

Jodi Myers, Independent Consultant

Exploring organisational

Jodi Myers (www.jodimyrs.oc.uk) has many years' experience working across the arts. Having managed and programmed mixed programme multiple space venues, since March 2005 she has worked as a consultant with a wide variety of arts organisations. Previously Jodi was Director of Performing Arts at the South Bank Centre and prior to that she was Director of Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry – the largest arts centre in the UK outside London. She was also Deputy Director of Touring for the Arts Council of Great Britain with responsibility for drama. Jodi regularly mentors and coaches individual managers, producers and artists, and occasionally acts as a consultant executive theatre producer. Currently she is independent chair of the National Dance Network, a trustee of both Propeller and Graeae Theatre Companies and a governor of The Central School of Speech and Drama. Jodi returned to the AMA conference having last given keynote addresses at the AMA conferences of 1997 and 1999

This session was a space for experienced arts professionals to come together to discuss and share ideas and think afresh about organisational culture, structure, governance and systems that we might need to maximise our ability to reach and engage audiences.

More than rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic

This is a participatory session. When I was planning this session, I gave myself a working title '*More than rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic*'. The intention was to illustrate that what we need to achieve in our organisations and those we work with is a slight shift in emphasis. I want you to shake the hand of the person sitting next to you with your left hand, not your right. [Delegates do this].

It feels slightly odd, doesn't it? The other thing I'm going to ask you to do is to intertwine your fingers the way you normally do it, and then do it the other way. A lot of us would report that that feels slightly unnatural, slightly difficult. What I am trying to illustrate is that what we as practitioners, marketers, managers, need to do is just to think *slightly* differently. We don't need to undergo a radical shift; in most cases, it is about a slight change in emphasis to make the audience absolutely central to what we're doing.

One of my favourite phrases is '*Le client n'a jamais tort*' – César Ritz, *French hotelier, 1908*. It means 'the customer is never wrong'. I prefer to use that to 'the customer is always right' because I think it is much truer about our relationship with our customers. By 'customers' I mean visitors, participants, ticket purchasers and gallery attenders. The phrase 'the customer is always right' apparently comes from two leading American retailers.

[Jodi invited delegates to talk in pairs about an organisation they think has very good customer engagement, either in the arts or retail.]

Feedback:

JM: I had a fascinating experience in Waitrose, part of the John Lewis group, recently, in which I was very disappointed. It was disappointing because they have such a high reputation. They made a mistake and they didn't apologise. It was a small mistake involving a small sum of money but because I'd been so satisfied with them in the past I was really shocked. One thing this has shown me is that you can never rest on your laurels.

Delegate: *John Lewis are very good at telling us they are good at customer service but a recent experience I had with Amazon felt like more genuine customer service.*

Delegate: *I had a wonderful experience recently at Hackney Empire. I think their staff are recruited very locally and when I go there I find they have passion and energy.*

Delegate: *The British Museum seems to design their exhibitions with visitors in mind and it seems very considerate, targeted campaigns based on the kind of audiences they are going for.*

JM: I'm going to structure today's session around three different areas – culture, structure and governance - each of them examining what greater audience engagement might look like for your organisation.

Culture

In Andy McKim's keynote speech we learned how his organisation engages with the public through the Buzz Festival. I've come across an interesting example in Salisbury Arts Centre. They run an interesting programme called 'Practice'.

Delegate: *It's run by Salisbury Arts Centre in partnership with the University of Bath. I work at the university. 'Practice' is a series of events. There is an open call for artists who want to promote their work. The university pays them a small amount to cover their travel costs and they get to perform a ten minute slot. The audience, some of whom are invited from Battersea Arts Centre and other venues, as well as members of the public, can come along and comment and discuss the work. We follow some of these artists and, once the work is complete, give them performance slots and guidance for the next few years. It isn't just a one-off scratch event but there is developmental work that goes along with it.*

JM: I was talking to Sarah at Salisbury Arts Centre about the people who chose to come as audience / feedback members and she said that at the moment it is still very heavily weighted towards the industry. One of our opportunities and challenges is to try and get the general public in. One thing I took away from Andy McKim's keynote address yesterday was the vocabulary we need to use to engage audience members

to help them contribute to the development of the art form. I've spoken to one or two artists who have taken part in sessions like that and they say they are absolutely invaluable because it is very difficult to get honest, objective feedback.

As arts marketers and chief executives we are sometimes wary of how to broach that conversation with the artists but if we view ourselves as producers or potential producers of the work that is an interesting way to enter that dialogue. As well as urging people to look at the Salisbury Arts Centre web site to find out more, I would also urge people to look up 'Megalog' which is a new online magazine which has replaced their e-newsletter. It has only been going for a few months but all their back issues of 'Megalog' are on the web site and I found it a really interesting read. It continues the conversation between the artists and the audience in a safe, curated space.

Rebecca Davis, Puppet Animation Scotland: We are piloting a scheme in November in association with the Federation of Scottish Theatre which uses an audience feedback structure to develop work. It's around a formula of questions and three facilitators. We are looking to do training in 2013 which will generate mentors and facilitators who can work in the longer term throughout the sector in a sustainable way.

Delegate: My younger brother runs two theatre companies. We were brought up in a small village in rural Yorkshire and he has formed a collaboration with our local pub. Twice a year we have an artists' retreat where we pay travel expenses and artists from all over the country come and try out work and the villagers give them accommodation in their spare rooms. It is often these locals, including farmers and locals in the pub, who end up seeing a host of new work. It is a very interesting way of getting audience feedback. The pub supports it by getting free barrels of beer and cider. Local musicians will play in the evening and the artists stay for the whole weekend and have an ongoing dialogue. At the start of every performance, the artist explains the development of their piece and at the end there is a facilitated chance for audiences to engage with and feed back on the work.

Ivan Wadeson, The Audience Agency: We have worked with Nuffield Theatre in Lancaster and Matt Fenton who runs it. We did a project about cultural diversity and an unexpected outcome was to do with Matt's personal capacity. They develop performers around theatre, dance, live art. It is very intensive. The changes in Matt's professional and personal life meant that he could no longer do this so two seasons were programmed differently: one was programmed by companies they had worked with and the other was to the public of Lancaster. He just put an ad in a local paper and got six people. He met them for a coffee and got to know them. Then they reviewed all the material that came in, went out to see shows, and then programmed the season. One of these was the best selling season ever. For Matt, the main thing was the change in culture; there were more voices involved, they were able to

assess a bigger range of material than he could get to. What impressed him about the public members was that none of them had any specialism or background. The level of debate around the choice of programming was phenomenal.

Delegate: At Theatre Royal Stratford East (TRSE), I have been running a programme called Open Stage which has involved handing over programming power to the public. We wanted to find lots of different ways to engage with people. Our web site couldn't do that so we completely rethought the way it worked. Rather than it being a space where we tell people what we are doing, it has become a space where other people can explain what they are doing. They can upload their videos, they can talk to each other, we run strings of tweets from other people that we think are interesting, the whole building is encouraged to take part in that, as well as our volunteers and the young people we work with. It has been live for two months and already it has completely changed the way we are looking at things. We have started live streaming some shows. We have done two seasons of new plays where we have invited audience feedback in the theatrical space after the shows as well as streaming them online and asking people for their comments on those. One of those shows will be taken forward and produced professionally.

Abbigail Wright, York Theatre Royal: We run the Take Over Festival which has come out of the A Night Less Ordinary initiative. We thought that the stuff we already programme might not be that interesting to the young people we had attracted. So we recruited a group of young people to programme a three week festival of new work every year. Each department has an Under 25 year old, an extended placement idea. We have just secured Esme Fairburn and Paul Hamlyn Foundation funding to continue that project. Even the board members for the Take Over Festival are 11 – 25 year olds. It's changed our organisation too. I remember the first year our box office staff were complaining about there being live music every day because they couldn't hear what they were doing but the following year the box office manager wanted a Take Over young person in her department too.

TRSE Delegate: It has increased cross-departmental working hugely. Also some departments such as stage management have become keen for volunteers to work with them, whereas previously they would not have been. At the moment we are looking at what structure our organisation needs to allow this sort of engagement to continue. We do still have a hierarchical structure though.

Abbigail Wright, York Theatre Royal: The length of time a placement runs depends on the individual. Stage management placements tend to be when the festival is on whereas box office placements have lasted six months. Some people work at the same time too; the project's general manager last year was also working at a small arts organisation in the city. We have built lots of links with different groups of young people, not just our own youth groups.

TRSE Delegate: The youngest volunteer is 18 and the oldest is 83. We tend to get people interested in careers in the arts who are aged up to about 25; our older volunteers (aged about 50+) tend to want to socialise. It has been fascinating to see how the two groups work together. We get a gap in the middle age ranges because of people's life commitments so we are trying to work out how it could be less of a commitment for some people. We are always really clear that it shouldn't cost anything for anyone to take part as a volunteer so we pay travel and lunch expenses. We have stopped doing internships because there are lots of issues around paying or not paying people but we have started doing some of the creative apprenticeships instead. Some people who originally did internships at TRSE and then volunteered with us have now gone on to get jobs with us. We worked closely with our local volunteering agency to set up a clear structure.

JM: There were some interesting articles in Arts Professional about working for volunteers. Those of you who subscribe can look online at back issues.

I would now like to move on to audience behaviours and the signals we give our audience members. I'm fascinated by TRSE's Tweet Zone.

TRSE Delegate: *We turned the top part of the Upper Circle into a Tweet Zone. We know that people use their phones while they are watching the show. We also know our audience is quite young. We wanted people to be able to comment on what we were doing on stage so throughout the performance you can tweet from this area of the theatre. When we did 'Angelic Tales', part of the audience feedback was to have live tweeting for people to comment and get involved in the debate in a slightly different way. A lot of people didn't really like it at first. We are still exploring this now; whether, for example, actors and performers are happy to open up the rehearsal room for us to live stream rehearsals. All these conversations are quite tricky but people start seeing the benefits of it, how it has benefited the organisation.*

Delegate: *I saw an article about an orchestra in New York and the whole balcony was a Tweet Zone. I thought it was a good press story to try and encourage young people to enjoy classical music. I have proposed live tweeting to our organisation but have heard nothing back yet; it is with our Communications Director at the moment.*

JM: One thing that concerns me about this is when those tweeters go to an event at which it isn't accepted, how are they made to feel? And are they fully engaged?

Delegate: *There was a big debate in the Guardian Cultural Network. It's good PR to get new audiences but I feel it should just be an event, I don't think it should happen all of the time. In the longer term, no I don't think people should be tweeting throughout a whole performance.*

Delegate: *We deliberately confined it to the Upper Circle so it was less distracting for the rest of the audience. But the TRSE audience gets very involved in what's going*

on, on stage. People in the audience often film parts of the performances anyway so in a way it's an extension of that.

JM: This is a quote from a Princeton University sociology professor who also studies non profit organisations: 'Back in the nineteenth century pretty much anything was considered acceptable. People would hoot and holler in the theatre, talk in their boxes at the opera. It was not until the late nineteenth century that the conductors, with help from the patrons who paid for the opera or the orchestra, took it upon themselves to demand certain behaviour from the audience...Our idea of what it means to be an audience only began when they invented electricity; we could turn down the house lights, turn up the stage lights, and tell people how to behave.'

I found that article really interesting because it prompted me to challenge myself. I go bonkers with people tweeting or taking photos in shows. It always seems to be in my eye line and I find it really disruptive but perhaps we have been told for 100 years to be quiet. We could probably run a whole conference just on audience behaviours and the signals that we as a sector are giving out.

There is a man called Dirk Singer who runs a company called Rabbit, a social media ideas agency. He wrote in the Guardian blog recently that he 'lives in Greenwich and twice a day passes through the old Royal Naval College, now a popular location for film sets. Large parts of the nearby area were being turned into nineteenth century Paris because they were filming *Les Misérables*.' He wanted to share his experience on Instagram and the attitude of the location assistants varied; 'some were helpful and didn't stop you as long as the cameras weren't rolling; others gave you a point blank 'no'.

Of course, taking a picture with an iPhone is different from using a giant telephoto lens. In contrast, Secret Cinema transformed the Troxy in Limehouse into an interactive film experience for "Bugsy Malone". As anyone who has ever been to a Secret Cinema event will know, this isn't just a simple screening. It is fully immersive, complete with audience participation. It's the sort of event people want to share and Secret Cinema is encouraging customers to do just that. That includes actively inviting Instagram's most committed users, the Instagrammers, along to screenings...

So what should you be doing with your event or performance? First of all, develop a visual social media policy. What elements of your event or production would you like people to share? Are there any specific photo opportunities that you can guide people to? Then make sure everyone's on board, from every single staff member who has customer contact, right down to the box office team. Tell them the dos and don'ts, and when they can actively encourage smart phone users to take various shots. Give them a hash tag, pass it on. At the last count, 40 million people were using Instagram with other photo sharing networks such as Pick You, Via.me and Dada also growing in popularity. Can we afford not to have a visual social media policy?'

Delegate: It's just a set of rules. If you are saying with one hat on that you want to wipe away the last 100 years' worth of rules but then you want to put in another set of rules to allow people to engage via social networking, surely doing what you want when you want has to happen spontaneously.

JM: There is a slight difference between tweeting and photography. I think this article suggests you should find out what works best for your organisation. If you are a presenting venue with a wide range of product, there may be times at which it is appropriate and times at which it isn't. When I worked at the Southbank we used to have policies about whether shows were 'drinks in' or 'drinks out' so organisations could develop their own policies for what they will allow in terms of social media; for instance 'This is a show in which people can tweet' or not. Press photographers always take photos in the first ten minutes for a rock concert and the rest of the audience doesn't understand why it can't (i.e. licensing issues) but we don't explain. Arts organisations might need to think about what would help our audiences, particularly those not used to coming, to feel comfortable. One of the ways we might develop social media policies is with some of the younger people who we have working with us so they understand the sensitivities of the artists and their peers.

Rhian Hughes, The Albany: *We had a show which was aimed at a younger audience. We gave permission for them to use their phones, to take pictures and films from the encore. As soon as we reach the encore, it's a free-for-all and you can do as you like but we want you not to use your phones during the show. What happened is that the performers did the show, took their bow then they did the show-stopping number (which was about Facebook anyway) and then the young people took their pictures and it was really focused. The audience loved it and got really carried away. We have a very vocal audience which really engages with what's happening on stage. We haven't done it since because we haven't worked with a company that was as willing to do it. I think it would work again. Our young people take their calls in the middle of the theatre. We took the same group to the Royal Court and they didn't want to go in because the Royal Court gives you these rules at the door. Even as a seasoned theatre goer I feel I'm being told off before I've even made it to my seat. These young people were so reluctant to go and take their seats.*

Delegate: *There is a theatre which in the autumn is going to advertise some 'relaxed' performances. The lights are going to be on. We have a deaf and disabled festival coming up and we want everybody to come along. I thought the 'relaxed' performance was a really interesting concept. What a wonderful way to welcome people and make them feel comfortable.*

JM: Relaxed performances have been around for a while and they have sometimes been called 'autism friendly performances'. The reason they became known as 'relaxed' is that there are a lot of people who wouldn't self identify as autistic or have children with behavioural difficulties. Also, there could be stroke victims and people

with a range of other issues. 'The Lion King' was the first Broadway production to do a relaxed performance.

Delegate: I've worked for the Ambassadors Theatre Group previously and Jodi and I worked together on a conference that was a response to an incident that happened in one of ATG's theatres where a family with an autistic son had a very bad experience and one of the very positive consequences. This prompted us to have a day in which we looked at how the industry could think more cleverly about how we welcome families. Relaxed performances were talked about in some detail and I think 'The Lion King' was going to be the first in the West End but there are a number of others.

Delegate: *I'm from the Everyman and Playhouse in Liverpool and we did our first relaxed performance in January 2011. It has become a regular thing now for our pantomime. You think it's going to be a massive deal because you have to talk to every department but on the night it was just the most amazing thing.*

JM: Kirsty Hoyle is the acting, part time access officer for the Theatrical Management Association (TMA) and the Society of West End Theatres (SOLT) and it's worth making contact with her if you are interested in this area.

Who deals with complaints in your organisations? Do they go to customer services? Do the chief executive or artistic director get involved? When I was running Warwick Arts Centre, my marketing team taught me that a complainant was a customer who wants to engage so I dealt with the complaints.

Delegate: *Complainants come to the MD's office then are sent to the most relevant department so their complaint can be dealt with quickly. Every complaint is logged and then the senior director of the team looked weekly at all complaints received and what the response had been.*

Delegate: *We have Visitor Comments. They are not labelled as complaints. Everything that comes in at Tate is looked at every week in terms of what people are mainly complaining about. Because of the numbers involved, we look at whether there are trends and patterns in what people are complaining about. There are a lot which are related to physical factors such as queues and toilets. There are far fewer complaints about actually engaging with the art.*

JM: I'm not just talking about engagement with the art. It could be about audience behaviour or prices, for example.

York Theatre Royal Delegate: We have just set up a feedback email address and we do feed back cards. We do a similar thing on a weekly basis. We have a weekly customer service meeting and discuss the comments that have come in. We find there is a wide range of people who want to engage with us.

Delegate: *It's about giving people the opportunity to feed back in different ways too. Not everyone wants to fill in a comments card; some people prefer to phone instead.*

Delegate: *We manage four venues in Fife and we set up online channels. We built a database and we asked relevant staff at each venue to feed into this. It's not just complaints; we want all the comments to build up a complete picture.*

Delegate: *As an extension of our audience feedback work, we developed a Mystery Shopping programme so we could explore in more detail some of the issues that had been flagged up.*

Delegate: *We did a Mystery Shopper programme across Cardiff and it was hugely useful. Five major Cardiff venues collaborated. Common themes emerged. We then set some targets for the following year when we repeated the process. It was very successful. We should do more of it.*

JM: I found a wonderful story recently about a playwright who had a deeply frustrating correspondence with her telephone supplier and she wrote a play about it. It has been playing to nearly sold-out houses at a festival in the States. She said 'I've come to realise that there is nothing people identify with more strongly than a customer service nightmare. It's up there with birth and death.'

I have to tell you about a wonderful experience of customer service which I experienced on the way to the conference. It fills me with joy and rapture. And it comes from British Rail.

Delegate: *I heard of a good customer service experience recently on the London Underground. Their staff are really well trained. I'd never thought about that before. My experience of the Underground is delays and nightmares but I began observing the staff and notice they are so knowledgeable and helpful.*

Delegate: *London Underground staffs' knowledge is extraordinary whereas in the arts our staff don't always have that degree of knowledge about performances or the programme.*

JM: I arrived on the platform at St Pancras to get the train to Brighton and I realised there was no café on the platform. I wanted to pick up a bottle of water and I had failed to do that on the main concourse. So I said to the guy who was seeing the trains into and out of the platform 'Is there a vending machine here?' and he replied 'No there isn't' so I asked whether there was anywhere I could get a bottle of water and he said 'Have you been travelling all day?' and I said 'No, I'm just thirsty' then he said 'Come with me' and he had a collection of bottles and gave me a bottle of water. I offered to pay him but he said 'No, it's yours for nothing. Just don't tell everyone'. I thought it was so kind and so exceeding expectations that I am now singing the praises of British Rail in a way I have never done before.

Organisational structure

JM: I've been wondering recently whether it matters if staff members are employees or freelancers. Does it make a difference to the culture within an organisation? Lots of arts organisations have a small core staff but a much larger sub-contracted or short-term contract staff. What difference does this make to their emotional connection to the organisation and sense of ownership? Someone yesterday talked about staff being 'emotional stakeholders' in an organisation. I'm really interested in the sense of ownership.

Delegate: I think it's about sharing the organisation's values and ethos. Our young people's team work with freelancers to deliver workshop sessions. I can tell the difference in our FOH staff who are employed because they love the theatre and what it does and those who just come in, work their shift and leave.

Delegate: Our organisation, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, uses lots of freelancers but they are all totally engaged in what the company is about. They work with us over a long period of time because they feel engaged and have some say in how the organisation is run.

Traverse Theatre Delegate: We are the same. Because arts organisations are charities we can't afford to pay a huge amount. A lot of people who work for us – either full time or temporary – are there because they love and believe in what we do. We are lucky that people aren't there just for the money. A lot of our bar staff are actors and one of our bar staff had to actually run from the bar to go and appear in a show because the main actor didn't turn up or was sick. We have some people who have gone on to be quite well known come back and say 'I started off as a barman at the Trav or as a volunteer'.

Delegate: I work in a freelance capacity for a number of small arts organisations. There are some I've worked with for a number of years that I'd like to feel I have a sense of ownership about. But I'm rarely involved in marketing decisions – they decide to bring me in when they need me. In terms of social media, I sometimes work with staff who will not touch Facebook or Twitter, saying that it's my responsibility. But I'm not working for them full time – I will often only visit their office once every two or three weeks. It can be difficult sometimes to feel engaged with the organisation in these circumstances.

JM: One of the challenges for freelancers is to get updates from the organisation. People in organisations often forget about the people who are not on contract. It's hugely important and can be a real challenge for people in arts organisations – particularly bigger ones – to remember to brief people who work part time, casual hours and freelancers.

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment Delegate: Previously our brochures have used photos of the players in the orchestra but for our forthcoming season we are

using photos of the audience as well. We ran a social media campaign to recruit people. We wanted people who looked interesting and individual – the sorts of photos that would make you sit up and take notice. We got a good response and we've ended up with a body builder, a drag queen, some Goths and so on. It demonstrates that classical music isn't just for who you think it's for and the images are arresting. We have also done stories about each person as well, their relationship with the orchestra and how long they have been coming.

Delegate: I've been to MOMA when people have filled in comments cards which are then placed on the web site. They've also used them on hoardings and on the subway. That was very popular.

JM: Some of the questions we are asking in the arts are exactly what business people are talking about. I subscribe to 'Critical Eye' which is an online network of leaders. One interesting question that was posed recently was 'Do chief marketing officers ever become CEOs? Yes, because marketing is the core of any business understanding: where to sell; what to sell; what to communicate is what marketing does and over time marketing rises to the top.' How many arts organisations' CEOs come from a marketing background? And if there are not many, why not? And is it time to do something about that?

Delegate: Our artistic director (at TRSE) started off in the marketing department and Jessica Hepburn, the Executive Director of Lyric Hammersmith, started off in development before going on to manage the marketing and communications team.

Delegate: It's interesting at the Lyric because you can almost tell as soon as you walk in that they are customer focused; even down to the staff uniforms. As soon as you walk in there is a presence. It makes sense that the CEO came from a marketing background.

Delegate: Lots of our organisations are run by artists or people whose background is as practitioners. I work at The Place and one of the things we do is train artists. A big part of that is about giving them the space to be in charge of stuff. It's very hard to blend that sort of training with the sort of audience focused work we have been discussing. Young artists need to find their own voice and it's about their own focus internally so I think there is quite a tension there. Personally, what I don't want to do in my career is make decisions about artistic works whereas some artists gravitate towards that.

Delegate: I've been on a cultural leadership course in Scotland. A lot of us went on a very interesting journey over 18 months and it was about accepting the fact that you could be a leader in the department that you are in. A lot of us realised that we quite would like to be CEOs and you don't have to fit the model of what you think a CEO is. It enabled people from departments such as marketing to think that they could go down that route and that they would bring a different skill set to leading the

organisation that is equally as valuable as someone who's come from a different direction.

Delegate: I have a commercial marketing background and I wanted to work in the museum world and I was very nervous about it, thinking that I would be wearing a label on my forehead saying 'From the commercial world'. I discussed it with various people who said 'It really doesn't matter. You have the marketing label; it's more a question of finding out more about the arts rather than from coming outside the marketing sector'.

Delegate: I was on the AMA board from 1999 to 2005 and we had exactly the same discussions about people progressing their careers and also influencing Chief Executives. Jessica Hepburn, Kate Morgan at RSC, Peter Bellingham at Welsh National Opera are all people who have made those moves. So that has happened but I don't think there has necessarily been an audience focused shift across the sector. Marketing type roles are expanding; there's almost an extension in roles at senior level but there are still people we need to influence. There is a different need which is about how we can be evangelical and bring people on, wherever they have come from.

Governance

In 'Critical Eye' there was a wonderful comment from a study of CEOs from the world of business which showed that 86 per cent of CEOs said that 'getting closer to their customer' was their main priority but very few have someone on their board who is responsible for addressing this transition.

I'm interested in the relationship you have with the boards of your organisations. Do those of you in audience focused roles get invited to present to your board? Is there anyone on your governing body that comes from an audience experience perspective? And if not, are there opportunities that you could encourage to open up the gene pool for potential board members?

Julia Potts, Almeida Theatre: I'm here in the capacity of Executive Director of the Almeida with my Head of Marketing. It's valuable for leaders to come and have a dialogue with experienced marketing people. We have been looking at governance and how we create an opportunity for each head of department to have a conversation at a board meeting throughout the year so that they get to present about what they know about and it isn't always filtered through me or the Artistic Director. We are also about to recruit one or two new board members with a marketing background but I think what we need is someone who understands audiences so as a result of this conference I'm going to think much more broadly about what that skill set might be so that the marketing team will have someone at governance level who brings a broader perspective to their work. When a board works well, it's brilliant that you can go to someone who has additional expertise and

together come up with some answers or have some conversations to enhance what you are doing.

Delegate: I am on the board of Opera North. They have instituted that model and it works incredibly well. So, for example, one month the Head of Costume might talk to the board and they can talk very articulately about the challenges that department faces and also talk about why the funding for that department is as it is (for example, why opera costumes can cost so much). It works really well. I would advocate it to every body. You find the board, who work outside the sector, are hungry for this knowledge. It transforms their understanding of the company. I would argue every board should have a shared responsibility but if you segment it then I would worry about that.

JM: On one of the boards I sit on I have a role as Equality and Diversity champion. I would argue that it is the entire board's responsibility but having me chivvying them helps keep these issues on the agenda

Delegate: You could compare it with fund raising. Everyone on the board needs to be involved in fund raising but some individuals champion it.

Claire Zammit, Southbank Centre: At the Southbank Centre, my role is a new one; Director of Visitor Experience. So actually I'm not a marketing person but I decided to come to this year's AMA conference anyway because it is all about the visitor. 50 per cent of my role is running my department which has a staff of 160. The board has thought that the other 50 per cent should be about influencing the rest of the organisation to think about the visitor. The bit I'm slightly struggling with is how do I then influence the board? I've written a visitor experience strategy that now sits within the business plan but I probably need a champion on the board because a lot stops with me and it can be difficult to get really big projects through.

Delegate: Ultimately it comes down to where visitors and customers sit within the core vision and values of the organisation. If they are central to that set of core values, then of course it will be part of a natural framework.

[JM asked delegates, by a show of hands, to demonstrate how many of them sit on boards of other organisations and was pleased with the amount. She then asked the delegates who didn't currently sit on other arts organisations' boards whether they would be interested in it and delegates showed overwhelming interest in this.]

That is encouraging. I do lots of work with board recruitment and I know that AMA and TMA would be interested to know about this level of enthusiasm from delegates.

Delegate: It can be difficult to know how to go about getting onto boards if you are a young person at an early stage of your career, even though we have all sat in board meetings within our own organisations.

JM: Look at what the National Union of Students does. There are boards in Student Unions of 18 and 19 year olds. I would encourage younger people not to be frightened. Boards need younger people.

JM: I love the story Andy McKim told yesterday. He put a card through someone's letterbox and this person ended up being a supporter and a board member. That's the sort of dialogue we need to further.

I will leave you with the question *'What are your organisations going to take away from this and what are you going to take back to your organisations to debate and what are you individually going to do?'*