

25 May 2018 @ National Opera Estonia
RISE 2 Workshops
In the frame of the 55th Pearle* conference Tallinn, 24-26 May 2018



Pearle*'s 55th Conference was the opportunity for Pearle* members to be informed and discuss a variety of topics such as:

- Sustainability in cultural organisations: A perspective from fashion design
- The European Pillar of Social Rights and the first principle on education, training and life-long learning
- Managers, lonely leaders? The state of play in relation to the workforce and the unions
- Friend or foe? Relations with third parties (from advocacy groups to collecting societies)
- Skills, a matter of finding and retaining people with the right skills Identifying skills shortages in the sector and how to address the challenge of filling the gaps
- The loneliness of the long distance runner Revealing relations and culture policy work with the government
- Negotiation – the Art of Making Constructive Agreements
- Know your law
- Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality
- #metoo: How to deal with and eradicate issues such as sexual harassment, mobbing, etc from the workplace
- Gender equality is not an option: Initiatives aimed at establishing gender equality in our organisations

The Conference ended with a speech of Indrek Saar, Minister of Culture Estonia who updated the participants on the state of play of culture in Estonia and the initiative to raise the minimum wage in the cultural sector.

In the frame of the RISE 2 project another two workshops were conducted this time on “going digital”.



The first of the workshops in the frame of RISE 2 - “**Going digital: when technology meet live performance!**” - gave an insight on concrete issues experienced by theatres and other venues when cooperating with scientific institutions on new technologies.

In the workshop outline one could read: “In the live performance sector, digital tools based on new technologies can be developed with the aim to get an artistic added value in a live show (an example of the theatre lab: sound capturing or speech to text and automatized translation technology). The process to develop these tools doesn’t necessary go smoothly: New competences have to be developed in the theatre, the partnership with scientific institutions needs to be defined and often a common language between the partners and a shared understanding of the matter has to be found.”ⁱ



To help discuss these topics Heidi Wiley (Executive Director of the European Theatre Convention) presented the specific case of the “[European Theatre Lab – Drama Goes Digital](#)” and Jonathan Thonon (project coordinator at the Théâtre de Liège) sent in a video illustrating their experience with the “[IMPACT - International Meeting in Performing Arts & Creative Technologies](#)” project.

The workshop looked into the following questions:

What are the challenges for live performance organisations when partnering up with scientific organisations and developing digital tools in an artistic context?

- In the context of Drama Goes Digital ETC – European Theatre Convention was the facilitator by bringing the topic to the table and the theatres themselves decided if they wanted to test out this experience or not.
- The theatres involved were Public National Theatres with repertory style companies. In this setting this experience can be quite revolutionary as the working methods, the hierarchy, even the technical possibilities can be quite limiting.
- For instance, in many theatres skype is not installed for security reasons, so even the idea of developing a dramaturgy online was a barrier.
- Theatres do not have a Research & Development department that can be used to develop these experiences.
- The big question from the permanent staff was how does working with digital technologies – in the artistic creation process – bring an added value.
- Copyright wasn’t an issue when discussing sharing content online – the project focused more on how the artists could use technology to add value to their creations.

Which competences are needed in the management and for artists?

- For this challenge to work it needs to work on an artistic level which implies a change in the way an organisation looks at its hierarchy. Hierarchy is also a mind-set i.e. theatres are clear on who takes the lead and the hierarchy is very clear and defined. In the scientific organisations world many times the expert (and therefore who takes the lead) is the technician and not the director so the pyramid is “upside down”.

How to create a shared understanding with scientific organisations?

- Speaking the same language was a challenge – the dialogue between theatre and scientific had to be very well moderated not only in terms of concepts but also of working methods.

Which new work processes and operating processes have to be taken into account?

- The working methods are also very different. Scientific organisations work with prototypes i.e. longer times to test before reaching the finished “product”; theatres work with 6 weeks rehearsals and then premiere the finished “product”.

This project already had some inspiring results for example [Kinetics Of Sound: Peer Gynt/Den siste kongsfesten \(The King’s Fair\)](#) A co-production between Det Norske Teatret, Oslo and the Croatian National Theatre, Zagreb that brings together two large scale stage productions of modern classics, “Peer Gynt” by Henrik Ibsen and “Den siste kongsfesten” (“The King’s Fair”) by Miroslaw Krleža.

These two pieces “will be staged in the partnering theatres exchanging directors and bringing a part of their cultural heritage to the other country. Erik Ulfby will direct the Norwegian play in Zagreb, Ivica Buljan the Croatian text in Oslo. The dimensions of parallel universes, dream worlds and distorted perceptions of reality in both plays and their decisive narrative techniques are suitable for investigation and a transfer into a digital context. Both productions work with the same composer and will experiment with new audio technology, such as 3D sound, auralisation and psycho-acoustic effects. The project partners have looked into the field live electronic music with the Music Academies in Oslo and Zagreb and have worked together with the Acoustic Research Center (ARC) of Sintef in Trondheim (NO). With more than 30 students involved, the Department of Sound and Music of the University of Trondheim is an important partner in research and the development of new audio and visual techniques, tools and equipment serving the artistic purposes in the communication between stage and audience.”ⁱⁱ

As an example of Innovation in captioning for performing arts there’s the piece: [IDIOMATIC/Dub it: One Voice, Many Languages](#) A coproduction between the Théâtre de Liège and the Teatrul National “Marin Sorescu” Craiova in collaboration with INCESA, Research Hub of Applied Sciences, University of Craiova, the Multitel Innovation Center and the company Transquiquennal, Brussels, producing “IDIOMATIC”.

“This multilingual, transnational project identifies translation via new technology as key to expand audiences and increase intercultural dialogue. It uses the research phase to find new ways to develop translation aids with digital technology. The theatre-makers, together with scientists from the universities of Craiova, Liège and Bucharest, and the partner companies Incesa and Multitel, have done research on synchronized broadcast, vocal recognition and speech-to-text technology. A tongue-twisting entertainment on the tip of one’s tongue, turning on mother tongues and other tongues in a post-Babel performance that got lost in Google Translate. The show is brought forth by the meeting of the actors and by their impossibility to share a common tongue. It is a show without a “mother” tongue, designed to go everywhere, to meet all audiences. The actors try to elaborate a common communication tool in order to present the show the audience has come to see. The dynamics of the show are structured by incomprehension and cultural differences. It is a participatory show in which the spectators find themselves in the same position as those who are making it.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The most interesting part of this challenge was that the focus was not on how to use digital means and technology to reach audience by means of corporate communication but on how one can – artistically - address audiences in a different way, improve the way a piece communicates. Putting the focus on creating an artistic language can result in a beautiful journey that, with time and perseverance, goes a lot further than merely a “come see our cool toys” approach. It can open doors to an exciting world of creativity for both scientific and artistic organisations to work together in creating new kinds of pieces and developing solutions that can be used further to reach audiences.

If the context were independent companies, for example [Crew](#) or [A Two Dogs Company](#), the questions raised would necessarily be very different since they have been developing these partnerships for many years now resulting in pieces like, just as one example, [Terra Nova](#).



The second workshop “How to set up and manage a digital archive” focused on building up and managing digital archives, in a very practical way.

“In the digital age, all live performance organisations have to deal with the online environment, be it in the context of their own website, (live) streaming, social media or archive material.”^{iv}

To illustrate the challenges, obstacles and opportunities when building up a digital archive we took as a starting example [TANZFONDS ERBE](#) which was awarded, in 2016, the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards in the category Education, Training and Awareness-Raising for promoting and preserving dance

heritage.

To start the conversation the invited expert was none other than Madeline Ritter, managing director of the agency diehl+ritter and project director of TANZFONDS ERBE.

TANZFONDS ERBE was launched in 2011 by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation) as a fund to support the reconstruction and restaging of classic dance works from the 20th century and make them available to audiences. It funded 60 artistic projects dedicated to the cultural heritage of dance and kept a visual record of the projects.

The challenge with a digital archive, as with any archive, it to achieve that it doesn’t become a dusty archive that no one uses. Just digitizing the works is not enough for the archive to become alive and dynamic and attract audiences. TANZFONDS ERBE’s choice was not to have a list of the most important dance pieces ever created and preserve them (like for instance in film there’s a list of the 100 most important films to be preserved) but rather open a call and those who were interested could apply for the funding (max 100.000€) by explaining why their theme (their chosen historical choreographers, works and themes) was relevant to dance and significant today and how they’d make it accessible. This open approach facilitated the possibility of accessing dance history from a wide variety of entry points.

The archive is more than just a collection of videos of different pieces, the documentations offers an insight into the origins of projects as well as their research and production processes and this process has become a part of contemporary practice – to document the piece, interview the choreographers and dancers and clear the rights. In 2016, the project was extended for another two years to 2018. Thinking of the future, it costs 8.000€ in copyright alone every year just to keep the digital archive going. There was no major problems in clearing copyrights for the choreographers and dancers as it was part of the criteria that these would have to be cleared beforehand. The most difficult rights to clear were the musicians.



Next year they try to open an international competition for any team who wants to create a “backdoor” to access the archive i.e. for the archive to be used and “played with” by the audience.

Other examples of digital archives mentioned in the workshop were:

- [Numeridance](#) (Lyon)
- [Opera Europa Digital Platform - OperaVision](#)
- Belgium has an archive where all Belgian artists supported by public money place their works however these archives are not open to the public.
- The [Pina Bausch Foundation](#) is working on an archive and in finding ways to take the information and twist it, use it, make it part of now.



Madeline Ritter is a fully qualified lawyer with a professional focus on copyright law. She founded tanz performance köln, an international production and performance platform for contemporary dance in 1989 and was its artistic director and managing director until 2004. She has initiated many European networks, been the director of inter-disciplinary festivals and produced international co-productions in the field of dance, media and performance art. Madeline was appointed project director of Tanzplan Deutschland by the German Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation) in 2004. Tanzplan Deutschland mobilised 21 million euros for dance and became a model project internationally. When the Tanzplan Deutschland project came to an end in 2011, she founded the non-for-profit company DIEHL+RITTER with Ingo Diehl in order to manage, among other initiatives, the Kulturstiftung des Bundes new dance funds: TANZFONDS ERBE (Dance Heritage Fund) and TANZFONDS PARTNER (Dance Partners Fund).

She teaches culture management at various European universities and is a certified coach and facilitator of processes of change. Madeline Ritter is an expert of Initiativegroup Tanzförderung Stadt-Land-Bund as well as a member of the Supervisory Board of Kulturfabrik Kampnagel in Hamburg, the board of trustees of the Kulturfonds (Cultural Fund) Frankfurt RheinMain, the Advisory Board of Deutsches Tanzarchiv Köln and since June 2014 of the Board of Trustees of Pina Bausch Foundation.

ⁱ In 55th Pearle* conference Tallinn, 24-26 May 2018 outline

ⁱⁱ In <https://www.europeantheatrelab.eu/kinetics-of-sound/>

ⁱⁱⁱ In <https://www.europeantheatrelab.eu/idiomatic-dub-it/>

^{iv} In 55th Pearle* conference Tallinn, 24-26 May 2018 outline