

Report

Directors Anonymous

Rod Dixon, 25 January 2015

Joining me in this

Amy Golding, Mariana Bennett, Sophie Gall, Tom McDonagh, Juliet Cowan, David Cottis, Anna Mors, Amy Claire Tasker, Dean Rodgers, Julie Bergevin, Tom, Catherine Fowles, Rebecca Gould, Phelim Mc Dermott, Emma Bernard, Jonathan and several bumble bees

I called this conversation because I was feeling a bit lonely - I never get the chance to talk to other directors and find out what goes on in their rehearsal rooms and I wanted some reassurance - after decades of doing this I still wake up and feel a TOTAL FRAUD.

Within five minutes I felt better and I didn't need any molre therapy.

It was agreed that Open Space techniques and therefore D&D has had a major influence on how we hold the rehearsal room and make a stimulating, collaborative and non-hierarchical space for making.

Amy talked of not having a plan (but having one in her head in case a plan didn't materialise!) - setting the day's work together and the open question being - what do we need/want from the day.

Phelim talked of 'being present' but not in control. We agreed that ultimately we want to give the actors the power to 'do' - or 'play' as Lecoq would describe it. Most people have developed the confidence to go say 'I don't know' we are moving away from the traditional idea that the director has all the answers - thank God!

A lot of discussion about 'finding our own way' - letting go of the Katie Mitchell, Mike

Alfreds handbooks - obviously allowing influences in but being brave enough to kick away these crutches - but it was lovely to hear people with years of experience still say that it's good to have these and they are reassuring.

I asked the question - do we need these MA's in Directing??

Unanimous agreement that some were useful (Birkbeck) but only because it puts trainees in theatres as assistant directors.

this led to a long discussion - support and advice session about assistant directing - what it means, what is the role - Rebecca Gould's big piece of advice was "ask yourself - what do I want to get out of this?" and have the confidence to ask the director - "how can I be useful?" OR suggest to them what you can do to help /tell them what you've identified needs help.

The question was asked "But how do I get to BE an assistant?"

Emma suggested stalking (my word actually!) - choose a director whose work you love and admire and email them a personal request saying why you want to work with them etc etc.

It was agreed that we all feel very guilty and awkward about the inability of our projects to pay for an assistant and that they sit in there unpaid and often crucial to the work as another pair of eyes.

I asked the question - what do we do to make this fairer (so many assistant directors are rich kids who are friends of the director, friends of a board member blah blah.... what about those talented young directors who can't afford an MA can't afford three weeks rehearsal unpaid perhaps we should blow the whistle where this happens - and it happens everywhere. Should we insist on an assistant being in the budget for - I do.

We talked about the SDUK report of low pay for directors. Have we made a rod for our

own backs making it even harder to get work or for fringe theatre to say well you can only have 2 weeks rehearsal because your fee has gone up no answers to this I'm afraid. There isn't enough money in the Arts - simple as! THERE WILL BE AN OPEN SPACE LED BY SDUK AT JERWOOD SPACE ON FEB 15 10AM TO 6PM FACILITATED BY PHELIM

Finally a question from one participant : "How do you overcome obstacles such as being foreign, a woman and the answer was make work about who you are - raise the debate about this unfairness/struggle/injustice in your work.

There were many more good points and helpful pieces of advice from the experienced directors in the circle - THANKS EVERYONE.

I am still a director...the addiction hasn't been cured.

Tags:

directors, Directing, Phelim McDermott, Directors, SDUK, directing