

APPENDIX 6

SUMMARY OF NOTES FROM 50 RESEARCH MEETINGS CONDUCTED BY TTE WITH TOUR PRODUCERS

This document provides a summary, in bullet point form, of the 50 research meetings held with the producers of tours in six artforms who participated in *The Touring Experiment*. The notes from each meeting are presented by artform.

This document reflects the responses of each producer when addressing four, key generic questions with respect to their tour:

1. Why did you want to tour this show?
2. Why/how did you choose your tour circuit?
3. Discussion re: issues identified by the producer(s)
4. How would you determine the success of this tour?

DANCE

D1

1. See Dance Case Study.

D2

1. Exposure for the artists. Organisational development – company's first tour.
2. Circuit chosen with a view to building longterm relationships.
3. Learning about touring- producer has never organized own tour before.
4. Learn about how the work tours, or if it changes during the course of the tour. Response from peers to the work.

D3

1. Company's shows are built for touring. The show was always going to tour internationally; having an Irish leg first was a great opportunity. This is a chance to reacquaint themselves with the venues.
2. Circuit chosen from previous touring partners. Prioritised on basis of (i) scale and (ii) relationship with Artistic Directors/Choreographer. Final schedule included mix of old and new relationships.
3. Learning about marketing a tour to general audiences – surprised by venues wanting to charge for over printing. Have employed development officer who'll work with venues to sell the show.
4. Learn about *how* the work tours, or if it changes during the course of the tour. Response from peers/critics to the work. Find out if they have costed it right for touring in the Republic.

D4

1. Exposure for the work of the choreographer – to see *how* audiences respond to it. The choreographer will also tour with the show and deliver workshops.
2. Circuit chosen through personal contacts. The producer has toured to each of these venues before.
3. To learn about audiences. Will a three show stint in a single venue deliver results? Will having a dedicated administrator liaising with venues yield greater results?
4. Increased attendances – this builds confidence on the part of the venues to invite producer back.

LITERATURE

L1

1. To facilitate the development of relationships between individual authors and libraries.
2. Producer deliberately targeted the three circuits on the basis of having a mix of capacities and types of venue spread across distinct geographical areas.
3. Wanted to build on previous research work which revealed uneven resources for and provision of literary events for young people in Ireland. Midlands area is key priority.
4. Getting valuable feedback/input from the libraries. Feedback from the artists.

L2

1. To promote artist's new book. Readings help to generate more invitations to other events and to generate more book sales.
2. Was unable to stick to proposed schedule because of unexpected venue hire fees and artist's own personal circumstances. Final schedule was a mix of personal contacts plus venues which had dates that suited the producer.
3. Producer felt at a huge disadvantage when negotiating with venues (experienced theatre organisations would fare better, producer believes). Found arts centres were unsympathetic to needs of literary tours.
4. Getting invited to perform more readings at other venues/festivals. Book sales. Positive responses to the work itself.

L3

1. To get the work out there. To promote children as artists.
2. Unlike most projects they do, this circuit wasn't based on personal contacts. This circuit was devised in consultation with a children's literary festival.
3. The main focus of this tour is the workshop process. They wanted to test out workshops geared specifically at teachers. Also using a stand alone exhibition running in each venue for one month covering the workshop days so the public was aware of their work.
4. Greater networking with libraries and other partners. The creation/publishing of new work. Quality engagement with children.

L4

1. Increase organisation's knowledge of touring. Exposure for artists. Meet the requirements of Arts Council funding.
2. Circuit chosen in response to available infrastructure. Organisation had previously discussed circuit with Arts Council executive.

3. Organisation views itself as having a mandate to act on behalf of authors and publishers. It wants to become a touring agency for literary publishing.
4. Increased attendances. Quality engagement from audiences in literary talks. Book sales are a tertiary concern

L5

1. Expand opportunities for artists and contributors. Share models of best practice with potential partners. Extend knowledge of geographical provision of young people's poetry events.
2. The final circuit was shaped mostly by the timeframe and other external factors. The circuit has a mix of expertise, venue capacities, organizational/political contexts.
3. The main issue cited was a lack of lead-in time. Producer would have liked more time (1-2 years) to plan a schedule that would allow better interaction with partner organisations and potential audience groups around the country.
4. Greater engagement with likely partner organisations in Ireland (and abroad). Accessing new audiences of potential contributors. Book sales.

L6

1. Producer has a long track record in publishing and promoting books. Has toured successfully at least three times before and wanted to do so again.
2. *The Touring Experiment* dictated the circuit to the producer. Producer had prioritized book shops as venues and managed to incorporate this into the final schedule
3. Trust between an author and a publisher is key. If a tour is badly thought out, or inadequately funded, this leads to disappointing audiences and disenchanted authors. Everybody loses.
4. Build relationships with book shops, and relationships between the authors and their audiences (be they book shops or readers). Book sales.

L7

1. To gauge whether or not there is an audience for Irish language literature outside gaeltacht areas.
2. The circuit was selected to facilitate point 1 above. In other words, the producer identified regional venues outside the identified areas of strength for Irish language literature,
3. The market place is saturated with poetry readings. The funding cycle-driven mentality prevalent in Ireland leads to ever greater numbers of literary events being organized with little or no monitoring of them in terms of quality.
4. Get an accurate sense of audience numbers for Irish language literature outside gaeltacht areas. Audience engagement & discussion at these events.

MUSIC

M1

1. Getting the repertoire out there/sharing a common love of music with audiences. Exposure for artists.
2. Circuit chosen through a mixture of personal contacts and referrals from other venue managers. AC funded venues not suited for their work.
3. Test effectiveness of workshops as part of a tour/gradual development of the group and each person's role in the tour.
4. Further solidify the group's identity as an ensemble and identify its best repertoire. Attract new audiences.

M2

1. Organisational development. The challenge of mounting a tour of this size. Exposure for artists.
2. Circuit chosen through a mixture of personal contacts and referrals from other venue managers. AC funded venues not suited for the producer's work.
3. *TTE* funding gives producer more 'control' over finances. Having funding in the bank gives producer more power/assurance when organizing the tour.
4. Artist's own work benefits through interaction with audiences. Drawing as an artform benefits through greater exposure.

M3

1. Building the national audience for their art form and their work. Opportunities for the artists.
2. Circuit chosen through a mixture of personal contacts and referrals from other venue managers
3. Learning about touring technically challenging work to a range of venues over a sustained period. Company has limited recent experience of touring.
4. Attract new audiences. Build relationship with festivals and venues in the West. Company hopes to develop into a 'national' ensemble and not just a Dublin-based one.

M4/M5

1. Committed to touring high quality jazz nationwide.
2. Producer invited ten candidates to participate in the tour. Circuit chosen on a first come first served basis.
3. Touring International high quality jazz nationwide and creating a grouping of venues that other promoters can look towards.
4. Audience development focusing on younger demographic. Noting venues' and artists' responses.

M6

1. To bring high-brow classical musicians back to Ireland as classical music lacks priority in Ireland.
2. Circuit chosen due to personal contacts and advice from Arts Council staff member.
3. To make it work and draw an audience.
4. Establish producer as a brand and bringing top quality Irish musicians from abroad.

M7

1. Targeting regional audiences outside of Dublin.
2. Circuit chosen due to relationships already established by producer.
3. Testing low-cost marketing strategies e.g. Myspace/Bebo and touring a concept rather than musicians.
4. Noting success of low-cost internet advertising/marketing and attracting regional audiences outside of the major cities/centres.

M8

1. Good experience for Orchestra and exposure of orchestral music to areas not used to it.
2. Circuit chosen on basis of medium sized venues available both in North and South having contributory funds from both.
3. Producer knows own traditional audience base very well. Touring allowed them establish audiences elsewhere.
4. Delivering a good performance and getting a good audience numbers and reception.

M9

1. To move outside of Dublin and create new audiences.
2. Circuit chosen through contacts already made in each venue.
3. Increase the standard of the performance with a series of concerts rather than a one night stand and develop their audience.
4. Create new audiences outside Dublin.

THEATRE

Th1

1. Producer identified this show as a 'tourable' piece of theatre. Producer sees producing tours on an annual basis as part of its remit.
2. Circuit chosen through personal contacts. Producer has toured to most of these venues before.
3. n/a (could be to test assumption that this show was 'tourable' and would be well received).
4. Increased attendance. Building relationships with regional venues. Learn how each venue sells the show.

Th2

1. Producer venue identified this show as light-foot, 'tourable' piece of theatre. TTE funding allowed producer to 'take a risk' on this scale of a show.
2. Circuit chosen through personal contacts. Producer has toured to most of these venues before.
3. n/a (could be to test assumption that this show was viable from a financial point of view).
4. Increased attendance. Building relationships with regional venues.

Th3

1. Extend the life of the work; more exposure for the artist. Producer may use this tour to road-test the show before a 2008 transfer to Edinburgh Festival.
2. Circuit chosen through mailshot and follow-up calls. Producer had previous relationship with one of the venues.
3. Producer wanted to learn about touring in Ireland. TTE/this show offered producer the opportunity to tour a low cost show.
4. Increased national profile of the company. Build relationships with regional venues.

Th4

1. Organisational development. Touring instrumental in allowing company to build its profile and reach new audiences.
2. Circuit chosen on a regional basis - proposition was that company would prove the viability of a touring circuit identified by the producer.
3. Test effectiveness of workshops as part of a tour, and as the central plank in communicating with and sustaining audiences.
4. Increased regional profile of the company. Build relationships with audiences. Bringing the work to its own community - tour will not be reviewed as it's outside larger circuit.

Th5

1. Company builds most/all its shows for touring. This tour is a chance to complete a trilogy, the first two parts of which were toured successfully. In the case of one of the previous tours, the company wants to discover if this tour will enjoy similar success at the box office.
2. Circuit dictated by venue availability. The schedule, however, does span a geographical area in which the company is used to touring. The producer had hoped to tour to two national arts festivals, but couldn't do this due to availability of venues. The tour launched in another multi-disciplinary festival instead, which proved very challenging for the company.
3. Using international cast as marketing tool for specific immigrant communities proved more challenging than expected. Transferring a show direct from a festival to a tour is challenging. Company unable to secure a production manager for the tour. Company must consider developing closer links with a smaller number of venues to make future tours more successful.
4. Improved artistic quality once the show goes on the road. Increased audience numbers. Better critical response to the tour shows (response to festival opening was not positive).

Th6

1. Company builds most/all its shows for touring. To find an audience for this particular kind of work (in this case a non-theatre, mass-going audience).
2. Circuit designed to include a number of venues in producer's home base (normally not viable to do this). Circuit put together largely on the basis of personal contacts, though with a smaller number of new relationships. Timeframe also influenced by actor availability.
3. Will non-traditional marketing methods proposed in the DPF be successful in attracting the target audience? How do you tour one existing show while at the same time directing/developing a new one in the rehearsal room? Producer also recognizes the need to change company policy re: remuneration: the only way forward is to pay rates equivalent to those paid by leading Dublin-based production companies.
4. Part amortization of original production costs. The fact that a regionally-based company can tour is a success.

Th7

1. Sustaining/re-gaining previous momentum as the leading producer of touring work in Ireland.
2. n/a the circuit/environment wouldn't co-operate.
3. Power - the producer expected an increased bargaining position because of track record/brand. Recent experience suggests that venues are unwilling to take risks with the producer on the basis of trust alone. Producer considering changing proposed tour.
4. Test company brand with 'new audiences'?

Th8

1. Network believes it has identified a piece that is both Audience-driven and of high artistic quality. This tour will enable the network to continue its development.
2. Network put together in 2006. This time has allowed each member's role to be clarified. Very clear sense of purpose. Network model will allow them to work with a number of artists/art forms in future years.
3. 'Theatre is the main problem' in terms of attracting audiences, hence their decision to tour a theatre show. Positive momentum of the network was also an issue - other venues have approached the network re: joining but current members feel the membership needs stability for the time being.
4. Testing the strength of the network and the efficiencies it is expected to deliver. Quality of engagement with audiences - long term developmental goal is to build a sense of brand with local audiences.

Th9

1. Producer wants to use this tour to critically successful Irish show to regional venues, following its successes in Dublin, Edinburgh & elsewhere.
2. Venue network offered a circuit with appropriate geographical spread and spaces of sufficient scale for the show (Producer's experience showed that large scale venues didn't suit this show).
3. Availability of actors a huge factor in determining the order of the shows the producer can tour. Producer has several actors who can play a number of roles, but wants a cast as close to the original as is possible. The challenge of maintaining the integrity/artistic quality of the show with a new/partly new cast.
4. Build relationships with the venues and audiences nationally in advance of the 2008 tour.

Th10

1. Producer wants to tour venues it couldn't afford to visit in the absence of increased public subsidy/sponsorship.
2. Circuit designed to include a number of venues to which the producer couldn't normally tour (geographical, financial and scale factors make these venues prohibitively difficult to schedule based on current resources).
3. Producer wants to achieve own research aims, but is compelled to achieve 70/80% business in order to break even. The scale and costs of the shows demands high box office returns; producer had already pre-sold 30% of seats in April for a tour taking place in October/November.
4. Improve conditions for actors on tour (and thereby improve negotiating position for future tours). Increase the number of adult ticket buyers for their tours.

Th11

1. Audience development/network development/ sense of power in negotiating with producers.
2. Network put together with common goals (see above).
3. Power – the network expected an increased bargaining position because collective approach. Recent experience suggests artists have more power to determine when particular tours take place if those artists are considered a central element of the tour. Network determined to maintain own position on casting.
4. Strengthened network? Better relationship with production company?

Th12

1. Company used to build all its shows for touring. This is a chance to reacquaint themselves with the venues.
2. Circuit/timeframe dictated by cast/venue availability. The schedule, however, did span a period including exams and two national holidays – not really suitable.
3. Three issues:
 - (A) The picture has changed since last time the company went on tour - outside the major centres most venues will only take two nights (they used to book full weeks).
 - (B) Make no assumptions...without contracts you have nothing (re: venue deals).
 - (C) Being part of TTE gave them a stamp of credibility and made the show more viable for the venues.
4. Increased national/regional profile of the company. Further develop relationships with venues. Discover if the piece becomes stronger as a result of it being toured.

TRADITIONAL ARTS

Tr1

1. Showcasing traditional Irish music around Ireland.
2. Circuit chosen by virtue of using venues with larger capacities not usually programming traditional Irish music. TTE funding facilitated approaching larger venues.
3. Testing the producer's brand with audience outside producer's traditional base.
4. Having the audience and musicians enjoy the event and building on nationwide audience for producer.

Tr2

1. Building an audience nationwide.
2. Variety of venues in smaller towns including Arts Centres, semi-commercial venues and testing the Island audiences.
3. Looking at the touring mechanism: a venue manager; the venues' abilities/inabilities and attracting an audience for a traditional concert in today's society.
4. A good publicity campaign leading to good audience numbers.

Tr3

1. Building the national audience for the art form.
2. Circuit chosen with a view to regional spread, including areas with good/bad provision, and also venues not visited before.
3. Learning about touring - producer has never organised own tour before.
4. Increased knowledge of the artform nationally. More members for producer's own organisation.

Tr4

1. Having tested the gaeltacht tour in the past, this tour could place the artists as the focus.
2. Circuit chosen through a mixture of personal contacts in each venue and being a tried and tested circuit.
3. To measure the influence and interaction between artists and the promoters.
4. Getting audience feedback as to whether or not this performance was value for money.

Tr5

1. Benefit from network model and shared experience.
2. Relationships already in place via tour facilitator.
3. Ownership of the gig and bringing good quality music/performance to the locality.
4. Good Audience numbers and successful running of a concert.

VISUAL ARTS (including Architecture)

VA1

1. Good for producer to use own collection and be challenged in broadening its expertise to incorporate workshops and training.
2. Circuit chosen following an initial approach to producer from a regional venue which prompted producer to build a collaborative project with the other venues.
3. Building awareness and audiences through educational outreach activity which is methodology-based.
4. Doing work that was strategically effective; looking at children from different backgrounds and facilitating them to attend talks and workshops.

VA2

1. Exposure of artist's work and concept.
2. Circuit chosen on an ad hoc basis apart from collaboration with other TTE participant.
3. Notion of empowerment given to the producer from being in receipt of TTE funding.
4. Observation of audience experiencing installation in public and shared spaces.

VA3

1. TTE inspired producer to tour to and test different venues in Ireland.
2. Testing different 'types' of non-gallery, exhibition spaces.
3. Challenging the notion of the Gallery space and creating a gallery space for non-artist activity.
4. Attracting the 'right' people to an exhibition and engaging this audience.

VA4

1. Exposure for artist's work and the artform.
2. Circuit chosen through a mixture of personal contacts and referrals from other venue managers.
3. Building on the experiences of touring last year – artist has genuine interest in engaging with audiences.
4. Artist's own work benefits through interaction with audiences. Drawing as an artform benefits through greater exposure.

VA5

1. Power of using exhibitions to effect national policy.
2. For workshops, producer wanted to visit existing networks. Choice was affected by short time-frame.

3. Broaden audience appeal of the artform.
4. Listening to public and influencing changes in the Public's perception of artform. Building an audience for artform that will attend again; inform national policy.

VA6

1. Getting the work out there. Exposure for artists.
2. Circuit chosen on ad hoc basis - TTE forced their hand - mixture of personal contacts and 'cold calls' to other venues.
3. Challenges specific to touring disabled artists to venues and locations with little exposure to this kind of work.
4. Organisational development/learning about touring.

VA7

1. Touring workshop series to heighten the awareness of the artform and making it accessible.
2. Maintaining existing ties with three community-based artists collectives.
3. By touring to non-gallery spaces the artform was brought to a wider audience.
4. Good coverage and educate people re printing as a medium.

VA8

1. Exposure for the artist (had hoped for a Dublin venue). Producer tours to fund catalogues and maintenance of permanent collection.
2. Circuit chosen through a mixture of personal contacts and referrals from other venue managers. One tour venue came on board following Theatre Forum presentation on visual arts touring.
3. Secure press coverage for the tour. Producers has recently opted to pay reviewers to come to see the show because its tours don't visit Dublin.
4. Build and develop relationships with other visual arts venues. Good response from peers to the work.

VA9

1. Repeat of project already undertaken in 2005.
2. Following approach from a regional arts centre, remaining venues were chosen through personal contacts.
3. Observing different artforms working and collaborating together in sharing one space and their tolerance over a period of time.
4. Observing the audience for this activity and how many audience members return over a 24hour period.

VA10

1. See Visual Arts Case Study.

VA11

1. To 'share the load'; individual curators rarely get the chance to share insights re: artistic and general issues re: exhibiting in hospital contexts.
2. All venues are acute hospitals, though each with a distinct local/organisational political culture.
3. What happens to works commissioned by hospitals once an exhibition/tour has finished. Who owns the work? and Where will it reside when the exhibition finishes?
4. Shared curatorial experience. Greater audience feedback. Greater leverage with local stakeholders.

VA12

1. To bring high quality work of international renown to Ireland nationwide.
2. Relationships with venues in place already.
3. Bringing Dublin audiences to a regional venue and building on this audience through outreach activity.
4. Build and develop relationships nationally and internationally.

VA13

1. Targeting audience from different communities outside of traditional audiences for artform. Also important for producer to tour as it is a national Dublin-based organisation, but one which is not Dublin-focused.
2. Time-frame related issues and scope affected by finances afforded.
3. Important for people in Dublin to see real projects.
4. Broadening audience appeal of exhibitions in this artform.