

Panel Discussion

International Co-Financing/Co-Producing

Part 1

Sherrie Johnson (PuSh Festival, Canada)

David Malacari (Auckland Festival, New Zealand)

Christopher Wynn (Edinburgh International Festival, Scotland)

Chaired by Fergus Linehan

Fergus Linehan: Good morning everybody. It's great to be here, and it's great to be here with three people, all of whom I know from other incarnations. I think I've drunk with each of you in different cities around the world at various points. I think what we're going to try and do – we've talked a little bit beforehand – is to try and keep this as grounded and practical as possible.

Co-producing and co-financing is one of those areas that can become very, very wandering because there are as many different types of co-production as there are productions themselves. Personally, I think it must be 20 years ago, I was first involved in the theatre with people here with a company called Pigsback, which subsequently became Fishamble. We did a production with Tinderbox up in the North of Ireland. That was very much a meeting of minds and I think that that is one model, and perhaps a really good starting point. Obviously there are other co-productions which are purely financial arrangements, and are co-productions in name only, really. There is no creative input beyond it becoming a budgeting issue. I think that there is another which is looking at it as a context for presentation and very specifically within festivals or whatever else, which has a great resonance within a production. And then of course there are just ways of sharing resources, and that may be an increasingly important issue in terms of Ireland over the next number of years.

As I say, I know each of these people from different places. Christopher Wynn is the Sponsorship Development Director with the Edinburgh International Festival, but has had a long and varied career in the US prior to that. Sherrie Johnson, I knew her from Dublin Theatre Festival twelve years ago when she brought a show with Daniel McIvor over, but now curates the PuSh International Festival in Vancouver, and I think that's primarily what we're going to be talking about. David Malacari is the Artistic Director of the Auckland Festival but also has extraordinary experience across a whole range of Australian events including the Adelaide Festival.

Where I wanted to start here was really just to ask each of the members to introduce themselves in the context of co-producing. If each of you could touch upon a particular project that you were involved in that either was particularly novel or could shed light on this area. Christopher, can I start with you?

Christopher Wynn: Sure. I'm Christopher Wynn, and I'm the Director of Sponsorship and Development for the Edinburgh International Festival. In my past alliterations in the States I was the Director of Finance for the New York City Opera, the Jazz at Lincoln Centre, Lincoln Centre Theatre, and the National Corporate Theatre Fund which is an alliance of the big 11 regional theatres around the country which did a great deal of co-production work.

In terms of the work that we do at the Festival, we had a couple of co-commissions and co-productions this year. We commissioned a play called *The Last Witch* by author Rhona Munro about the last woman burned as a witch in Scotland, Janet Horne, which was a production that was produced by the Traverse Theatre Company. We were a co-commissioner and co-presenter of Michael Clarke's new work as well as being the

commissioner and producer of Malthouse Melbourne's production of *Optimism*, which was a version of Voltaire's *Candide*. What we can actually provide in the festival is cash, frankly. We are not a producing house per se, and the productions need to work on our terms in terms of the get-in and get-out. We're a festival so something needs to come to us rehearsed and really at the dress rehearsal stage and have the ability to come in in the three to four day period, perform three to five performances and then be out in a day with that. What we do offer on top of cash is that we are a high profile opening and a high profile world presence with the press in terms of the launch of a project. The eyes of the world are on Edinburgh. The world press, frankly, is circulating around Edinburgh. We had *Dorian Grey*, Matthew Bourne's piece premiere with us at the festival last year, which we were a cash co-presenter on, but piece received quite good reviews and a lot of press in Edinburgh to really launch the piece internationally which is still touring with Michael.

In terms of a what, that outlines what we can do with the festival. In my past jobs with New York City Opera and with the regional theatres in the States I did a lot of co-production deals within cities, in that the production would be a co-production with the Centre Theatre Group in Los Angeles, then moved on to the Goodman Theatre in Chicago and then on to the Long Wharf in Connecticut. Similar arrangements all the way round. Cost-effective obviously to share costs and productions. That's where those productions began. The other model that is familiar and ever growing in the States is a commercial producer coming in with an idea or a project that is, frankly, cheaper to build in the regions in terms of unions. It's cheaper to build the set and it's cheaper to build costumes in San Diego than it is in New York. So a great number of productions are being built for pre-Broadway musicals, large-scale productions which then have a try-out. So what the good part of that is, in terms of the regional theatre is that they're being given high-profile, high-cost productions which they would not normally be able to afford to show their audiences, while the producer is basically getting an out-of-town try-out for it.

I think it's best also to touch on the fact that some of these collaborations fail. The good part about a multi-co-production that's being seen a couple of different places is that, frankly, it can be tweaked. We've all seen shows that have changed drastically in the course of their runs around the country and around the world. For the better. It's a way of learning from an audience, learning from the process and making it best. Particularly with opera. With New York City Opera we would co-commission work or operas with other organisations that frankly would never see the light of day in New York. Just the production didn't work. It didn't work in the repertory or it sat in mothballs and was never seen again. There was a particular instance of a company with Edinburgh that there were three co-producers on the production. It opened to not particularly great reviews in Edinburgh and moved on to its alliteration in Harvard at the ART and its third producer, the New York theatre The Workshop, just finally said thanks but no thanks. Keep the cash, we're good. I think that's the risk. We all know that's the risk in making and presenting new work. That's the exciting thing about it. That's the exhilaration and then sometimes the downfall of tweaking. Knowing when to say enough is enough. This is really not going to work.

Sherrie Johnson: I've been producing out of Toronto for the past 20 years and I've been involved in producing theatre, dance, film, publishing, festivals, pretty much everything I've explored. I also in 1995 founded a festival in Toronto with my colleague Menno Plukker called the Six Stages, which led to my role coming to the PuSh Festival in 2004/2005. That's my background. The PuSh Festival, just to give you a context is an annual festival. We produce, commission, co-produce, present theatre, dance, music, film projects, any kind of hybrid performance. We are always in the same time frame, mid-January to February. In 2010 we're heading in to our sixth festival as a society or organisation.

What I'd like to know from you in the room first of all is how many of you have co-produced or co-financed shows? How many of the companies or artists have done that? Great. What I've done is, I have a handout in your folder that I prepared that is just some topics to be discussed, but also an outline for myself for today's conversation. I want to use two projects that PuSh has commissioned or been a partner on a commission. One is a commission that we're doing here in Ireland with the Cork Midsummer Festival as well as the Banff Centre of the Arts in Alberta, Canada. It's an opera based on Air India. Another is a project with Rimini Protokoll, which is a reality-based company out of Berlin, Germany. Both have very

different examples of how they are put together and how PuSh and myself are involved. One of the things that happened with the PuSh Festival is that when I joined PuSh as a curator I came to PuSh with skills as a producer, so we decided that I would handle anything called a Special Project. So with Rimini Protokoll and the Air India opera, we're not only a commissioner where we've given money to develop and help nurture and produce the work, but I actually am the hands-on producer of the Rimini Protokoll project and I'm one of the producers of Air India, the other being Eithne Egan here from Cork Midsummer.

The first thing I'll say about any kind of commission or co-production is that they have to come about naturally. There has to be some compatible interest. These particular projects are not what we call financial co-productions, they're truly artistic co-productions. With the Air India project, the starting point came out of Cork Midsummer with William Galinsky who had the idea based on a photograph that he saw, and put his own team together in Ireland, and is commissioning funds. William happened to meet me in Scotland on a delegation. As curators we're very like-minded already and William identified that and he said to me, can I tell you about a project. It's rather personal because I'm also the director of it, and I said sure. He said have you ever heard of Air India flight 182, which, as many of you may know, those flights originated in Canada, and most of the individuals on board were Canadian. It had a tragic incident over Shannon and the Cork area. When William brought it up it was actually very personal to me because I had actually produced a four-hour movie of the week based on Air India, and know the story inside and out as well as the victims' families and a lot of the authorities that have worked on that case for the past 20 years. So that's a very artistic, personal reason for coming together on that kind of project.

With Rimini Protokoll it's a bit of a different story. They did a show in Montreal at the Festival TransAmerique which Norman Armour, the Executive Director and I witnessed, and we loved the company. Norman actually approached them and said we would like to have you at our festival at some point. Would you consider doing an original work for us? And they said yes. But we didn't really know what the starting point would be other than we wanted to somehow work with this company. What we did was we invited them to Vancouver to see what the city was like and from there, once they were in our city we started to build the project together. That's something very important to talk about when coming together on any kind of co-production or commission is really to clearly outline what is the project and the timelines. I'm not going to repeat any of this but just for you as artists and producers to know it starts with the interest but then there are a lot of practicalities to bringing that forward.

The other thing is, I put together a budget template because I find over the years that I've been co-producing, a lot of artists and companies don't quite understand the budgeting process, cash flow and budgeting for your development into production. So I wanted to bring that forward for you, as well as say that once you have a budget like this you have to understand that it's a starting point, and you have to revise it. A lot of people don't realise that. I revise budgets 20, 30, 40 times. On a regular basis I'm constantly revising budgets, and it's very important to remember to be very realistic in your budgeting. It's for everyone's benefit, every partner, every funder, whoever your producer is within the company. And the second thing that is quite misunderstood that I want to address is in-kind contributions. These are so valuable to projects. Sometimes you have a partner who cannot offer you only the resource of cash, but in-kind resources, whether it be technical support or a venue to rehearse in or a place to build your set, anything like that. They have a value and you have to recognise that and understand that that is part of the budgeting process and is really considered a true partner on a project.

I'm just going to leave it right there for now so that we can move on, and if there's any questions of course we can address that.

David Malacari: Hi, my name is David Malacari. I'm the Artistic Director of Auckland Festival. Until the beginning of this year, in fact, I was the Chief Executive and Artistic Director and I can gleefully say that I'm only the Artistic Director now, which is terrific. Before that I spent some 12 years at Adelaide Festival, starting out as a production person and moving up to be Programme Manager before I left. I think, in terms of co-productions and things, in my time at Adelaide Festival I saw a great change in the way that projects were presented at

the festival. When I first arrived they came as unit productions. We bought shows, we presented them. Over time we saw that we had to be part of the commissioning process if we were going to get ambitious projects into the festival programme, particularly for local work. We weren't interested in presenting work that was going to be part of the normal repertory season at the local theatre company, for instance. What was the point of putting that on in the festival? It was going to be on anyway. And so, I saw the beginning of a whole new process evolve where festivals kind of said we want more than our local companies can give us so we have to be prepared to put something into that.

Of course, that started a process where festivals began to work with each other to produce and finance bigger ambitious projects. It gave artists the ability to think bigger and think of projects that might be beyond what they would normally do with their scratched together funding. So a whole thing kind of began, which is probably ten years behind what happens in Europe, I would expect. Then I moved to New Zealand, which was another five, or ten years behind where Australia was, where that process is really just beginning now. For instance, New Zealand has two major festivals, three if you count Christchurch, and they've never worked together until these coming festivals where we are now developing projects together that fill the artistic needs that we feel that we want to fill in our programming.

Of course that raises other questions, I think which Sherrie touched on, which is what drives these co-productions? Is it an artist thinking up an idea and having an artistic impulse that they feel obliged to express, or is a programming conceit from the festivals who go well, we want something exotic and fabulous that involves international collaborations and has a bit of this and a bit of that in it. Of course the answer is, you know, somewhere between. Each project is different and it can be from one end to the other.

This one example that I can bring up is, we were involved this year where we were a co-commissioner of a new work by Ea Sola who is a Vietnamese choreographer who I think is right out there at the challenging end of the conceptual movement. We just put cash into that. It was a bit of completely opportunistic programming where I was very keen to have Ea Sola in the programme. She'd never been to that part of the world before. So we're filling certain needs in our festival programming. And I learned that she was putting a new work together, so we put some cash in and became a co-commissioner of it. In the programme, I have to say, it was right out there at the challenging end of the work that we presented. I had to kind of explain to a lot of people that that's actually naturally part of the festival programme. We're a multi-arts festival, we do dance and opera, we don't have the luxury of just being a niche festival, programming in one genre. That's just the way we're funded, so we have to deal with that. So we find the need to really programme a whole range of work. We're trying to attract new audiences so we kind of put popularist work that we think might open a doorway for audiences to come to something else, and we put challenging work that we hope that we might get some people to go to and that might open their eyes a little bit to what else might be possible in life and in art. I had to explain to people that this work would cost us money, we'd put cash into it, and it was really a critical part of our programming, even though only 200 people went to it, and it might have cost per head of audience triple what something else might have cost. I guess we all have to do those kind of funding justifications. You know, the awful per seat subsidy argument which is a hideous thing, and ignores really the whole idea that arts really is an ecosystem. It's a pyramid and there are the expensive arts at the top which two men and a dog might go to, and there's the stuff at the bottom and they kind of feed into each other. They're all related. You can't have one without the other I don't think.

We also commission a whole lot of New Zealand work, and I think it's fair to say that in that commissioning in the last three to four years we've extended the ambitions of a lot of the artists that we've worked with, and we've given them the ability to think, maybe we can talk to another artist and create something beyond what we would normally expect to be able to get funded, and we would put funding in to help them to do that. I hope that the next step from that is that those artists maybe look beyond the shores of New Zealand and heaven forbid, even look to Australia. But more to the point, also look to our Pacific neighbours and our East Asian neighbours. Auckland is a very multicultural city that really lives and breathes that kind of Pacific Rim world. I think that if we can reflect some of that in or programming through collaborations and co-productions, whether they come as an

artistic conceit of the festival or whether they come as something that grows out of the needs of the artists who feel compulsively inclined to work with each other, I think either way we're heading towards the same thing.

Fergus Linehan: Thanks David. I just wanted to open it up from the point of view that, generally I think that co-production is regarded as a good thing, and sometimes as a panacea for everything. It sounds good, and it's got long term planning and all the rest. But just to ask the question whether or not there are projects or companies or artists who really shouldn't co-produce. I've got a couple in my own head. I'll probably get shot down for this at a later date, but for me the example when Akram Khan and Juliette Binoche created that work together, which was a very interesting idea that she would dance and he would act and that they would come together, which seemed to me something that, had it happened in a studio they may have taken it further. But it was project that from day one was built as a massive international co-production with huge fees and everything else attached to it, which I felt probably damaged the project in many ways. I certainly know that in the interviews with Juliette Binoche at the end of it she was saying I'll never do this again. But still had two years of touring commitments attached on. We've all seen those co-productions which stumble on indefinitely because the co-producers are locked into them and everyone has put their money up and should be put out of their misery. The question is if anyone has any experience where a co-production is really the wrong route to go.

Christopher Wynn: Well, I guess in our terms it's a company that's not used to touring and not used to our timetable in terms of get-in, get-out like I was talking about before. Uprooting a production from across the sea to Edinburgh when they're not used to dealing with visas. That type of minutiae. We brought a giant production of *Faust* over this year from Romania, that was a huge trial. 120 actors on stage, almost entirely funded by the Romanian Cultural Institute in terms of their wanting to get Romanian culture out, but it was those things that they're just not used to. They didn't quite understand that seven people couldn't sleep in a hotel room. And that five pounds a day wouldn't be enough per diem for their actors. Just minor things like that, where we kind of had to chase it and it became for us, ultimately worth it, but quite – I think my Artist Liaison team did not have hair after dealing with them.

Fergus Linehan: So that's a question of just managing the two cultures. How do you manage across – it could be just two different organisations, organisationally culturally different.

Sherrie Johnson: That's an interesting question, because curatorially I have interest in some of these larger-scale co-productions that happen, and some of those artists. I maybe wouldn't have necessarily put those artists together. The truth is, when I think about it from a PuSh point of view, and as a curator, when I think of those larger organisations and artists like a Robert Lepage or a Lev Dodin or an artist on that scale, I think they don't really need PuSh. There are other festivals and partners in the world that can offer the resources. With PuSh it just so happens that Norman and I love to introduce new artists to Vancouver audiences, and we actually like to help them begin their careers. We're both very nurturing and we are mentoring to a lot of companies. It's interesting. Even when I had the Six Stages with Menno in Toronto, we never really got involved in larger scale pieces or co-productions.

Fergus Linehan: One of the other things as well is that I often think that the international co-production happens because of the nurturing nature of some of the curators or the leaders, but actually where it sits in terms of the actual funding is very ambiguous. Funding agencies around the world, if it was actually kind of pushed that their funding was going to pay for German actors and German directors, that creates quite a lot of confusion. As you say, I think it's the particular sense that an international festival director or presenter has about an artist rather than it being kind of codified in any way. David, you had the Australian experience with that, which was in terms of co-producing. You just might want to mention how that worked in terms of the Major Festivals Initiative. That was specifically a really interesting funding device for encouraging co-production.

David Malacari: Yes, I think it was felt that investing significant amounts of money in shows that just played one city – in the case of the Australian festivals, Adelaide Festival commissioned a show, it played Adelaide, and that was the end of it – was kind of a waste of resources.

Really, if something was going to be good then it really should tour. Why wouldn't Sydney Festival also present it, or Melbourne Festival? The festivals had never worked together in that way. But they sat around the table and they came up with this plan and went to the government and said if you give us a million and a half dollars over three years we'll put together shows and we will guarantee that they will appear in at least two of the festivals, and they will be shows of scale. We'll curate the process ourselves. It's now been going for 14 years I think, the Major Festivals Initiative. There's been some dreadful shows come out of it, including a couple like the one that Christopher talked about where the producers walked away from and said, look we're fine, you keep the money. But on the other hand there have been some incredible successes. *Cloudstreet*, I don't know if any of you saw it, was probably one of them. *The Theft of Sita* which was very interesting in that it was an international collaboration that was also a collaboration between Australian festivals and it involved artists from Indonesia and there was Wayang puppetry and contemporary jazz. I'm not sure where it went to in Europe. It went to BAM I know. Anyway, they were undoubtedly successes.

I think what you talked about before, the Juliette Binoche/Akram Khan thing, I think one of the things with co-productions that one has to be careful about is where the artistic conceit to create something wonderful that no one's ever seen before with artists no one's ever seen work together before and isn't that fantastic, perhaps strays into the world of a marketing conceit, you know. We'd like to put these famous people together because we think they can sell tickets. Of course it's never that. That's not why people do it, but I think in the back of your mind there's, hey, if you put Juliette Binoche and Akram Khan together then that's got to be good for box office surely. I think it's trying to avoid, or work around those potential pitfalls to make sure there really is a strong artistic core that's driving the collaboration.

Fergus Linehan: Yes. Someone like Sherrie, when you were working with Menno you would have seen, because Robert Lepage is the great example of the co-producer. That's an interesting model that they have as well, which is that if you present a Robert Lepage show three years after it is first premiered, you still pay back into the co-production, the original co-production fund. That is part of the deal. Once it's opened, there is an original co-producing body which grows and grows and grows. Obviously, if you are Robert you know that there is a reasonable chance your work's going to travel round the world. But it still is a very interesting idea that when you present, a block of that is always going back into pre-production, which I thought was interesting.

I'll just mention something about that fund in Australia because it's a very interesting model because it's self-governing. The festivals themselves decide where the money goes, so there is no third party in it. But if you are going to get the money it will only go to pre-production, and secondly, you yourself must take on all the costs of the presentation, so therefore it is very interesting model because I don't know of any other model where if you are bestowing a grant upon somebody you are obliged personally to become financially involved in it. It is a very interesting self-governing trigger. As much as anything else, it put all of those festivals around a table twice or three times a year, talking in that particular space. I think that there are very few forums like that that I'm aware of which as practically grounded.

David Malacari: And not only were you obliged to cover the presentation expenses, to kind of make sure that people were serious about the productions, you were also obliged to invest 10% of the total pre-production budget yourself. So if the production budget is say \$1m and two festivals are going to do it then the two festivals each have to put \$100,000 in, and the \$800,000 then comes out of the investment pool that the government gives. So it makes sure that you're going to be serious about presenting, so that the abandoned shows have been few and far between. There's been a couple of them but not too many.

Christopher Wynn: Also there's the example where producers are coming in late in the game after something is in production as well. With the production of *Optimism* that we did this year it was a co-production with us and Malthouse Melbourne. The production opened in Melbourne and then we brought on the Sydney Theatre Company as a partner. They saw the production, wanted to bring it to Sydney so they in a sense became a late partner, so

both our partnerships' costs came down considerably with that third partner. I think that's possible if a work's successful in its first production, that there's the possibility of bringing further partners on.

Fergus Linehan: Sherrie, you mentioned the nurturing nature and therefore you want to work with those other artists, but there are some pretty practical reasons as well. Christopher, from your point of view, dealing with funders, dealing with donors, does the fact that you're co-producing or co-presenting have resonance and value in terms of that end of the business or could they not care less.

Christopher Wynn: Well, on some things. We commissioned *Blackbird* by David Harrower. It was originally produced and directed by Peter Stein with us which went on to be a huge success, frankly. The production was bought lock, stock and barrel by a producer and then put up on the West End. We still receive royalties from that production today. Which is a nice, rare thing with commissioned work and co-productions as well. But in terms of funders I don't really think that it matters to my funders in terms of if we own stock. I think it would have ten, fifteen years ago. They would have thought that we were investing in something that would have payback. But I think anyone who knows the business...

Fergus Linehan: That's what I mean. Is it a very internal industry thing? Do the public and do the funders and do the sponsors care?

Christopher Wynn: I don't think they care, frankly. It's the work that goes on stage, the work that they're seeing and that they're being able to present in your city that counts.

Sherrie Johnson: In our case it actually does matter because we're really invested in also building our local Vancouver artistic community, so with the Rimini Protokoll it's an artistic production where the directors are from Berlin but they're working locally with Vancouver experts of daily life and designers. Because of the original nature of that commission, we have been able to raise additional funds to put into the project. As well as the Air India opera, again because we decided it would be great for the 125th anniversary of Vancouver, so again, because it's framed in that context both of these projects in particular did have an impact with sponsors and the local community and the funders. We were able to access special funds that were also created because the Olympics are coming to our city in 2010, so something called the Legacies Now arts partners and creative development was created to help bring in commissions for 2008, 2009 and 2010. Norman and I accessed those funds for both the Rimini Protokoll and Air India projects.

Fergus Linehan: David, when you were doing the piece with Ea Sola, why not just book their last show? What was in it in terms of the perception?

David Malacari: Well, I think it's partly about kudos. We're a young festival, we're quite new. We're trying to forge a name or a place for ourselves. We're in a very small country which already has a strong, well-regarded festival in another city, that we're sort of competing against in a way. So we're delighted to have our name on a show that's going around the world. And we're doing that for the city, it suppose. We partly doing it to provide some kind of payback for the city funding, which is our major funding, because the city kind of sees as important to establish that Auckland isn't just this brash commercial centre. There is some kind of cultural depth there, and we're sort of demonstrating that in a way to them. I don't think anyone else really cares. But it's great for us to wave in front of the Mayor and say look, Auckland Festival is on programmes in the Netherlands and Paris and whatnot.

I think if it wasn't for that they'd be saying, well why aren't we developing our own artists? Why aren't we just spending all of that money on local artists and producing shows? We're saying it's about more than that, it's about Auckland's position, it's about New Zealand's reputation as well. It's a long way to New Zealand from here. It's about diametrically on the other side of the world. There's an image of Australia and New Zealand in this part of the world, that there's lots of beaches and there's exotic animals or there's beautiful scenery. But what people tend to miss out is that these are sophisticated societies with cities that work and live and breathe with people going about their business. There's a much greater depth to them than you'd get from the tourism ads. That's one of the things I feel quite

strongly about, is saying that Auckland is a culturally rich city and I'd like to demonstrate that to the rest of the world. One way of doing it is to have your name on things. You were talking about the Lepage model. We presented *The Anderson Project* in the festival this year, and interestingly we had considered being a co-commissioner of *Lip Sync* and Menno said, well, Lepage has never been to Auckland. Why don't you do *The Anderson Project*? I think it's right. And he was right, and we presented *The Anderson Project*. And then we see our name on *The Anderson Project's* subsequent tours which we hadn't asked for, hadn't even expected. But we're very happy to see that, and to be now one of that list of cities or countries that have been part of that process.

I think the other thing is that there's cash contribution and there's in-kind but one of the unrecognised parts of a collaboration is actually providing another touring opportunity for a show that kind of fills in a gap, that keeps the show on the road, and therefore reduces the cost of remounting something. Although it's not directly a collaboration or a commissioning thing, it actually does add to the ability of that show to keep going and keep developing and keep on the road.

Fergus Linehan: I might just take this chance to open it up a little bit to the room. So if anyone has any questions for any of the panel, this would be a good time to put your hand up.

Audience 1 [Willie White]: An observation and maybe a question from the floor. A distinction has been made between putting together unlikely artistic bedfellows like Binoche and Khan. My question about what the stages are towards making the collaboration. Does everybody just put their money in the pot and see what happens or are there stages in development where people have curatorial influence or not? My question to my colleagues here is what are the incentives, what are the understandings, what are the things we need to do so that we can have an Irish product the Anglophone markets with work that is already made here. Of course you can look at the Fabulous Beast collaboration here in recent years, or you can look further back and have *The Barbaric Comedies*. But really we don't have an extended record here of any thing other than touring. We're not very good at co-productions. My question to my colleagues are what are the things we need to do if we want to tap into that market? Or am I being unfair?

Fergus Linehan: No, I think you're being fair. I think my experience of it would have been that we work on a very different timeline, and we are essentially straddled by the West End and Broadway and are still very much within that model of, we'll start it off and then maybe, you know, we'll hit the jackpot. Now, much has changed. I'm going back a bit now. As opposed to, in two years time, let's talk about this.

One of the things that was interesting when I went to Australia was who kept in contact – not personally, professionally – and there are artists who are just naturally internationally curious. You know. Gavin Quinn, no matter where you go in the world, Gavin will find you. He's just absolutely wired into that network, and I think his practice has grown out of it. Michael Keegan Dolan the same. Garry Hynes, again just an enormous international curiosity. I found that that was very interesting because there were artist who I had worked with quite closely here who, once I left it was like, it's over, they're gone. I think that that's a key issue, but I think that's as much to do with practice as it is to do with any form of management or promotion. I don't know if anyone on the panel wants to say anything?

Sherrie in terms of artists who almost need to be – I mean, Robert is a great example, he can't make his work unless he's on planes and trains and automobiles.

Sherrie Johnson: It's interesting what you said about Ireland because in Canada we always said we're trapped between the Eagle and the Queen with the United States and England as our producing models. For those of us in Canada and especially Quebec, we knew that we had to reach out to make our work, just to get away from those two dominating presences and how work had been being created.

In terms of your question about how do you also get partners involved on projects like Rimini, I think partly why I as a curator have also chosen to produce a lot of the work that we commission is partly my experience of being mentored by Robert Lepage. I like to make

sure that it's a very collaborative experience for everyone involved, that even when we're taking money from co-producers that it's really not about money. I try to find ways. It's been different on every project to have those partners involved. With Rimini Protokoll we've been very good with the seven partners we have so far about finding ways so that each of them can have an influence in their own city on the project. I've been one of the communicators of that as the commissioner and the producer and linking that in with the artists.

But really, I think if artists in Ireland want to start to connect more it's really about friendships and network and just getting to know certainly those of us up here but also all the other presenters and curators. It really always starts with that personal connection. Continually keeping in touch is what I say. Don't just send an email and if you don't get a response forget about it, because everyone's busy. You have to be a little persistent but just know the fine line. When I was doing da da kamera for 20 years I always kept in touch with all of our producers and partners, and also as a producer of a company I was always very loyal. If I'd worked with any co-producer, partner, presenter in the past I always went back to them first, and I always tried to keep them involved in the company. It is full time work.

Fergus Linehan: There's a few things, without getting bitchy and mooney about it, I think that the media here don't help. They're fundamentally disinterested. It was only after I left Ireland that I found that, that I really found that the media are so obsessed with what's going on in this country that they sometime ignore it. I'll always remember the first time we did the Bob Wilson piece and we did a piece by Peter Brook that year in the festival. A lot of the press didn't even review it. And yet there's the obsession around new writing and that end of it. Having said that I think it's breaking down a bit in terms of people's attendance. I always used to be very surprised at major theatre events around the world, the complete absence of Irish people. Not necessarily going in a professional capacity but just out of curiosity. My experience is, not just Irish people, but those people who you see when they're 21 or 22 who just get on planes and just go to Berlin or go to Avignon off their own bat, that seems to be the genesis of it. I don't know why that curiosity has had trouble taking hold in Ireland, but I think it has.

Christopher Wynn: I also think the great thing about theatre as opposed to the other art forms is that, our opera and orchestra programme is I think programmed through 2012 at the moment, just because that's the way those companies work. Opera and orchestras are so far out. The great thing about theatre is that six months – in January of last year, our theatre programme changed entirely before August. There's a malleability in a good and in a bad way with theatre, in that projects will fall in and fall out. And the genesis of them can be very quick in terms of them coming together. I think that's the nice thing about working in the theatre is that those things can kind of morph together rather quickly.

David Malacari: That's probably partly to do with the fact that everyone wants to beat a path to Edinburgh Festival of course as well. The reputation of being on show in Edinburgh would help people make decisions more quickly for instance than you or I would be able to do.

Christopher Wynn: Well, we had a show that was coming in in January that we were a co-presenter on that they lost a partner and then came to us and said, we need another £150,000. We kind of had to say, sorry. That's not possible. And we had to find another project.

We were going to bring a project from Poland that had been with Susan in St. Ann's Warehouse that we just finally couldn't make fit in our theatres. We thought it was going to work, and then come February it was like, this isn't going to fit and we need to find something else. And the curatorial process was greatly expedited in trying to find something else to replace it.

I think it's a good thing in terms of product and looking at things that are a couple of months out. There's still that possibility it's not years and years in advance that we're looking, but there's still short-term projects available.

Fergus Linehan: Were there any other questions?

Audience 1 [Willie White]: Just to say, Edinburgh is a very important destination. It's a place to see work and to meet people, but it's very clearly, to me certainly, a certain type of work. There are other fantastic opportunities. If I can advertise for IETM which is a network that meets twice a year. People are sometimes a little disappointed because they go and they come back and they say, well I didn't sell anything. But if you look, particularly at somebody like Gavin, because I constantly cite Gavin Quinn of Pan Pan, the international touring opportunities that Gavin has got for *Oedipus Loves You* and subsequently *The Crumb Trail* is built substantially on the effort he's put into networking.

Now, that can be quite difficult if you are an independent artist and not in a company that has the resources to support that, but nonetheless even though the theatre budget is spent for this year, next year you could for example apply for the Travel and Training budget and go to the meeting which is in Berlin, all going well. There's another meeting in Glasgow, which is also easy to get to. So, while Edinburgh and APAP and Under the Radar are very important, they aren't comprehensively the opportunities that are there. People do actually have to get out and meet people and put the time in over a period of time as opposed to expecting to be picked up and to be famous straight away.

David Malacari: We also, as a festival in New Zealand always see that as part of our role to introduce people. We act as advocates for New Zealand artists, and I'm always trying to suggest to artists that they should go and visit other festivals and what artists they should speak with. Particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. That's really our stomping ground in Auckland. That's kind of the area that I'd really like to encourage more artists to visit each other and learn about each other's practice and maybe become inspired enough by that that they might want to work together. But in the end, it has to be driven by people who want to connect. I think the best that we can do is try and help effect those connections.

Fergus Linehan: I'm aware that we're just going to keep this going on schedule. Just to finish up, I thought it would be interesting, just off the top of your head – if there was a thing or two things that pique your interest, in terms of international co-production, what are those areas in terms of the particular needs of your organisation? It could be that it's something geographical or political or whatever else. I was just going to ask each of you to come up with something that might make you smile or catch your attention in terms of a priority in terms of co-production.

Christopher Wynn: I guess for us, Jonathon who is our festival Director as a preference on things that have not been seen in the UK prior. That obviously piques our interest. If it's a UK premiere for us is very important in fact. It's kind of a must, with Jonathon's curatorial process. Then also Jonathon programmes via theme at the moment, which is a bugger to manage. The Scottish Enlightenment was our theme last year. I was about to tell you what our theme was for this year but I can't. It's finding things that we could fit in to that, which is always challenging.

Sherrie Johnson: I guess in terms of PuSh, because Norman and I are so artist driven, there are two cities in particular that feel very like-minded to Vancouver and we really want to find ways to match up these artists from Ghent and from Melbourne, with Vancouver-based artists because we actually see some real similarities with the artists and we think that we can really get creative projects and networking and long-term relationships for all the communities out of that.

David Malacari: For me, I'd like to see the wall between Australia and New Zealand fracture a little bit to allow more artistic collaboration across the Tasman. But also, looking further than that, I'm really, really keen to find relationships with artists in China and India, both of which are represented by big populations in Auckland. I think the potential to produce work or present work that reflects something more of the demographic that the city is to me, it's a goal to aim for at least.

Fergus Linehan: That was a leading question in a sense. I once was sitting with an Australian festival director who had been with an Irish artist for an hour and at the end of it, she said ok let's talk about my needs now. I think in terms of international co-production it is very

specific, and maybe the whole issue of research is the key to it. It's a long-term commitment to research to know what the needs and the specificities of those organisations are.

So, I'm going to wrap that up there. I'd just like to thank all our panel members. We're off to a good start. Thank you very much guys.