

## **Seminars: Strategic marketing workshops**

### **Matthew Lawton, National Theatre Wales; William Norris, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; Claire Heafford, The Papered Parlour** ***Connecting marketing and programming to engage audiences***

Matthew Lawton is communications director at National Theatre Wales. Previously, he was a freelance consultant for a wide range of music and arts festivals across the UK. As part of somethingcreatives.com he developed a wide range of projects including the world's only inflatable church. He is known for creating unique and innovative campaigns that work in tandem with the narrative of the productions including the ground-breaking 72hr event *The Passion* in Port Talbot and recently the *Hyper Connected Theatre* production *The Radicalisation Of Bradley Manning*.

Will Norris is communications director at the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Previously, he worked at the London Philharmonic Orchestra, in various marketing roles from 2001-2005 where he launched the student scheme, NOISE. Since joining OAE he has been closely involved with The Night Shift, the OAE's student scheme Attitude, and the themed weeks at its Headquarters, Kings Place. He is currently working on the development of the OAE's new concert series The Works, the first event of which took place in October 2011. William is a member of Spitalfields Music's Programme Advisory Group, co-chairs the Association of British Orchestras marketing manager meetings and has given presentations for a range of organisations as well as contributing to debates at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Young People in the Arts and writing for *Gig* and *It's all in the delivery*.

Claire Heafford is the Co-Founder and Director of London based artist studios, The Papered Parlour. She spends much of her time researching and testing new business models in the arts, and is particularly interested in the relationship between branding, programming and audience development. As well as running the Clapham-based studios, she has also worked as a freelance creative programmer and communications specialist for the Crafts Council, V&A Museum of Childhood and V&A, and was formerly the press and marketing manager at Pump House Gallery and marketing and communications officer at Battersea Arts Centre.

This was a case-study led session providing three examples of companies that have effectively combined marketing and programming to present things in a way that maximises audience engagement.

#### **Matthew Lawton**

My first ever day at National Theatre Wales (NTW) was to attend the AMA Conference in Leicester so it's good to be back here three years later to tell you about our progress.

NTW has no education and outreach department as such. Our ethos is that community engagement should be at the heart of everything we do. When forming the company, we thought for a long time about what a national theatre company would look like if it was co-owned and co-authored by the people of the nation. Could every ticket holder be a stakeholder in the company, and how could we involve and engage with communities on a much deeper level than ever before?

At the core of NTW's Communication strategy is the importance of networks. We launched the company with its own social network in 2009, months before we put in place our website or the announcement of any artistic work.

The focus of building key networks is to engage people in a community building approach as opposed to a 'sales driven' one this in turn would generate mass ownership and participation, a sense of belonging and pride to our new organisation NTW. Through these networks we hoped to multiply each marketing initiative ten-fold.

The aim was to maximise these networks in order to have a wider impact and reach on potential audience, individual participation and levels of engagement than traditional marketing and communications methods alone.

The name we gave to this idea of building self supporting 'community networks' engaged in the activity of the company is TEAM. We could never have planned just how much impact and influence TEAM has had on the whole organisation and how much the idea has now grown into something much, much bigger.



In a nutshell, NTW TEAM is a Wales-wide community network which engages with all levels of NTW's activities, rooted in a model of local community leadership.

Usually, a theatre company or other arts organisation would create a series of organisational structures around a programme of work to try and ensure community engagement has an extensive audience through education, outreach, marketing and audience development. At NTW, we had the opportunity to do things differently, we decided to work instead on a community-centred model, where all of our work is focused on engaging people, not just with individual shows, but with the company as a whole, and on giving people real stakes in everything we do. TEAM engagement is an ever increasing set of ripples in a pond.

The thinking behind the NTW TEAM and the overall ethos of the company lies in current movements toward ground-up planning and group organisation. Web 2.0 networks, from Wikipedia to open source programming demonstrate ways in which specialists and amateurs can work together to develop important public cultural initiatives. Likewise, grassroots social movements are impacting on everything from the US elections to the development of the World Social Forum.

In the arts, a participatory and interactive ethos has become one of the most significant cultural phenomena of recent years. In projects such as Anthony Gormley's '*One and Other*' (the Fourth Plinth) and the work of companies such as Punchdrunk, audiences become interactive performers and viewers become the artwork.

Whereas the community art of the past was often seen as an addendum to 'real' art, or, in recent years, an educational or social application of artistic activity; these new interactive art works and companies often seem at the forefront of artistic innovation – the closest thing to an avant-garde we have.

The emergence of interactive online forms suggests that these developments will only become more widespread. In the meantime, with less fanfare perhaps, a range of arts organisations have been experimenting in forms of cultural democracy.

In Sweden, the Riksteatern, a huge public institution providing touring productions to a national network of venues, has been instigating radical experiments in community decision-making in relation to its productions.

Contact, the Manchester theatre with a focus on young people, has developed a generation of young leaders who take a key role in everything from strategic planning to delivery of programmes to hiring staff and board members.

In New York, the small but multi-award-winning Foundry Theatre spends half its time producing Obie-winning avant-garde shows and the other half running public debates on key issues for local citizens and in Rio de Janeiro, companies such as AfroReggae are led by former participants who have used culture to transform their communities.

Again these projects are very different from older traditional version of community arts where interventions were often led by highly educated political activists.

### Assembly

We set out to deliver pioneering approach inspired by all of these initiatives. We have been working with communities and local community advocates who participate in building relationships with us amongst their own networks in turn helping us to reach new audiences through a number of events created and run by them. We work with face-to-face to develop meaningful relationships with the company, helping to build communities and develop skills, engagement and participation.

In our first year, we developed a strand of work called 'The Assembly', a series of events that offers participants an opportunity to experience theatre as a space for exploration and discussion. These ran alongside our season of work of twelve shows in twelve locations across the whole of Wales.

In each location, we discovered and worked with a group of new TEAM members to find out about the important questions facing that community right now. We did this by digging in and being in the location, having face-to-face meetings, setting up empty shop projects and most of all being open, friendly and accessible whether that was online or in person.

The Assembly questions that came from those communities which were answered by the project were:

- *When does the future start?* Blackwood
- *Is Swansea made of dreams or ambitions?* Swansea
- *Is Cardiff a young city?* Cardiff
- *What's left after the summer tides?* Barmouth
- *What does a Welsh person sound like?* Prestatyn
- *What is Brecon guarding and protecting?* Brecon
- *What is a Cofi Christmas?* Camarthan
- *What is Milford's Energy?* Milford Haven
- *Does Butetown want to cross the tracks?* Butetown

(I'll come back to this later as this was an important milestone for us as a company)



Assemblies were held in pubs, empty shops, disused banks, marquees, bus stations and ice-cream parlours and led to the creation of a radio station in Barmouth and a filmmakers' club in Prestatyn.

### TEAM and Assembly outcomes

Several TEAM members have gone on to employment both within and outside NTW, and the whole company is committed to supporting professional development wherever needed. This has included guiding people towards appropriate training and education, support with writing CVs and preparing for interviews, provision of targeted training and mentoring.

While many TEAM members will want to remain volunteers with the organisation, we believe that it also important to offer support with their own professional aspirations. Ever increasing support from TEAM members to help each other and set up their own joint projects, for instance the local radio station being set up in Barmouth was

supported by the Butetown TEAM as they had experience of running a community radio station.

TEAM is now fundamentally part of the DNA of everyone's job role. All NTW departments, staff, associates, productions and projects engage with community members, embedding them into all levels of our work. This includes opportunities in NTW productions, online, communications dept, administration, finance and the production department as well.

At the end of our first year, we got the key TEAM leaders together to discuss what was important to them. This information has formed the basis of strategy for the future of TEAM and the organisation.

[Matthew then played a video which showed what happened on that day]

### Assembly Year 2

Adbul, the new creative associate for NTW, runs the new incarnation of Assembly. We have moved the project forward and rather than going into a community and finding out what we think the question is, we now ask communities to pitch what project they would like help with. Companies and individuals are invited to submit proposals, of which three will be shortlisted at each regional submissions stage.

The public are then asked to vote for their preferred project online, and the project with the most votes will be given the green light.

The organisers have to pitch using video and images on our dedicated website and then market their idea to their communities to get votes.

[Matt showed an extract from one of the pitches]

### The story of DeGaby

Overall, the piece will be a poetic re-creation of a much misunderstood urban area in Cardiff, and an insight into the lives, hopes and fears of young Somali men. One of the most successful outcomes of the Assembly and TEAM journey has been working with the DeGaby Poets.

We met the poets at the Butetown Assembly and we started building links within the Somali community through delivering spoken events in conjunction with them. The poets are now on track to put on a large site-specific exploration of the Butetown/Cardiff area next March with a focus on the young lives and dreams that flow through it. Music and poetry will be central to the performance.

Audience will encounter intimate moments of performance and spectacular larger-scale events as the streets are brought to life by the kinds of young men that many people try to avoid. For example, a moment where an audience member is exploring the contents of a thousand 'messages in a bottle' that seem to have washed up on

the Cardiff Bay shore might give way to another moment where hundreds of people burst into the same song on dozens of street corners, as a huge image of the sea is projected onto Butetown's largest tower block.

Without the real trust and understanding between us and the DeGaby poets, this would never really have got off the ground. Through TEAM, Assembly and passionately working to put people at the heart of the organisation we wouldn't have had the success we've had in the past three years.

@matt\_ntw

### **William Norris**

I'm going to talk about the way we have approached developing products for specific audiences at the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, how the communications and marketing team has been involved and indeed, led this and what it has meant for my role within the organisation.

I'd like to start off with a blog I found ([properdiscord.com](http://properdiscord.com)) which illustrates some of the frustrating aspects of concert going – much of which can be applied to other arts events.

**5:00pm** – I leave work early to make my 6pm dinner reservation

**6:00** – I'm stuck in traffic, and call ahead to get them to hold my table

**7:30** – It's just as well nobody wants dessert, because it is time to pick up tickets. Dinner comes to \$125, including tip.

**7:35** – I arrive at the venue, straight into the ticket-pick-up queue. You can't get to the restrooms or the gift shop without a ticket, so I just hop on one leg for a moment.

**7:40** – I've got tickets, I've had a pee, and it's time to mill around with old people, all seemingly lost because the terms used to describe where you might find your seats are incomprehensible.

**7:55** – The orchestra shuffles on stage as if nobody can see them. For reasons that aren't entirely clear, they are wearing tailcoats. I feel a bit under-dressed in an outfit that only cost \$2,500. People practice their instruments. In principle, I'm in favour of that, although this doesn't seem like the time.

**9:35** – I need to pee, so the interval provides welcome respite. I don't know how all these old people manage. There's always a long queue at the ladies, but not at the gents. This seems to be true of all concert halls. Somebody should look into that.

**9:40** – There is nothing to do in the interval except top up on fluids, so we sit in the crowded lobby and I try to convince my +1 that Sibelius is a good composer.

**10:00** – We're back inside. Pianist Yuja Wang comes on stage and redeems the whole affair with a rendition of Prokofiev's second piano concerto that I will never forget. At the end of each movement, we suppress the urge to fill the awkward silence with rapturous applause for reasons that nobody can quite remember.

**10:30** – It's over. Almost everybody stands up to clap, then almost everybody leaves.

**12:45** – I'm at home and in bed, trying to sleep but somehow plagued by the notion that my evening out cost \$350, and that it took eight hours to hear 40 minutes of good music. I could have bought Yuja's CD for \$10.

I've read this out because it's useful sometimes to have the obvious pointed out to us. We accept the way things are because it's normal to us, but if we're designing things for new audiences we need to be self-critical and to put ourselves in their shoes.

To back this up, I asked some of my friends what they found most annoying about concert going:

- Queues at the bar at half time
- Stuffy atmosphere
- Overly long concerts
- Programmes where they make you sit through some drivel in 1st half so you only get to see the big concerto in 2nd half
- Orchestras without any hotties in the 2nd violins...
- Pretentious bores that are just attending by virtue of some corporate hospitality and have no real interest in the music
- Lack of a hot dinner and time to eat
- Uncomfortable seats
- Concerts that drag on for hours
- Handbags on stage
- Orchestras ambling on in no particular order with players looking less than happy to be there
- Dismal programme notes, being unable to laugh, cheer or respond freely, not being able to take drinks in like you can at the theatre
- Not enough interval time to eat and no proper food on offer

A few quick words about the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE):

- Established in 1986
- Play Western Classical Music
- No single music director
- Governed by its players
- Period instruments
- Tour across UK and internationally

### Classical music and audience engagement

This is the way that classical music is usually done. There will be an artistic director or principal conductor who jets around the world and might fly in to the orchestra for a few weeks each year and will tell the chief executive or general manager what is to be played. At some point they might tell marketing what will be in next year's programme. Then the orchestra will find it on their schedules and the audience will listen to it.

So the people who are doing the programming often have little or no contact with the audience because they're jetting off conducting other orchestras.

Classical music is an artform that is always going to be more about the audience being on the receiving end. What we can do though is to programme according to audience needs, find new ways for the audience to connect with the music, and develop experiences tailored for specific audiences.

I'm going to talk mainly about *The Night Shift*.

*The Night Shift* started in 2006, a joint project between the CEO, the marketing team (as it was then) and the projects team. Since then it has become a project owned and run by the (now re-named) communications team.

It came about for a number of reasons. We wanted to produce something for students. When I arrived there had also been a long-standing desire to produce something more informal and there was also a more esoteric reason following on from our *Listening in Paris* series. This series examined what happened in Paris audiences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because audiences haven't always been the respectful audiences they are now. Back in the eighteenth century, they were quite riotous and all sorts of things were going on in the auditorium. Then in the nineteenth century they were gradually 'tamed'.

We had played the music from that era, but not allowed the audience to do something different, so we thought this was a good opportunity. At this point I'd like to say we did loads of research and planning, but we didn't. We just decided to go for it and sometimes I think that has a value.

The aims were to attract a younger audience (18-35) and an audience which is culturally aware but not necessarily attending classical music.

So, *The Night Shift* is an hour long informal concert starting at 10pm, presented from the stage with music in the foyer before and after the concert. The conductor will talk to the performers, soloists and the audience. You can bring your drinks in, which is radical. It usually takes place after the 'normal' concert. Crucially, it's about changing the presentation and the packaging but not the music. We still play full works.

[Will played a video which provided an overview of the series].

One of the other things we wanted to investigate was how this approach might affect the performance and the orchestra.

### Marketing the Night Shift

We decided we needed a sub-brand and logo. The word 'orchestra' was enough to put people off, let alone the words 'of the age of enlightenment'. In fact, in research later we found that the words were a big disincentive.

We wanted a clubby contemporary feel to the series and we wanted a visual language that the audience was familiar with and pictures of the audience so that they can see that there are people like them that go to these concerts. There was a mini-website with lots of background information and clips.

And thinking about how we talk about it I came across this club flyer (right). I'm not a committed clubber and although I recognise the first name, the rest mean nothing to me and I have no idea what the music will be like – and I think it's the same with a lot of our print – long lists of names that mean nothing to most people.

We kept the pricing simple and cheap. It was possible to buy tickets by text, you could sit on stage. There were student tickets and you got a free beer as well. There were discounts for groups etc.



The flyers had quite a clubby feel. In a way we wanted them to be ambiguous. We didn't want them to say 'classical music'. The concert itself is a little more engaging than a regular concert as we have a presenter, and we talk to the audience and sometimes take questions too.

But we can also go a bit beyond that, helping to generate interest on social media outside the concert. Lots of my colleagues unfairly call these things stunts... So for example some of the things we've done are:

- Give the audience disposable cameras so that they can take pictures of the night out and we then put them up online
- Get people to vote for a piece of music
- Asked people how the evening makes them feel and then taken a picture of them afterwards [right]
- Run a competition called 'Pod Idol' to find a voice and presenter for our podcasts



- Had mobile billboards going around town
- Run a crowd-funding campaign – we raised a small amount of money for a pub tour. It also engaged people in what we were trying to do.
- Asked people to vote for their favourite piece of print
- Established a user group
- Given out temporary tattoos
- Provided free merchandise – we’ve received a bit of stick for this but it’s a nice way for people to take a memento home with them. I realised that this had worked when I went back to my flat one evening and someone came out wearing a Night Shift badge.
- Established a loyalty card – like a coffee card – you get stamps per show

### The audience

#### The opposite of a regular classical music audience

- 82% aged 34 or less
- 58% aged 18 to 24
- 15%-20% attending a classical music event for the first time
- Doubled from first year to second year of the series
- 50% growth from second to third year
- By end of fourth year over 8000 admissions

We’ve done lots of research. Some of it has been free because we’ve been approached by PHD students etc.

One of the researchers took a group of people who had never been to classical music to a series of concerts, one of which was The Night Shift, and afterwards she did a focus group with them. The Night Shift was the preferred concert format of those new to classical music. The people in the focus group talked a lot about the importance of the rapport and interaction with the orchestra, which you normally get in pop and rock concerts but is rare in classical performances. They felt it made it personal to them and they also said that the existing audience in other shows can be one of the most off-putting things about attending.

Our own evaluation highlighted the importance of minimising the risk. So that was things like making the concerts short, putting other kinds of music in the same light and the ticket prices. Word of mouth was the most significant way that people found out about it which is why all the ‘stunts’ were important. It overturned pre-conceptions about classical music and was even described as ‘cool’.

The press liked it:

*“Concerts like this ensure classical music’s future”*

*(The Independent October 2010)*

### Key issues, challenges and learning

It was a new thing to make a concert for a specific audience. In the early days it was quite difficult to scrape together an audience and it was tempting to go to the friends but we had to be strong because they would have brought all their usual ways of behaving at the concert and it would have diluted the product. There was a need to communicate with that established audience, telling that this was happening but it wasn't for them.

Internal communications also needed attention because the orchestra frequently had to play two concerts in an evening. We also found that negative feedback would be quite powerful to begin with. A couple of comments from the regular audience could outweigh the impact of this new audience that was attending. It took time for everyone to understand the importance of this new audience.

One of the hardest things was to get people to put themselves in the audience members' shoes and to realise this was a different audience. We had lots of comments that it was 'too patronising' 'simplistic' etc.

It was also quite controversial – the idea of separating the audience.

Evaluation was also important. It helped us to prove our aims to funders and press and get nominated for awards.

### Developments

Although the South Bank is quite friendly, but some people still might find it too much of a barrier to overcome to go there, so we've been to other venues: The Roundhouse, Wilton's Music Hall, Village Underground and a pub tour.

I talked earlier about the impact on the orchestra and one of our lead violinists wrote about it in The Guardian.

*'This is about empowerment. Audiences want to have a bit more ownership of what they're listening to. The best performances involve a three-way relationship - the music (i.e. what's on the page) the audience and the performers.'*

The wider impacts have included the tone we've adopted generally and we've become braver with our imagery.

Next season, we have a new series called *The Works*. We found that when we did our research with *The Night Shift*, many of the audience were older than we imagined - 35-55. They liked the idea of the event and the ambience but they felt it was a bit too late for them and they felt out of place. So, we realised there was an opportunity for a different format. The *Works* starts at 8pm and it's slightly more structured though retaining some of the interactive elements that people like.

The way we approach artistic planning now is a more fluid process. The Chief Executive and Players decide the repertoire but the communications and projects teams make lots of suggestions about presentation, extras and context.

It's changed my own role as communications director. I'm selecting and booking venues which I think are appropriate for our audiences, booking artists for the pre and post concert music. It's no longer about a product to sell but more about being given a base product which we can refine. That goes for our regular concerts as well.

The communications team has been about representing the needs of the audience to the rest of the organisation, especially the orchestra.

### **Claire Heafford**

*The Papered Parlour* is the name of some London based artists studios in Clapham. We also host weekly crafts workshops for the general public and collaborate with arts organisations to put on craft based events in their spaces. I'm going to talk about one of these collaborations with the Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green.

[Claire played a video introducing the project]

These two events came about because we were approached by the Museum of Childhood who had included a craft activity in another late night event which they had done. So we were invited to discuss how we might present craft in a similar sort of event.

In the end, we ran two 'lates' on the first Thursday of the month as part of Time Out's initiative in which several galleries and museums are open late on this day. The museum was keen to work with us partly because of our own strong existing audience and that by working with us they would get access to a different sort of audience. For us, it was great to be able to put on a larger scale event in a new space as we are restricted by space.

The idea that was developed was to take over the museum and cram it full of craft activity in as many of the spaces as possible.

The audience engagement objectives were influenced by the museum's observation of passers-by on the first Thursday of the month who were going to the late night gallery openings but they weren't coming to the museum and so it aimed to reach these people. So specifically, this meant

- Reach a new adult audience through our craft specific networks
- 'Craft Takeover' designed to animate the museum's spaces and collections
- Attract 20 – 35 year olds
- Attract Vyner Street audience
- Target of 400 visitors for each event

There were five key ways in which I went about programming the event as I wanted to make sure that marketing and programming were linked right from the beginning.

1. Be specific about the audience we are trying to attract – the 20-35 year olds going to Vyner Street
2. Take an issue and then curate the event around the issue. So there were two events. The first was based on ethical fashion and the second on self-publishing. I wanted to choose semi-political issues so that there was a 'charge' – connecting with the values of the audience – and the audience connecting with each other and their shared values.
3. Borrow a very basic marketing technique - choosing a target audience and then tapping into those networks. I tried to find the most interesting people working in the fields set up by the issues that we were curating around and I worked on the basis that the more people that I programmed who came from the existing social and professional networks of the most interesting people working in those fields, the more ready made the audience would be. The idea was that the programme would deliver an audience rather than demanding that people come along.
4. I tried to think hard about the spread of activities in the event, providing a wide range that a number of people could take part in - from shopping, live music and a bar, to workshops, talks and a panel discussion – so that people could be sociable and soak up the atmosphere.
5. I considered that there would be a tipping point at which it would go from an activity classed in the audiences mind as 'interesting' to 'not to be missed'. In this case, I felt that the tipping point meant inviting around 30 individuals in the field to perform, run workshops, speak, exhibit or sell their work.

We then put together a very basic press and marketing campaign in collaboration with the museum – brochures, websites, social networks and 5000 flyers.



The slightly unconventional programming combined with this marketing resulted in it far exceeding our expectations. So we had 900 people at each event, when we had been aiming for 400.

It was run on a minimal budget. Each event including opening the museum in the evening cost £1500 all together.

## Summary

- In a time of reduced budgets, large organisations can maximise budgets by partnering with smaller organisations to deliver audience development and programming objectives.
- These kinds of partnership are an efficient use of resources, exploiting the networks of smaller organisations whilst providing them with a large venue and operations support.
- Network Programming and identifying the ‘not to be missed’ tipping point at the programming stage is an efficient way to programme because it delivers audiences rather than demands them, ultimately saving time and money for marketing departments.
- Network Programming does not have to mean ‘commercial programming’ – rather it’s a holistic approach to artistic programming that includes marketing, pr and audience development strategies from the start of the programming process.

## Questions and discussion

Kate Sanderson (chair) opened this up for debate, commenting on the importance that all of the speakers made about the structures of the organisation and saying how much she liked the idea of ‘delivering’ an audience rather than putting on an event and trying to demand one.

[Due to technological difficulties, it was not possible to repeat the early set of questions exactly as asked by the questioners as these were inaudible. The summarised questions were repeated from the stage]

*Delegate: How did you [WM] manage to keep people going in the early stages despite the negative feedback?*

WN: It was interesting because the first two events didn’t work very well to be honest and we were tempted to give up. However, the third one suddenly clicked and it was getting to that third event that was important. There were two keen advocates – myself and someone in the projects team so it was very much about being dogged and keeping going. Talking to the performers and keeping them on board was crucial too. At every stage we always explained what we were trying to do. Some of the people who were most sceptical turned out to be the biggest advocates.

*Delegate: What made the third one work?*

WN: It helped that we had a good presenter. We had also learned things – the first two had classical djs and that didn’t work so we changed the pre and post show music. It was lots of things – small refinements which suddenly clicked.

Delegate: *What are you doing with the new audiences you've generated? Are you moving them on?*

WN: The aim is not to get them in on something easy and then to move them on to the 'hard stuff'. They're different audiences that want different things. If they want to listen to Beethoven 5 at 10 with a beer or at 7 in more formality, that's their choice. We've decided to keep them as relatively discrete audiences.

Delegate: *How did you [CH] work with the museum to make sure that the audience didn't just disappear but carried on attending?*

CH: It's an interesting question because the museum saw them as stand-alone events. The problem was that they didn't have the staffing resources to do it in an ongoing way. The lasting impact was that they have decided to do these sorts of events in partnership with other organisations, especially if they already have a loyal following. They also came to understand Facebook and Twitter better and see its importance in creating a buzz around an event. That question is about budgets of museums at the moment. Sometimes smaller organisations have flexibility to achieve things that larger ones can't.

Delegate: *How much of the recruitment to The Assembly [ML] was random and how much of it were people who were deliberately recruited as representative of certain communities?*

ML: Within the first year, we spent a lot of time going into the community and working. In each location there was a show on already, so we used The Assembly as a way of going in at the grassroots to work with people that hadn't been engaged so far and didn't normally go to theatre. We went in and tried to get a feel for the community and the location, meet key stakeholders and work with those ambassadors. As we are not a building based company it was also really important to be in the heart of the community - whether that might be inhabiting a disused shop or resident in a café. It was a natural fluid approach. The way that people would then talk to each other led to other connections. In terms of capacity, we found that about 100 people was a good number.

Eric Hildrew, Museums Sheffield: *I admire the bravery of what you have done. People often talk about the risk that the audience is taking but it can be scary for us too, wondering if anyone will turn up! I'm interested in the OAE project. Did you have a sponsor or underwriter for it? How do you balance the financial risk?*

WN: We just did it out of our core funds originally. Everything we do loses money so it was just a question of deciding where we were going to lose money that year. We hope that doing a risky project like this might attract people in the future and it's true that we have been successful with a couple of trusts and foundations. It's interesting the point about risk, because normally our audiences book a year ahead and programme their whole life around it, whereas this audience turns up on the night.

*Delegate: How did your new brand for The Night Shift go down with the older established audience?*

WN: Well they don't get to see it much, except in the leaflet racks, because it's not targeted at them. According to our focus groups, the name and brand has gone well and we copyrighted it. There is a little bit of confusion with people wanting to find deeper meanings – especially the orchestra. The orchestra name is still in there by the way, but a little bit further into the print – just not at the top.