

Discussion Paper

Australian Theatre for Young Audiences International Showcase

Incorporating Australian International Tour Syndicates Program (AITS)

an initiative of Insite Arts supported by Arts Queensland and Australia Council for the Arts

Introduction

This discussion paper is intended to provide a departure point for discussion and conversation around the establishment of the Australian Theatre for Young Audiences International Showcase (ATYAIS) ATYAIS is augmented with a supported program called *Australian International Tour Syndicates Program (AITS)* a syndicated presenters program from specific geographic regions. See attached.

Definitions

- Young audiences are defined as people aged 0-18 years of age.
- Family audiences are audiences where parents, relatives carers or friends are taking or sharing an experience with young people of various ages
- The use of the word theatre, performance, or performing art is an inclusive term which includes installation, immersive theatre, outdoor performance, dance, physical theatre, text based theatre, puppet theatre, new media and circus.
- Presenters refers to Artistic Directors of Festivals, Producers or those people responsible for “buying” product for arts centre programs, arts festivals or touring programs.

Background to the Project

The background “inspiration” to this initiative lay in Jason Cross’s experience as Artistic Director of ASSITEJ 2008 and the 2009 Australian Festival for Young People – Come Out, conversations with national and international peers in the performing arts industry, a dialogue with Arts Queensland and the Australia Council and the desire to create a tailor made event which showcased Australian theatre for young audiences to national and international presenters.

In the Australian Performing Arts industry artists and companies creating theatre for young audiences or theatre which is suitable for young audiences make up a substantial contribution and proportion of independent projects, annual or triannually supported companies funded by state and commonwealth governments. Over the last twenty years we have seen significant development in the aesthetic quality of theatre, establishment of companies and international recognition of performing arts created by Australian artists and companies for young audiences.

Yes there are Festivals and arts centres which program theatre for young audiences – Sydney Opera House, Out of the Box, Awesome, Come Out, Long Paddock, APAM – however they are not specifically “created” or “designed” with the specific goal of showcasing theatre for young audiences to enable the sale of this work for presenters who want to and need to buy it. In many cases venues or arts centres who program theatre for young audiences employ producers who do not (necessarily)

attend events like APAM or Performing Arts Market Seoul (PAMS) because the “higher level” executive staff attend and the focus is not significant enough.

Internationally there is a trend which sees presenters buying shows (mainly in Festivals – Imagine, IPAY, ASSITEJ Korea Summer Festival, Danish+) where the program specifically showcases theatre for young and family audiences. These events provide a defined context and clustering of shows for these presenters and the artists to network and examine specific topics.

Summary of ATY AIS Characteristics

The creative and operational framework for ATY AIS would or could comprise of the following:

- Presented in Brisbane, Queensland every two years
- Presented over five to seven days
- Presented in three or four venues in a geographic cluster (walking distance)
- Presented to live young humans with specific target of age suitability to work
- Artistically Directed with the support of a national advisory committee
- Showcase works for 0-18 year olds and family audiences (thus varying scale/size)
- Showcase between 12 - 15 Australian theatre works
- Showcase Limited Number of Works in Development
- Restricted Invitation to National and International Delegates
- Manage Hosted program for 100 targeted delegates
- Managed Program of Introduction and Networking Events

ATY AIS Objective

To be one of the world's most respected and trusted performing arts “showcases” of Australian theatre for young people and family audiences

ATY AIS Aims

- To sell Australian theatre for young audiences to the national and international market
- To build on, capitalise and extend the relationships with presenters who have an established reputation of purchasing Australian product.
- To inspire and create new relationships with arts organisations, arts centres and festivals which have capacity to purchase Australian product.
- To further establish and build on specific relationships in Asia, Europe and North America to promote long term sustainable touring models and amortise the cost of touring Australian product to the world.
- To inspire future commissioning between Australian and international arts organisations.
- To excite the audiences who attend the showcase.
- To create an intimate event where delegates are looked after professionally and personally
- To stimulate the making of “amazing” theatre for young audiences by Australian artists.
- To position Queensland as a home of quality art experiences and theatre for young people

Summary of ATYAIS Characteristics

Artistic Selection

The aim of the program is to present a clearly defined artistic program which represents the best Australian performing arts product available. This selection process would not necessarily prioritise new work and may require to companies to prepare work for the showcase

An advisory peer group would assist in selection of the programs content and AITS representation.

Program selection would be determined by:

- Artistic Excellence of the work
- Suitability to specific markets
- Programs diversity of work for specific age groups
- Programs diversity of work in respect to form
- Export Readiness of company or artists

The program could also include:

- Three works by emerging Queensland companies
- Four works in development presented in a pitch sessions

Full Presentation with Live Humans

The lesson learnt from national and international presenters is their desire and need to see the live performance of the entire work presented with full production values attended by the specific age group or audience in suitable venues and appropriate audience sizes.

It is estimated the program would have a general audience capacity of approximately 7000-10,000. Given the limited audience capacities of the program it would be marketed to schools, kindergartens (specific age groups) and via specific databases or markets of the presenting venue partners.

Who are the Presenters or Delegates?

The primary delegates are those participating in the AITS Program and other targeted national and international presenters who are carefully selected because they have:

- previously presented Australian product
- have the financial capacity to present international work
- are a target market of government agencies

This delegate list would be carefully created and managed to:

- take advantage of specific regional, International priorities and programs
- maximise State and Commonwealth market development initiatives
- represent a complimentary number of presenters from major cities and regional centres

Partnerships

Critical to the delivery and success of the event is the establishment and commitment of partners across all aspects of the projects delivery. These partnerships would be established on the basis of long term commitments. The event would be financially supported via a shared responsibility and partnerships between: Queensland Government - Arts Queensland, Events Queensland, Tourism Queensland, Dept of Education & Training, Commonwealth Government - Australia Council, Brisbane City Council, Other State Governments, Venue Partners and Industry Partnerships

Venue Partnerships

One of the keys to hosting this event is to provide a geographic hub so that delegates can either walk to and from venues, take a short ride on event managed transport or a ferry up and down the river. Brisbane offers an excellent hub in which to present the event where venues are closely located, accessible and set in beautiful surrounds.

We would establish a collective of principal presenting partners with one of these venues becoming the central hub. We would be seeking in-kind and or significantly reduced hire costs via these partnerships. Where possible longer seasons of specific shows would presented by venue partners to embed the ATYAIS program into the venue partners broader program.

Potential Venue Partnerships could include: Brisbane Powerhouse, Judith Wright Centre for Contemporary Arts, The Edge, State Library of Queensland, GOMA and Metro Arts

Industry and Advocacy Partnerships

The event would be supported by key industry organisations to build on the commitment, development and direction of these industry and advocacy organisations

- Young People and Arts Australia (YPAA) now based in Brisbane
- *Lowdown* Magazine - The National Magazine for Youth Performing Arts

Ideas to Consider and Discuss

- ATYAIS partners with Creative New Zealand to showcase 2 or 3 works from New Zealand
- Independent artists are directly supported by their state governments
- Some independent Australian artists or companies may require advice or management toward international touring in respect to presentation and negotiation of fees, management of itineraries, logistics and freight, and general readiness for export and support for these companies may need to be developed alongside this initiative.
- ATYAIS would encourage further tours of the shows to interstate and regional QLD venues

We are very excited to present these ideas and look forward to future conversations.

For all comments and further discussion please contact Jason Cross by email or on 0421 502 576.



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