-holder.
 - vi. Reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the post on a regular basis, and revising and modifying the model as required to ensure maximum impact.
- b. Once this facility is established, and if proved to be effective, for CEC to propose to Creative Scotland and other charitable Trusts and Foundations, that a producing hub is hosted at the Festival Theatre to provide support to local performing artists as outlined above and as a complement and/or enhancement to that provided by Catalyst and Catherine Wheels and which may come on stream at Summerhall. To maximise the impact of this recommendation, CEC to consider provision of match funding to realise this project for a minimum of two years.

'Arts is an ecology – it needs towering trees, but it also needs a messy, scrubby undergrowth, and that undergrowth needs nutrients. Between the festivals and major venues, Edinburgh has a lot of giant redwoods, but its undergrowth has been starved of resources in the last decade....without small independent venues and funded independent producers there's nothing to feed those great big trees. Without resources dedicated to the small and developing, we'll never have the kind of vibrant year-round arts scene you see in, for example, Glasgow' (Survey Monkey respondent)

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

10 Costings

10.1 The majority of the recommendations can be achieved with no additional or new external funding.

10.2 Where additional costs are required, the following budget would be required to enable the necessary impact on an annual basis:

10.3 Recommendation 9.3.a

£15,000 – assuming a pro-rata salary of £25,000 x 3 days per week. This figure assumes the post is offered on a fee-basis. The figure would increase if the post is employed on a salaried basis.

10.4 Recommendation 9.3.a.ii

£2,000 – contribution to training budget

10.5 Recommendation 9.3.a.v

£10,500 - producing budget: assuming consultants are engaged at the rate of £175 per day x 5 days per month x 12months (60 days)

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

Appendix 1

List of those consulted by interview

Performing artists and companies

company	name	
A Blank Canvas	Debbie Robbins	Artistic Director
All or Nothing Dance Theatre	Jennifer Patterson	Artistic Director
Cultured Mongrel	Emma Jayne Park	Director
Cutting Edge Theatre	Suzanne Lofthus	Artistic Director
Dance Ihayami	Edyta Kania Matt Foster/David Hughes	Arts Manager
David Hughes Dance	Hughes	Administrative Director/Artistic Director
Errol White Dance company	Errol White	Artistic Director
Green Room	Michael Richardson	Artistic Director
Grid Iron	Judith Doherty	Co-Artistic Director/CEO
Independent producer	Dani Rae	
Independent theatre artist	Hazel Darwin Edwards	
Independent dance artist	Michael Sherrin	
Independent producer	Susan Hay	
Le Petite Monde	Tanja Czajka	Artistic Director
Licketyspit	Virginia Radcliffe	Artistic Director/CEO
Lung Ha's	Michael Fraser	Company Manager
Lyra Theatre	Jo Timmins	Artistic Director
Magnetic North Theatre Company	Verity Leigh	Producer
MAXimeall Dance Company	Rob Heaslip	Director
Strange Theatre	Liz Strange	Artistic Director
Strange Town Theatre Company	Ruth Hollyman	Creative Partner
The Meladromatics	Susie Dumbreck	Artistic Director
Tortoise in a Nutshell	Ross McKay	Director
Wee Stories	Verity Leigh	Producer

Support organisations

Catalyst	Vicky Rutherford-O'Leary	Producer/Director
Catherine Wheels	Paul Fitzpatrick	Producer
Creative Scotland	Lorna Duiguid	Portfolio Manager, Touring
Federation of Scottish Theatre	Jon Morgan	Director Development
Imaginate	Fiona Ferguson	Director
Puppet Animation Scotland	Simon Hart	Director
Summerhall	Rupert Jones	Arts Programmer

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

Producing and presenting venues

Traverse Theatre	Linda Crooks	Executive Producer/Joint CEO
Royal Lyceum Theatre	Alex McGowan	Executive Director
Festival City Theatres Trust	Brian Loudon	General Manager
	Nick Parr	Commercial Director
	Cerin Richardson	Learning and Participation Manager

City of Edinburgh Council

Councillor Richard Lewis	Convenor, Culture and Sport Committee
Lindsay Robertson	Arts and Event Manager, Culture and Sport
Jo Navarro	Arts Officer, Culture and Sport
Lisa Kapur	Arts Officer, Culture and Sport

Pilot Project: Capacity building for small performing arts organisations in Edinburgh

Appendix 2

In addition to the support services outlined in paragraphs 5.8 – 5.15, all of which provide models of good practice to emulate, there are various examples of organisations which have developed to support independent artists and on which some aspects of recommendation 9.3 might be based. Amongst those which have developed in response to a particular geographic area or city are:

Theatre Bristol - <http://theatrebristol.net/whatwedo>

This organisation receives core support from the Arts Council of England to provide a comprehensive support service to performing artists in the Bristol area. The organisation has grown from a small advisory service to a producer in its own right – however it retains a key role as a one-stop-shop giving bespoke advice and training to artists using a pool of experienced producers. It also plays a strategic role in the city, helping to bring venues and artists together and commissioning work where there are gaps in provision.

PANDA - <http://www.panda-arts.org.uk/>

A membership organisation which acts as a coach, advisor, facilitator and connector for performing arts practitioners, organisations and venues in the Greater Manchester area. Its experience has proved that whilst a web-based resource is valuable to artists, spending time meeting and supporting artists in person is a vital complement to this provision.

The Empty Space – www.theemptyspace.org.uk

Alongside its role as an agency advising, producing and managing a group of performing artists based in the North East of England, it helps to broker relationships between theatre venues and companies/artists seeking space and support to develop and present their work.

In particular, it works with emerging artists to help them get access to administrative and creative spaces in the city, aiming to combine meeting the needs of artists with maximising the current building provision in the North East. It facilitates an informal meeting each month for artists to meet and discuss issues of importance to them. Each meeting is held in a different venue across the city/region to help ensure that artists are familiar with the spaces available in the city.

It helps venues to understand the needs of particular artists and encourages artists to develop relationships with particular venues.

The Work Room - www.theworkroom.org.uk

The Work Room is a studio at Tramway in Glasgow and is an example of an artist-led studio which has been set up to serve a particular art-form sector. It was established as part of Scottish Ballet's re-development of Tramway. It is dedicated for use by Glasgow's independent professional dance artists. In order to use the studio, dance artists must become members of The Work Room.

The studio is provided by Tramway as part of an in-kind donation which also provides the costs of heating, cleaning and technical support. The day to day operation of the studio is managed by a core staff of two part-time personnel who support the Board of Directors and an Artists Panel. The Panel agrees the criteria against which all applicants for use of the studio must be assessed.

The use of the studio is split roughly 1/3rd for development time and 2/3rd for rehearsals. The Work Room has become a key venue for many dancers and choreographers wishing to develop their work towards performance.

The staff team also offer advice and support to members and is hoping to develop a producing service with funds from a charitable trust.