

ASCA & Creative Scotland - Meeting Minutes

Date:

25 August 2020

Meeting Attendees:

Laura Mackenzie-Stuart (LMS) – Creative Scotland, Head of Theatre

Katy Koren (KK) – Scottish Rep, LCA & Steering Group Member, ASCA & Director at Gilded Balloon

Jay Lafferty (JL) – Steering Group Member, ASCA & Comedian

Ray Bradshaw (RB) – Steering Group Member, ASCA & Comedian

Agenda & pre-meeting info:

please note: due to GDPR, personal information has been redacted from these minutes

3. Barriers to applying to Creative Scotland

- Ray Bradshaw multi award winning comic will speak to his experience of starting the application process for his show Deaf Comedy Fam - a show delivered in BSL and spoken English. Which won an Innovation Award at the Adelaide Fringe. Ray will discuss why he decided not to continue his application process with Creative Scotland for his UK wide tour.
- We will give examples of the lack of representation of stand up comedy and the multiple barriers that comics have faced applying to Creative Scotland. All of which have resulted in a decade long feeling of 'why bother'

4. Successful Application

- Viv Gee Bridging Bursaries Ref: ce9b5329-1e83-ea11-99e5-2818782538e4
Viv was successful in gaining the award. Viv is a full-time comic and teaches comedy at Strathclyde University. We would be interested to understand why Viv's application was successful as she received no feedback to say if it was for her stand up or spoken word work that she was given her grant.

5. AOB and setting date for next meeting

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Laura mentioned that the examples that had been sent in were representative of the range of issues or reasons that have meant that these applications were unsuccessful.

- Jay explained a key concern for the comedy sector was that comedy was not funded in its own right but venues with comedy programmes did receive funding which is not what the sector needs.
- Jay also explained that comedy touring has become financially un-viable as no guarantees are offered anymore and the risk is all on the comedian touring.

Laura explained the same concerns for other sectors apart from work which is commissioned by venues that they receive funding for.

- Jay explained another key concern about the lack of comedy representative on assessor panels that understand the comedy sector and the type of projects should receive funding.

Laura explained that not all art forms can be represented on the panels but LMS understood the want for that but wasn't sure it was feasible.

LMS went on to explain the key thing in order to receive any funding from Creative Scotland – the applicants have to show that there is a public benefit or impact that would not have been achieved if funding was not received.

Laura went on to discuss the issues with the Bridging Bursaries applications that were sent in by ASCA. Key thing that Bridging Bursaries were designed for the not-for-profit sector.

- KK explained that this was one of the key frustrations from our sector that CS used the Bridging Bursaries as an example of how they have been supporting comedy during this time but if they are for not-for-profit individuals, then it will never be able to support comedians. KK explained that CS shouldn't be claiming this if it's not suitable to 'commercial' comedians or performers.

Laura explained the Bridging Bursaries were set up to plug an immediate gap to support people as quickly as possible when the pandemic first happened. It was a one-time fund that will not be repeated.

- Jay went on to explain that we find ourselves in the comedy sector in a difficult position to encourage the community to even apply for anything at Creative Scotland as it's widely known and reported the Creative Scotland does not fund comedy.
- Jay explained the need for staff training internally at Creative Scotland as the ASCA has multiple examples of staff telling comedians 'not to bother applying' or that CS 'do not fund comedy' despite the LMS stating differently and CS socials stating differently.

Laura acknowledged that she would discuss with the small team at Creative Scotland to ensure the understanding is across the board that Creative Scotland does not only fund certain art forms. LMS explained that their communications have been moving away for some time from the specific art forms and she would make sure this was understood across their communications in future.

- Ray explained his personal experience of applying for funding with Creative Scotland and why he felt his show and subsequent tour should have been eligible for funding from Creative Scotland.
- Ray explained that he felt he couldn't apply for funding as a comedy show as it wouldn't be taken seriously by CS so considered applying as Spoken Word or Story telling which CS have funded in the past.

Laura explained the importance of understanding the work that gets funded and why and emphasised that it was not down to the art form. It's about the impact of the work and how that impacts, and public benefit is articulated in the funding applications is key.

- Katy suggested the ASCA can help our sector be better equipped to understand this and help with applying in theory. However, since it was a voluntary Association, this might be tricky.

Laura suggested she would be happy to do a briefing session with the comedy sector in the future. To help them apply for the Open Fund or other pots in the future that may become available.

- Jay requested a commitment from CS that they improve their communications in order to encourage our sector to apply rather than discourage it. Jay explained there was a huge amount of apathy in the sector and us trying to get people to apply would be difficult due to the overarching feeling our sector has and the so few results we have seen.
- Jay mentioned the specific example of Donald Alexander asking for help when applying for the Bridging Bursary and he received none. It was not encouraging for the community.

Laura explained that she would discuss this with the team. She also explained that it needed to be made clear to the comedy sector that it is not in Creative Scotland's remit to fund commercial projects or individuals unless a specific fund is given to them by Scot Gov for that purpose.

Meeting Action Points:

- Katy to write minutes and share with LMS, JL & RB for approval before sharing with the Live Comedy Association & Association of Scottish Comedic Arts Steering groups.
- LMS to discuss communications issues with the Creative Scotland team and ensure their messaging of funding comedy is clear and reinforced across their teams.
- LMS to suggest date that might work at the beginning of October for a Q&A session for the comedy sector on the Open Fund or other funds that might be suitable. ASCA & LMS to discuss over email dates & agendas for sessions.

Meeting End.