

THEATRE ENGAGEMENT PROJECT: Summary of Data Collected 2014 – 2015*

Our Mission: The Theatre Engagement Project exists to create a plan that will fuel social engagement and relevance for theatre in Metro Vancouver.

Our Values: Collaboration, Diversity, Relevance, Risk

Overview of Pillars:

From the beginning of this project in 2011, we had identified five pillars as a structural format for us to consider issues and opportunities.

Based on feedback, one of the pillars, Governance, was operationalized in the form of a steering committee which currently guides the project. Also, based on the feedback last year, significant consideration was given to various aspects of diversity when that committee was developed – cultural, geographic, forms of practice, professional and community representation, among other aspects.

The four remaining pillars guide our conversations, but they are meant to stimulate thought and discussion from various perspectives, and are not intended as boxes which we must think within.

Those pillars are defined as follows:

- **Art:** The practice, performance, and development of theatre
- **Diversity:** Ensuring relevance through diversity of people, places, and practices
- **Infrastructure:** Building a foundation for community, connection and creativity
- **Public engagement:** Engaging, educating and mobilizing our audiences and our supporters

Through community consultation, we identified the following overarching Issues:

- *Our work onstage and off is out of touch with the composition of our community*
- *We want deeper engagement: with the artists & workers in our community; with each other; with our audiences*
- *We want to share: resources, marketing initiatives, education / professional development*
- *We struggle with Spaces & Places: location, affordability, availability*

ART**Art Specific Comments: (to 2014)** (23 comments)

- Whose stories are being told?
- How to transform to authentic connection; Unleash our passion
- Event-ize the experience; Creative acts outside venues
- Exchange of ideas; Experience; Experiments; Research
- Actively engaging in theatrical practices and protocols
- Become a member of a company: What are the benefits of becoming a member?
- Bridge disciplines (ie PuSh); Broadening definition of theatre with the Jessies
- Role of creativity in everyday life
- How are the stories being told?
- Change parameters
- Courageous, dangerous, passionate, inciting language
- Diversity of representation in classics
- Critical discourse; deeper dialogue and esteem between industry practitioners; How do other disciplines engage in critical discourse/talk about themselves
- Power of partnerships: Investing in indie artists and practices
- Process oriented – PLAY

Collaboration:

Party/celebrate together; Breaking bread together; As a whole we grow stronger; Becoming a hub of the community; Does the whole community gather to create a big bang together?; What can existing theatre groups do to create more cooperative approach to sector/help each other?; Creating opportunities for self-definition and agreeing to change; Mechanism for sharing; Share research; Share tools and strategies; Sharing: resources; strategies; Finding tools to share strategies across the community; Finding a safe environment; How to move beyond organizational framework – what is available to indie artists for whom this is a lived experience?; How are we advocates for each other?; Who could lead these conversations?; Where are the gaps/needs I can fill? (16 comments)

GVPTA SURVEY – Related to Artists & Employment (8 comments)

- Expensive city to live in and hard to sustain the artists who reside here.
- respectable wages for non union
- livable wages
- the city is unaffordable for artists to live in
- How can we dispel the myth of the starving artist?
- Employment
- Encourage film and tv production houses to hire more stage actors in major roles. Once actors have name recognition, ticket-sales should increase.
- Create a data base: actors, singers, dancers, directors, stage managers, assistant stage managers, lighting designers, costumers, designers (sets, etc.), carpenters, graphic artists, web/social media experts, playwrights...A small company could then draw on this pool of expertise when mounting a production.

ART 2015**PRACTICES**

- Vibrant output, robust opportunity
- Artistic excellence first

- Quality work
- A need to embrace independent work
- Challenges around new art, emerging art
- Responsibility of investing in new art
- Support for new(ish) work and ensembles
- More opportunities for new emerging artists
- Growth and maturity TYP
- Advent of collectives
- Long history of innovative collectives
- Fewer opportunities, less support for collectives
- Collectives- share stories
- More work from elsewhere
- Exchange with artists from other communities

DIVERSITY

- Include diversity in this
 - Diverse+ high quality shows
 - No time to develop- need more rehearsal time
 - Under-baked productions due to lack of development time
 - Original new work and adaptations
 - Work that is relevant
 - Redefine "innovation"
 - Can be exploratory
 - The quality of the art is there but it is not in line with the diversity of the city
 - Vancouver has an identity crisis; as artists we provide narrative
 - If we are asking questions about the art are the last 9 or 10 projects/things you really believe in? What was of genuine quality?
 - RIGOROUS ABOUT CRITICAL PALETTE
 - Vision and mandate CLEAR
 - Why do we do theatre? To hear our own words or to hear others so we can be enriched
 - Strong emergences of First Nation work and theatre practices
 - Rising mass of great artists
 - Failure to artistic tastes of the audience
 - Our art is strong; it is connecting it to audiences that is the challenge
 - Question AD/GM model
 - Is our art as good as we think it is?
 - Track record allows risk and taking audience with you
 - How we develop our practice over time
 - PROCESS: the intimacy and joy of the creation process; OPEN OUR PROCESS; find a form, critical discourse, relationship as a community
 - Are Vancouver artists creating or challenging?
 - Reframing peer engagement through opening creation process
 - Focus has always been on art
 - We don't have a problem with art; the quality is there
 - Amateur=love of; professional directors> RISK
- LACK OF/CONVERSATION/HAVE MORE

- Huge influx of recent grads, schools train actors, not so much creators (i.e. solo shows)
- Art is completely subjective
- Growth now from 1960s is tremendous
- Emphasis on community based practices
- How do we define professional theatre
- Professional is too limited a label
- CLASSIFICATION OF WORK: e.g. Indigenous practice doesn't make disciplinary distinctions
- Every artist has the right to identify their own practice
- Cross discipline (theatre, dance)
- People are unwilling to be uncomfortable
- Good shows get people in the seats
- Opinion: "certain plays seem to disrespect the audience"
- HARD CONVERSATIONS: when is the right time to have it
- LOVING DISCOURSE. POSITIVE FEEDBACK
- DISCOURSE WITH THEATRE SCENE
- What would happen if we looked at the whole year to critique and reflect? Also within audiences? e.g. Indigenous process: The Study -> The Repast
- A need for FEEDBACK: not reviews but artist to artist and company to company; in a constructive/all-inclusive way
- Get the issues on the table
- PRACTICE of discourse requires shared language: BASELINE OF DISCOURSE TO ENGAGE RATHER THAN CREATE EXCLUSIONARY SPACE; ALLOW FOR NEW LANGUAGE
- SUPPORTIVE CRITICAL DISCOURSE
- Difficulty to talk about art with challenges faced
- Dialogue
- Get over the fear of the conversation
- Open mind
- Values are being reflective
- We should get people who are not artists to sit around and talk about art
- Meaningful conversation with peers and colleagues
- Artists and creators IN the conversation
- Succession conversations
- Trying to fill in creative deficits; how to share vision; politic; practice; form; how things are driven by project and people?
- Keeping an open mind as artists, listening, taking chances
- Creating opportunity for common points of reference to have more meaningful conversation
- Collective conversation will create a commitment to a cause that we can all support

RISK

- Risk in relation to financing
- Risk inherent in the theatre
- Risk to get attention

MODELS

- Gateway
- Festival city
- Examples of new theatre a la PuSh

- Ruby Slippers: play reading at the Fringe: creates profiles
- Fringe- tremendous energy
- PL1422 - doing the best with money given
- Gateway - take responsibility, leadership
- Events: reading series and development series
- Push has broadened the definition of theatre
- FESTIVALS a source of diverse production
- Block P
- Artist Run: like Western Front or Dance Centre; At the Beaumont you can apply for access/membership
- Can't talk about art without talking about challenges and funding-tenure for artists
- Integration with union
- Barriers: CAEA/ACTRA
- CARA gets in the way of art
- CAEA hindering art and artists
- # weeks rehearsal
- Difficult with BC societies act
- Barriers: liquor licensing
- More rehearsal time
- Same shows in same season
- Artist crossover schedule conflicts
- In need of a model for theatre
- Flexibility around urban resources
- Theatre and funding; we always think about the non profit model
- Existing without need for funding subsidies
- Understanding your business and diversifying revenue streams
- Oversaturation of theatre companies
- Are there too many companies??
- Let's stop asking performers to work for pittance
- Difficult to survive in arts
- Getting beyond survival mode
- More freelance artists
- Competitive ratio of actors: theatre jobs
- We are producing theatre for ourselves
- People just hire their friends
- We all create theatre for our friends
- People feel the need to do their own work as they can't break in
- Transition point from \$0 to indie is huge
- As companies mature you lose the ability to react quickly to artistic inspiration; you need to think ahead for planning/funding; companies on the fringe can be reactive
- Seeing producers take chances
- Longer model of forming art; desire for theatre lab- not always about performance
- Presentation leads to legitimacy: presentation= production value, website, venue; people need to pay money to see the show; funding brings legitimacy
- Innovation and environmental impact
- How do we find homes for pieces that don't fit company models?
- DIY theatre- do what they want

BREAK DOWN SILOS

- Encourage theatre on all levels- students, amateur, professionals
- Gender diversity on stage
- In 20 years (we would like to see...)
- Model -> hub by non-profit (independent society)
- Buddies in Bad Times - Vancouver version

COLLABORATION

- Great relationships with presenters
- Exploring new technology
- Exciting theatre-collaborations
- Artistic literacy of theatre is growing
- More artistic exchanges and internships
- The universal story has always been about being human
- Theatre is about tension; build tension, release build, release
- Directors need to move around- more cross-pollination for artistic leadership
- Arts: very important = civil society = culture

ART – MAKING A SCENE 2015

Vibrancy with the city: too much selfish crap being produced////focus on 1. artistic excellence and 2. serving the audience//make Vancouver a theatre HOT BED

Balance is necessary: risk v. engagement

External forces holding you back: CAEA for example, we need to imagine new models

Too much boring theatre

Where's the freedom to fail artistically?

Fear to criticize risk without discouraging the impulse: lack of critical vocabulary

Too many companies - do we need 95 operating companies

What makes you think you're currently being successful? AKA not failing

A forum to talk with your peers about your art? Maybe we need something more formal

Are we respected enough in the community to have a critical conversation about our art? -- trust//not being too personal about your art//how do we extend collaborative practices?

We're hearing our art is good from the public so we trust we're doing well. Feedback from//social media response from the audience//online audience reviews//critics and audiences say very different things

Best creative practice for ourselves//less fear of offending//curiosity and confidence//dialogue & learning to ask the question through proactive conversation//models exist that support dialogue in a robust depersonalized way//post show response//Fringe Festival has it figured out//theatre bar is a gathering place//sustainability//audience talkbacks within critical discourse

Hubs, resource sharing and working together//how is this info being shared

ART – MAKING A SCENE 2015

Ways to meet, collaborate with other artists

Most models are non-profit and run by AD & GM//need new models

Inter sector collaborations

Mentorship opportunities that are rich and meaningful//more accessible structures

Speeddating meetups//adapting national models locally//creative swap meet

Transparency

Different theatre levels connecting

Expand to writers//mentorship opportunities//introducing writers to producers
Artistic Directors being a part of the conversation
Comp tickets = critical response
Community listening to each other//steps towards a place where we can socialize//what congregation space works for us//what congregation space works for us now?//playdates//location
Rehearsal space
Demo stage: voice a problem publically and then a dialogue occurs
Put reviews where they are most useful as artists
Permission to revisit standards of artistic excellence
Putting new//diverse faces on stages
Allow yourself to be influenced by new standards
Time to//develop scripts//rehearsal room//2nd runs of shows//revisit and remount work
Coordinated initiative to change models
Environmental sustainability
Creating Safe Spaces for Critical Discourse//finding mechanisms for creating trust between community members as potential collaborators
Initiating a dialogue to change production norms

MODELS

Culture of Celebrity

CELEBRATE RISK

Competition as support//transform to ABUNDANCE consciousness
Collaboration, sharing radical creative practice
Shifting to co-creation from co-production
Instruments to share concept and vision
Diversity in dramaturgy, challenging assumptions
Continuous training
VISION: Vancouver as a mecca of theatre and talent
Culture of life-long learning across job descriptions and sector
Formal and informal mentorship
Cross sectoral creative collaboration
More opportunities for young playwrights
Representational development and production for all
Change conversation: research & development rather than right to fail
By 2025 in Vancouver, as a matter of course, an artist who lives with a visible disability is represented.
More tools for experimentation
Collaboration, invest in Research and Development
Develop plans for artists to continue training
Create opportunities for discussion, engagement and exchange
Activate institutional resources to amplify creative relationship

DIVERSITY

- Whose stories are being told?
- The community in Vancouver is ½ Asian and if we don't reflect that, we lose relevance

Support: a range of artists; a diversity of theatre practitioners; Champion culturally diverse artists from the beginning of their careers; Encourage specific ethnic theatre groups; Support a broad range of emerging artists: Collaboration, cross sector, culture, border, size (5 comments)

Share: strategies and failures; existing diversity connections that can be amplified; Identify current leaders in culturally diverse hiring and disseminating their practices; recruitment strategies for a diverse workforce; strategies and advocating for casting diverse artists between artistic directors at a high level (5 comments)

Advocate: Communicate diversity as a baseline for the industry; for casting diverse artists between artistic directors at a high level; purposeful recruitment of diverse artists in training institutions; for defining theatre beyond Eurocentric model (4 comments)

Communications: Does advertising in other languages work? What marketing supports are available to serve bi-lingual theatre goers in their preferred language? How are productions being marketed and performed in other languages in Vancouver? Is there a large enough nucleus of people to test bilingual performance in other areas? (4 questions)

Identify: gaps in access and training; language that removes barriers (2 comments)

Opportunities: changes to the population; bi-cultural collaboration; Diversify the post show voices, and pre and during (3 comments)

GVPTA SURVEY – Related to Diversity (6 comments)

- Inclusion
- cultural diversity
- We need more equality and diversity in the available roles on stage and behind the scenes
- Representation (women! People of color!), creating original work, access to professional mentorship opportunities
- inclusiveness
- a need to showcase more diversity/ethnicity on stage

DIVERSITY 2015

STORIES

- Diversity: making the art form valid
 - Respectfully acknowledge the First Nation community. Hold up a standard.
 - There are valid stories from all cultural perspective; if the only stories we see are from one perspective we don't learn or grow
 - Theatre is more diverse and more interesting if the stories are more diverse
 - What are the stories that need to be told in Vancouver
 - The right to tell their stories
 - The old stories all come from the same perspective
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- Seeing self, culture and stories, relevance
- I want to see more stories that are written by women
- What is the role of the producer with regard to diversity?
 - Who is selecting the playwrights?
 - Where are the women performers over 50?

CASTING

- I don't want to become unconscious about diversity
- Why are people scared of hiring a stranger?
- Stop just "calling the people you can think of" to increase diversity
- Cultural divide
- Professional theatre is Eurocentric
- Indigenous
- Gender
- Increase female representation
- Community plan for childcare
- Disability
- Basic rights
- Casting (non trad.)
- Integrate in more mainstream way
- Vancouver is accepting of diversity
- Small companies have to be more conscious of casting
- Being conscious of who we are hiring, why we are hiring, etc.
- Promise: cultural diversity; how we can do that with our upcoming shows
- Be more inclusive about how we create art- don't want to justify how we make art
- Artistic leaders becoming more diverse is reflective of society
- committing to stirring things up in terms of diversity, glad we discussed it, tired of talking about diversity one-on-one, diversity came up in every pillar, lots of work to be done, need to keep creating more spaces for people to speak up, have awkward conversation
- Don't want to have to check boxes when casting
- How do you make someone feel like they are not a grant checkmark? Be authentic

BASIS OF CONVERSATION

- What is the dominant voice in this town? Power culture?
- Why should we have diversity in the arts?
- Lack of awareness of privilege- need to confront
- Fear of appropriation
- Continue diversity of what we put on our stage- celebrate
- What do we celebrate? e.g. Linguistic diversity on the bus NOT reflected on stage
- Large percent of Vancouverites are culturally diverse
- 1/2 of Vancouver's population is Asian
- We didn't reflect community
- Invest in representation

POWER

- Representative of the community
- Reflection of community

- Conversation around diversity included disability, emphasis around best practices, looking at where other cities have been successful, adapting their successes to our community

COLLABORATION

- Cultural collaboration creates a new customer base
- Cultural collaboration can be multidisciplinary; creates a new customer base

Diverse stories are interesting and enrich us and adds to the landscape

- Combining inclusivity & business; creates opportunity
- -sharing resources is key, the road to diversity is both a long one but also means taking first steps, symposium on working with first nations
- CROSS pollination with other culturally driven producers
- Idea: podcast that starts cross-community conversations

CONVERSATION

- The diversity conversations scare me- I don't want to be rude or sound ignorant
- This is a scary conversation to have; how can we have it safely?
- Desire to engage in conversation about diversity
- Generation of artists who are not in the conversation
- Bring the public engagement & diversity communities together for a conversation
- 90s got it right- diversity pushed to the forefront: We now feel we have done our homework
- Diversity is a chicken/egg situation
- Lack of knowledge of diversity resources/people be ADs
- We need a way bigger conversation apart from skin colour in terms of discussing diversity
- Vancouver doesn't have a cultural identity; doesn't care about history or heritage
- Where are resources for sharing diversity?
- I am tired of diversity 101; it is time now to move on the 202; the conversation is changing

THEATRE LAGS BEHIND OTHER MEDIA IN STORIES TOLD AND HOW WE TELL THEM

- Diversity
- Diversity
- Diversity practice

DIVERSITY – MAKING A SCENE 2015

What's missing - celebrating our successes//awards//visibility of efforts

What's missing - do we share the same motivation around addressing diversity?

What's missing - how will we measure our success as a community?

What's missing - a safe place to have the conversation

What's missing - an action plan, a process for change

Future Goals - auditioning and casting actors from diverse backgrounds

Future Goals - diversity tool kit

Future Goals - learning about and breaking down cultural barriers that exist to participations

Future Goals - change context and paradigm of theatre

Future Goals - funding opportunities to new immigrants

Future Goals - affirmative action

Future Goals - train welcomes of different cultural practice and modes of art

Future Goals - collaboration between diverse companies

Future Goals - stop polarizing excellence and diversity - they don't cancel each other out

Future Goals - balance of power between audience and producer is equalized

Future Goals - theatre community is representative of the wider community

Future Goals - stories represent the community
Future Goals - kids make theatre in school
Barriers - internalized racism

DIVERSITY – MAKING A SCENE 2015

Barriers - sustaining efforts over long term
Barriers - habit makes it difficult to change our ways
Barriers - fear of acknowledging privilege
Barriers - financial pressures keeping us short-sighted and catering to current audiences
Barriers - perceived risk in change
Barriers - marketing departments and dependency on box office sales
Barriers - making deep systemic changes around programming and marketing
Barriers - funding policies and lack of funding
Barriers - inability to plan and implement
Barriers - the relatively small % of the population that value theatre as an art form
Barriers - education
Barriers - no learning centre for diversity resources
First Steps - create tool kit
First Steps - share, gather and meet around resources and best practices
First Steps - engage audiences and community in conversation
First Steps - advocacy plan
First Steps - communicate celebration and success stories widely and get better at telling them!
First Steps - cross organizational promotional campaign to celebrate diversity
First Steps - Be positive and optimistic
First Steps - do our homework and define diversity within our organizational plans
First Steps - reward/award action instead of waiting for successful results.
First Steps - find a way through the Jessie's to make an award for diversity (NOTE they are already doing this in Montreal)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Education: purposeful recruitment of diverse artists in training institutions; Identify current leaders in culturally diverse hiring and disseminating their practices; Professional development; Educating ourselves; Stories of success and failure; Build knowledge; building the next generation; Mentoring into diverse leadership - makers and goers; mentorships (2 comments); Constantly asking; make corporations aware of their responsibility/potential as funders; What sorts of things landed? (13 comments)

Principles / Values: Take responsibility – be accountable to values; valuing self esteem (6 comments); Honoring and recognizing and learning from the entire theatre ecology including Indigenous and Asian cultures; Language shifts/changes; Embracing our place, ourselves (10 comments)

Venues: Large organizations with venues working with smaller local creative groups; funding for more theatre spaces owned/operated by companies: retain small and medium venues; What are the resources, spaces?; Flagship venues at all levels; Granville island sharing same form; Encourage self-production by smaller groups in venue (6 comments)

Policy: Diversity from Board through staff through volunteer base through artists; Advocacy to funders/government about intrinsic value to create real cultural policy; Role for funders in changing evaluation criteria (4 comments)

Access: Create great accessibility; Audience has easy entrance into theatre (2 comments)

Support: Investing in and supporting theatre makers (2 comments);

GVPTA SURVEY – Related to Venues (18 comments)

- Fraser Valley... 1. Lack of affordable performance space for rent
- Venues: affordable rehearsal space 2. affordable venues for self-production
- affordable venues
- Ugly run-down venues.
- Lack of safe & affordable rehearsal space
- Performance and rehearsal space is too expensive.
- Development of new affordable work, rehearsal and performance spaces.
- venue availability, cost, accessibility rehearsal space availability cost
- various challenges around performance venues (inconsistency, unwelcoming spaces, difficult to find, expensive to rent...)
- Affordable non-union performance spaces.
- affordable rehearsal space affordable performance space
- Space
- Start a venue and/or rehearsal space that is affordable to most independent companies.
- Availability / Existence of Space
- more theatre companies housed in specific venues (with memorable names like the Cultch or the Stanley, not Studio 1398) because the general public does NOT have loyalty, awareness, or interest in theatre companies that they can't associate with a physical space...it's a marketing nightmare when audiences don't know "The Stanley" is "The Arts Club" and didn't understand what it meant when the Playhouse shut down, because they saw the building still standing. If we want our theatre to survive, we need to be clear with the public about where to find it and who does what...

the answer is a visible relationship between buildings and theatre companies so that the public, who will remember a building and build loyalty to it, know where to look when they're curious about "what's on." Indie theatre (e.g. Touchstone) flies under the radar of almost anyone outside the theatre community. It is worthy of more attention but requires re-structuring in order to increase its profile - more of an official presence for ALL our local theatres that is overseen by Tourism Vancouver so that tourists are aware of theatre as an appealing option

- space
- Being together people and space!
- work on finding/funding more rehearsal venues

GVPTA SURVEY – Related to Shared Resources (6 comments)

- Share administration costs.
- Provide office or Grant writing support collectively.
- Share ideas, space, resources, marketing. Basically communication.
- resource sharing for smaller companies
- Support each other's work more and strengthen the community (communal/coop storage space or rehearsal space)
- More in depth resource sharing as funding is so tight. For example use of rehearsal space for paying for this with other resources rather than money. Can we exchange other valuable things like time, audiences etc.

GVPTA SURVEY – Related to Advocacy (11 comments)

- Advocacy with government and private sector contributors.
- Political Capital
- Political education for companies and artists
- Advocacy
- A government that does not support the arts.
- Lobby government and BIA's to raise the profile and explain the value of performing arts to the overall community,
- Advocate on behalf of professional theatre companies and their collective interests (see above).
- advocate for the importance of art in life, in building healthy communities
- Organize a day to talk to local, provincial and federal officials
- Affect political decisions.
- Fraser Valley 2. Lack of Civic/Municipal vision for Arts and Culture; 4. Complete absence of funding from municipal governments, and no observable program to provide in-kind support to arts and culture groups. (I know funding was not to be mentioned, but it is a critical issue since for us as there is no municipal funding available at this time.)

GVPTA SURVEY – Related to Education (7 comments)

- need more opportunities for youth...better instruction and programs in high schools to mentor youth
- prof. devt.
- training for theatre directors
- more graduates than what the industry can absorb
- Training Costs (for artists completed theatre school)

- I'm not sure. I haven't been around for the Unified Generals yet, but is there an audition prep class that accompanies it? I know how to audition, but having outside coaching/help I have found has always been key to success.
- Cheap communal training.

INFRASTRUCTURE (part 1) 2015

SPACES

- Accessibility - use park, resources, free (funding)
- Affordable space (rehearsal & performance)
- Venue costs= need for low-cost venues
- New venues opening but still too expensive
- Affordable venues are poor quality
- Better venues - accessibility, subsidized rentals
- Flexibility and affordability re: venues
- There aren't a lot of venues
- Accessibility of venues
- Public funding for these
- Welcoming (venues)
- Lots of good venues
- Venues full
- Site-specific
- How can we streamline the process of access to non-traditional venues?
- City-owned space and location
- City spaces ->lack of independence
- City owned facilities
- Public places, venues
- Urban planning - include accessible cultural spaces
- CMHC (run own bar and merch sales)
- Public places, venues
- Canadian heritage \$\$ facilities
- More dialogue with city re: licensing et al.
- City model needs to be addressed
- Resource shares for religious spaces in the week (Dharma Punks NYC)
- An actual performance space
- Getting away from venue based companies
- We don't need another 200 seat venue; we need 100 seat venues
- Theatre (150 seats) per neighbourhood
- Theatre and bar as a social venue and destination for audience
- No artist-run space with rehearsal space/performance space/bar
- Venues/facilities
- *FLAGSHIP VENUE* - helps with audience recognizing who they are supporting
- Accessibility for disabled at venues- advocacy
- In 20 years (we would like to see...):
 - o Group of theatres? (PL1422)
 - o Aboriginal performing arts space -> and including other companies
 - o A space that serves indie theatre -> supports new work (rehearsal, build, perform)
 - o Accessibility, affordability **
 - o Space for interdisciplinary practice (not traditional blackbox)

- o THEATRE SPACES (rehearsal space/café/hub/bar) = affordable for small and mid-range theatres
- o More theatres that are affordable
- Sense of home- smaller companies
- Home venues
- There are not enough owned venues
- Attaching companies to physical spaces/venues
- Venue based collective
- Need pillar of venue based company
- Aggregate kind of space
- "See 7" (no government support); "See 7" with venue - consistent venue, flagship venue, independent theatre venue
- Having a downtown centre like Toronto or Winnipeg makes a difference; here everything is away from downtown
- GVRD has community theatres all around the burbs
- Infrastructure; concentration of theatres in Vancouver: all closely located
- Diversity of location is needed

SHARING

- Sharing resources
- Hubs i.e.: GI
- Administrative hubs (STAF)
- Sharing resources amongst small companies(1-2 shows season companies)
- SOLUTION: model something after Vancouver Tool Library, GNW shop (but rentals are expensive)
- Sharing resources with companies that are peers
- Future is in sharing resources
- Value sharing resources + cooperating
- Tools to connect to other emerging artists

COMMUNITY

- All in this together
- Missing a mechanism of building relationship; start with the relationships
- Intergenerational (recognizing theatre is one big ecosystem)
- Accessibility/approachability to contact GMs and Ads, etc.
- Maintaining relationships- need to keep momentum
- Sense of pride and ownership of all companies
- Need for inter-company support
- Struggle against each other
- Opening up the 'silos'
- Divide between film actors and theatre actors
- Gap: individual - how people tap into a community
- Community advocates
- Create more of a community spirit
- High awareness of the whole community
- The community is very insular, hard to penetrate
- Value= people coming together: craving community
- The community is competitive; self-interested; everyone is fighting for a small pool of resources
- What can be done to create a more engaged community
- GVPTA

- Existence of GVPTA
- What is the level of engagement
- Missing: interaction between companies
- Vancouver becoming known as innovative, collaborative theatre community
- Collaborative nature of small/mid companies
- Good collaboration
- Collaborating with theatre community
- Collaboration- resources, space, artistic
- Theatre companies of all sizes facing same issues
- Collaboration
- Collaborative community right now
- Be in solidarity with large companies; they are also struggling to stay afloat
- Lack of unity among emerging artists
- Partnerships
- Great collaborations- with companies and individuals
- Bridge the gap with large and small companies

EMERGING ARTISTS AND EDUCATION

- Meet up group
- Institutional development for companies
- Open up volunteer opportunities
- We are learning from our actions
- Learn best practices from other cities
- Level of knowledge from critical writing
- We are teaching ourselves
- Need more training for arts admin
- Trained arts admin needed!
- Barriers: admin capacity (artists as admin)
- Another gap: the 15 years between two generations of arts admin
- Company responsibility to mentor
- Mentorship grants are good + positive trend
- Opportunity to learn - apprenticeships/internships
- Internships/apprenticeships
- Education and development needed
- Mentorship/internships
- Lack of mentors
- Apprentices
- We don't have formal mentorship
- Training- relevant
- Professional education
- Address gaps in training
- Lack of training for working class artists
- Training programs in community; workshops through Alliance and Vantage Point
- High cost of training/wanting to help young people work (month/access)
- Schools could train: self-producing, writing, design

LEARNING

- Something for each age- evolution + growth

- Education – awareness
- What has gone wrong in the past?
- What can be learned from the past?
- Looking back - what can be learned from the past
- Learn from past experience
- Understanding this landscape
- What is strong?
- Where are we today?
- What is working now?
- What are we still getting wrong?
- What can we do?

CELEBRATING

- Celebrate success
- Wealth of knowledge and experience within this community, great to hear other perspective, annual party!
- Party! Break bread as a community, celebrate who we are, consider including artists with disabilities
- More community social activities (parties)
- Share obstacles and triumphs

INFRASTRUCTURE (part 2)

PRIVATE REVENUE

- Gov. grants AND private investments
- Sponsorships
- Becoming more self-reliant

PUBLIC REVENUE

- District funding
- Funding
- Funding in the 90s for arts
- Greater funding
- National, provincial, city funding
- Strengthen art by strengthening funding
- Commissioning \$
- Grants to subsidize revenue
- Endowment matching
- Travel grants
- There's too big a gap between the LARGE houses who get BIG funding and the rest of the community seeking operating costs covered
- We need grants; we can't afford for the audience to cover the cost of their tickets without grants
- Ongoing core operational funding
- Needs support, funding, venue

SUSTAINABILITY

- Sustainability, can our ideals and goals be accomplished, will we be around to achieve them
- Longevity for theatre companies
- No growth for small companies: financial

ADVOCACY

- Convince politicians
- Lack of agency ->City vs. cultural community; Money; Subsidized housing and theatre hub connected
- Not good at advocacy as a group (political)
- Policy/Advocacy
- Using the BCAC template strategy for advocacy
- Advocacy- plan and economic benefit to funders and audiences
- Advocacy and Education
- Spend own money politically
- Teaching companies how to become better at advocating for the arts, creating a model that all companies can use and customize
- More dialogue with CoV and also with Equity->ADVOCACY
- Education around what we do
- Provincial advocacy lobbyist (but expensive for Arts)

NEXT STEPS

- Future vision
- Take leadership
- This ahead and plan
- Transparency needed
- Let's pick a measureable, tangible goal and do it.

PERSONAL RESOURCES

- Human resources
- Lack of resources
- Technology? Significant investment needed
- Ways to support all artists
- Better livelihood in industry
- Artists are undervalued
- Support our artists so they stay here
- # of theatre artists who live here
- Certain seniority get paid to work anywhere you want: tenure!
- NYC: artist housing
- Subsidized living (PAL)
- Absence of 'working class' actor/writers
- Living wage; Dental etc, Subsidized housing.
- Benefits (dental and health)
- No more ghetto mentality!

INFRASTRUCTURE - MAKING A SCENE 2015

Need: Basic business skills for artists

Need: Add to 'spaces' - accessibility

Need: Living wage

Need: Human resources, benefits, retirement,

Need: Cultural representation in the theatre arts

Need: Marketing//cross promotion

Need: Developing our capacity to engage in political advocacy

Need: Accessible and affordable venues which include rehearsal hall, shop space

Need:Community building
Need:Sharing and mentorship
Need:Education of artists and arts management
Need:Living wage//funding

What will we measure? Success stories from other sectors//artistic team//productions//community engagement//audiences and ticket sales//administration (board and staff); gender equality//sexuality//age//ability//class. Goal: inclusivity

What is a helpful toolkit? - take theatres through the process of evaluation, analysis, setting goals specific to the company

How are we measuring? Percentage of stage time//lines?//hiring, casting process?

Recommendations of Practices: how to recruit (presenters v. producers)//how many people from diverse backgrounds did you interview//audition?//how many community groups did you reach out to//audience surveys with incentives to measure demographics and response//translations of press releases//communications and images//theatre etiquette.

What would advocacy look like? We would have expertise in communication (lobbyists) with politicians//economic and community building arguments//training our leaders in advocacy//identify clear specific goals.

What would Venues look like? Community Centres and church space would be more available for partnerships//more performance, rehearsal and creation spaces would be accessible//shared non-union shop space//residencies and greater access to non-traditional spaces such as schools

What would mentorship//education look like? On the job mentorship that is funded and NOT age specific//career-long learning//able to shift into other areas of expertise//expanding partnerships that support mentorship (Vantage Point, Cap College, UBC Program)//Basic training on what it means to be a self-employed person//Bigger companies mentor smaller companies//Succession planning.

What values//assumptions//beliefs shape the system of infrastructure we currently live in?

Education//underlying values, not intellectual, that make us resist // forms of change//accessibility and inclusion need to be consciously striven for// "art is a frill" // "free grant money"//relationship of civic theatres to the community// not for profit sector is volunteer-run sector (external perception)//being an artist entitles you to money and an audience//the assumption that artists should suffer and sacrifice.

First Steps: mentorship matching system online (NOTE: software//template already exists - Vantage Point?)

First Steps: a possible new theatre//school (NOTE: Meredith E.)

First Steps: Residency System with Companies with space (NOTE: Marnie Rice will send a map of spaces available. City also has a spaces committee//Advice (or advocacy?) re: non-traditional spaces in city.)

First Steps: Bring Space Finder to Vancouver

First Steps: Emily Carr building has spaces up for rent (NOTE: liase with CMHC as it is in the planning stages)

First Steps: Advocacy - say thank you to the bodies that grant you money (eg City Council)

First Steps: Portals//wiki for Vancouver Theatre

Need: too many companies - resources spreading thin

Need: environmental sustainability

Need: affordable spaces (lots of speace inaccessible)

Need: education programs - are they serving the community needs?

VISION - companies can have a life-cycle that may include death

VISION - find a way to make project-based model more sustainable

VISION - become a community with life-long learning possibilities

VISION - active cultural learning exchange across Canada

VISION - shared managed storage facility (poll independent companies to find interest in participating)

VISION - online resource sharing

VISION - form a co-op of existing indie companies

VISION - creation of sustainability mandates to help companies reduce waste (Marietta Kozak)

VISION - increased communication between training institutions and professional theatre producers

VISION - increase cultural diversity in training

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Marketing / Promotion: How do we reach the people who aren't there? Audience measurement— what is relevant? Intrinsic impact surveys; What is the invitation and the experience?; Encourage the adventurous approach “see something new!”; Vancouver “brand” – City of Theatre (4 comments);
 Need support to market at all levels of big commercial shows; Cross-promotion; Collaborative marketing; Joint ticketing system; Sell group tickets (2 comments);
 We need to be ambassadors; Increase access and visibility for all companies; Building from neighbourhoods: Market in your backyard; Embrace social media to create interactive, holistic, year-round connections; “Art tax” 1% of tickets, matched by City for joint promotion; Promote more outreach and community engagement Event-ize the experience; Engage our suppliers (23 comments)

Audience: Bring them in young; How do we establish the value system of our non-audience?; People want to engage in their communities; Work in the neighborhood where audiences are living; Consider the total show experience; Bring audience into the “privileged” information; Be aware of touch points: How often are we engaging our audiences?; Ask for feedback from our audiences; Engage audiences as advocates; Ask your audience and membership to help you make relationships; Understand how Theatre “affects” audience; test bilingual performance?; Recognize the barriers that we are putting up; Identify pre and post show barriers? Customer service? Be able to devote real time follow up; Who isn't in the theatre?; How do we get the non-audience to want to be engaged in our community? (17 comments)

Advocacy: Championing relevance through the prism of language - creative and community engagement question; Create relationships with leaders who will advocate on our behalf; Advocacy and education around the intrinsic value of theatre and the theatre experience; Stronger advocacy body (6 comments)

GVPTA SURVEY – Related to Audiences (45 comments)

- lack of attendance
 - A city best known for it's mountains and ocean, and not for it's culture. (public perception)
 - Making theatre attendance trendy and cool.
 - the festivalization of the performing arts (audiences are trained to attend performances in festival contexts, not season by season or show by show). They don't see attending performances as an everyday, year-round activity.
 - Perceived low value of a theatre ticket compared to other entertainment options.
 - Audience confusion between professional, 'semi-professional' and non- professional shows/companies and the quality of show they might expect for their dollar.
 - Audience attendance
 - Ticket prices
 - Audience attendance numbers low
 - Supply a list of every theatre company on the website for non theatre people who come across the website, or for new theatre community members wanting to know the city better - maybe go to non theatre events or festivals to find new audiences and have draws etc for people to win free theatre tickets and hopefully get them seeing more theatre attracting and connecting with new audiences: relevance to our audience
 - Maintaining audiences and public support & awareness
 - The community feels very DIY and therefore there's actually not always the best communication between companies to improve the theatre scene and public perception.
- Marketing and promotion of the sector in general.

- Fraser Valley: General community apathy regarding the importance of arts and culture.
- Flooding of the market and lack of communication between organizations
- The lack of awareness among many of Vancouver's large-company theatre patrons of the diversity and quality of smaller companies' work. The lure of home entertainment options which often end up trumping a ticket purchase to see a live performance/play.
- Lack of visibility to the general public (people don't know there's a theatre community here),
- no calendar of events for all theatre arts listings
- How can we engage audience members who may not normally go to the theatre?
- Our audience is dying - we need to attract younger people into the theatre The arts are not respected in BC - not seen as an important part of development in our schools and often the first thing to be cut in our educational system. This is a huge problem because these children then grow into adults who don't see the value of art. Vancouver theatre always seems affected by hockey and the weather!
- Demand (local audiences knowing and caring about the theatre that is happening).
- Audience sizes
- Attendance
- Communication as a theatre area
- Availability of Audiences (whether just them existing or even being able to reach them)
- Saturation - There are times when there are just too many productions happening at the same time
- band together to create a marketing campaign for the theatre industry - not just the individual companies.
- Market to the tourism industry.
- Continuing to increase the profile of the community in the public eye
- build a calendar which lists all professional and semi professional events
- Have a single comprehensive listing of all theatre and dance events in the city. As an educator I look for opportunities EARLY to book shows for university groups. I have to weed through individual websites and miss a ton.
- Market research that can be shared with all theatre companies.
- Use every mechanism you can leverage to shout out to a broader audience the story of the incredible theatrical talent and creativity that exists in the city.
- Major marketing campaign promoting the value of arts and culture in our communities.
- Create a calendar of tentatively booked times and locations so companies could choose when to plan their shows based on other theatre happening in the community.
- Get more information about the entire rich menu of theatre productions in Vancouver in front of a larger audience. As spaces and personnel are increasingly being cut by the mainstream media outlets, the need becomes critical for a comprehensive central online space to be the destination of record for listings, reviews and features.
- A collective initiative to help increase the profile for professional theatre in Vancouver.
- That is a difficult question. Perhaps increasing accessibility in the theatre by partnering with local charities and inviting underprivileged youth to see the theatre by donating tickets to those charitable groups?
- more unified marketing initiatives, for instance a better theatre guide than GVPTA currently offers –
- Theatre for everyone, everywhere? Kinda like what is starting to happen but make it so prevalent that all people would be exposed to snippets of theatre.
- Work together to insure a greater public recognition of theatre, maybe with an advertising campaign?
- something to do with advertising
- A comprehensive audience engagement initiative that spans the entire community - something like what's done in Seattle thru TPS, <http://tpsonline.org/artscrush2014/> but more theatre-centric.
- Workshops and Meetings for inter-theatre communication

- Create a for lack of a better word 'brand' for theatre as a whole with the audiences and potential audiences that is not company specific but more industry specific.
- While it is currently done, we could do more to cross-promote productions and companies. There are many opportunities to offer discounts when you've seen one show, subscription packages to see multiple works, or even to do something like present an 1 minute scene prior to another production to promote your own (all ideas, but they are all opportunities)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT 2015: BUMS IN SEATS

- Going to the theatre seen as a normal things to do
- Activities: talk backs-PT-audience in the room; expert guest speakers-audience in the room; Broaden-Deepen-diversity; taking shows TO audience (Carnegie); talking to sponsors/donors - development.

More audience	Audience acceptance
Train the audience	Audience specific
More aware-audiences	Specificity leads to audience
Large theatre audiences are trained	

- Theatre not seen as an opportunity
- Perception ->audience sees that 'we' don't need support
- It is hard to get other theatre people to see your show
- Art is not the problem-lack of audience is
- Recognise different people are interested in different shows
- Still a small audience
- Attendance
- Marketing
- Marketing
- Access. Awareness
- We need to make art accessible to our neighbours (pricing is one aspect of that)
- Affordability for audiences!
- Difficult audiences- don't take changes
- Disconnect between artistic intention and audience desire
- Accessible pricing
- BUMS in seats for other companies that are not Eurocentric
- Diverse audiences- reflect diverse community
- *All the Way Home*- showed ticket value
- There are people who go to cool stuff but not theatre
- "I want to attend theatre" vs. "I really should"
- People know theatre exists
- Not enough people are about the theatre
- Not hearing about shows
- Educated audience- literate audience, theatrical literate audiences
- CRITICS/AUDIENCE: may do it, but not be recognized; won't take a leap?

- Need to take risks to keep audience engaged
- No information coming to audience members
- Preferred celebration of the new/shiny
- Interesting experience + event
- Large companies, promote more
- Small companies have little broad recognition
- Only Arts Club is recognized
- I am a showman, not an artist; I am more concerned that the audience is having a good time
- How were the audience treated?
- 'I just want people to know about it'
- How do we spread the word re: initiatives (successes/failures) in more than an anecdotal way?

SOLUTION: data collection to centralized database; data belongs to each independent company, what they do with it is theirs; like CADAC ACTION; mobilize CADAC data for public use

ENGAGEMENT

- Finding ways to make engagement consistent -> beyond numbers and stats
- Quality of engagement-experience
- Sustainability, the more we talk and share, the more hope there is that the community will become engaged with us
- Empowering ourselves to see engagement as programming opportunity instead of audience issue
- Having conversations
- Intentional community engagement
- Always struggle for audience engagement
- Measuring satisfaction and 'quality of engagement'
- Engagement= make good work to create buzz
- Art conversations always turn towards engagement
- Public engaged with one another
- Reframing public engagement to depth not breath
- Reclaim engagement authentically and organically
- Public engagement: asking the audience what they want: producing from a need
- Engaging with community regarding their needs rather than being prescriptive
- Audience are more advanced than we think they are; we need to grow up and get in tough
- Create a relationship to help them remember and stay engaged
- Coming together with people outside the theatre community
- Discussing role of the arts
- PUBLIC DISCOURSE
- Better informed audiences, more inclusive
- Community engagement

DIVERSITY

- How to access a more diverse audience
- How many cultures are going to the theatre
- Cultural diversity
- There is the perception that if we diversify theatre audience will come

- Try and include more people in your wider community!
- Reflect diversity- gender/ethnic
- Audiences reflect community
- Not aware of our communities
- Culture of venue being inviting to diverse audiences

COMMUNITY

- In 20 years (we would like to see...)
- consistent house for emerging companies
- Every house in full with paid patrons
- Past (what worked? What didn't?); See Seven- subscriptions (worked)
- Promote from within community
- Promoting each other's work
- No more competition- collectively work together to promote each other
- Something that would be nice: the LARGE houses supporting and spreading the word re: other productions
- Big houses supporting smaller theatres to reach general public
- Giving free tickets is only paper; companies shouldn't be afraid to advertise other shows
- Strong venue- evening out- more than just a show
- Pleasant place to go- social

SHARED

- Centralized community box office
- What we would like to see now (and pushed forward): shared marketing
- The VIT= exciting, just being launched; absence of public profile
- Ticket sales: BPT; theatre wire
- VIT
- Community box office (fringe)
- Fringe box office plan
- Why do all the plays happen at the same time?
- We are competing against nature and hockey and rain

YOUTH

- Attend a theatre- youth
- Young companies
- Youth company-wide presentation
- Education- dialogue with post-secondary schools
- Loss of funding to engage schools is critical issue-> to create theatre-going families
- Importance of post-secondary theatre0 schools have helped foster
- Diverse students
- Young audiences
- Youth- reduction in economically accessible fees- revenue operated
- Touring in schools

- Education + acceptance at schools- youth
- Arts education is a priority
- Arts and music in schools
- Youth- struggling- meaningful engagement so important for young people
- Schools at theatres
- Professionals in schools
- Government getting in way of elementary school presence
- Programs (education) being cut
- Theatre + art in education system
- Arts in education (get into schools)

MARKETING

- Good direct outreach
- 2009- After the quake- direct outreach
- Stop complaining and deal with reality; this is the size of the audience
- Get theatre out there- for all
- Authentic belfry awareness: B4Play - FREE; Cast and pros discuss themes; Partner with CBC; broadcast/podcast
- A unified website? Something like indietheatre.com, etc.
- WEBSITE? -> to display ALL venues and production companies
- Tourism broadcasts nature not art; theatre should be part of tourism
- Budgets low on marketing, high on word of mouth, social media
- Exchange flyers, cross promotion
- Portals- web, TV, posters
- Partnership with Theatre BC
- Social media- increasing dialogue
- More exposure across Canada and vice versa
- Common calendar
- Indie theatre directory
- Online hub for all shows/companies
- Ad swaps
- Theatre Club
- Sell/marketing new work
- Affordable advertising
- Cross promotion
- Comp the concierges!
- Newslettering
- Unconventional media sources
- Known as an arts city

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT – MAKING A SCENE 2015

Missing - no community ownership//stakes

Missing - corporate involvement

Missing - marketing

Missing - branding "theatre"

Missing - barriers, cost, engaging people that aren't engaged//could be cool//engaging
Missing - relevance
Missing - citywide engagement (eg NYC)
Missing - what is our promise?
Missing - diversity
Missing - shared accessibility//box office//infrastructure
Missing - accessibility dialogue
Vision - In 2014, the theatre has conveyed to every resident in Vancouver that these are our stories, our community, our theatre//sense of belonging//"come and see what we're doing//city of culture & arts//civic pride//broader audience base//strive for excellence always//incorporating technology

Barriers - Indifference - it's not for me
Barriers - Fear - too expensive
Barriers - Don't want to talk to people
Barriers - Don't want to leave the house
Barriers - Why should I care?
Barriers - Perception of value - Lack of knowledge
Barriers - lost a sense of culture (did we ever have it?)
Barriers - reciprocity - lack of respect
Barriers - no central arts hub
Barriers - seen as passive
Barriers - "art" is a separate part of life
Barriers - how we discuss//describe the experience
Barriers – funding

First steps - awareness of season (theatre community) - all shows increasing knowledge
First steps - talk about theatre as an experience, not just what the particular show is about
First steps - seeing more theatre - for our audience//for ourselves//a "see seven" - type Vancouver pass//encouraging people to see more theatre from more varied companies
First steps - collective approach to communications plan//central hub for communications with info//news about theatre
First steps - on line database of information
First steps - in current newsletters promote one other show
First steps - World Theatre Day - offer a money-back guarantee
First steps - Focus group of community individuals to deliver three measurables by 2025: 1. Vision - where does the theatre community see itself in 2025; road map for theatre; masterplan for Metro Vancouver; 2.Branding - determine the brand that supports the vision; 3.brand standards - 100% buy-in//adopt//support by theatre community in support of brand; 4. Determine tactics to deliver #3.
First steps - Theatre directory in every program
First steps - continuous dialogue

What's missing - become experts at advocating for ourselves

What's missing - identify and develop our advocates in the community//audience champions//engaged board members

What's missing - develop new platforms to reach audiences

What's missing - accessibility (funding and physical)

What's missing - managing expectations (whom do we serve?)

Vision - full houses!

Vision - shared understanding of community and public engagement

Vision - theatre in every neighbourhood serving diverse groups

Vision - theatre as a social event

Vision - having a lobbyist who speaks on behalf of the community

Vision - eventizing (theatre as an exciting commodity to the whole community)

Vision - quantifiable #'s of investments

Vision - other sectors and ministries (health and education) seeing value in partnership

First Steps - theatre advocate at community events

First Steps - utilizing testimonials of existing audiences and asking questions

First Steps - developing audiences as participants

First Steps - Nourish development of TYA creators (education and collaboration)

First Steps - Online resources for audiences (links to websites, reviews and more info!)

First Steps - Active Challenges: speak to one person a day about the value of theatre//bring someone new to a show

First Steps - Branding and PR as a a community (#artsmatter)

First Steps - open house day - theatre crawl

First Steps - campaign that illustrates the importance of arts to kids

First Steps - develop a Live Theatre Promotional Campaign - video as one component (NOTE: Andy Thompson & Sinziana Corozel interested in taking this on)