

# Appendix 1

## A Flexible Framework for Devising

### **I • D   Φ • X's flexible framework: including a cyclical process**

One of the expectations usually associated with a publication of this sort is that readers are looking for formulae or models to use when applying the subject in question. In the case of devising, the use of fixed formulae can lead to confinement. The notion of being restricted directly contradicts the freedom at the heart of facilitation and devising practices in general. Still, by offering the reader a flexible framework we adhere to, be it often unconsciously, you can decide which aspects might be relevant to your own working contexts.

The concept of 'a cyclical process' deserves some elaboration beforehand. One of the exciting aspects about devised work is the continual conversation about and evaluation of what is taking place. This evaluation is taken on by the working team in the first instance and often may involve outside interested individuals as well. The sum of opinion investigating whether intention is being received influences developments which are re-evaluated and so on. In short, once one has reached a point for a preliminary evaluation to take place, a constant cyclical process begins which only ends when the art work has reached the end of its active life. (It may live on in the form of some kind of recording, however.) This will hopefully become evident below.

### **I • D   Φ • X's flexible framework for the devising or workshop process**

*The main categories ...*

- Create the working parameters of the group.
- The preliminary workshop takes place – testing the water.
- The project leader(s) discusses the stimulus/theme and, where relevant, creates a storyboard or basic template.

- The first task is set.
- The devising ‘inner-cycle’ of development and evaluation begins.
- Project evaluation takes place.

... and in greater detail

- Create the working parameters of the group
  - What is the common ground of experience of the group?*
  - How might this be manifested in the art work to be made?*
  - Which aspect of the common ground is to be investigated?*
  - The stimulus/theme is found and investigated.*
  - What type of form can that aspect/theme take on in the project?*
  - Is the project to be (partially) led or fully devised?*
  - Is this project one that intends to achieve an end product, and if so, is it one that might be shared? With whom?*
- The preliminary workshop takes place – testing the water
  - Is everyone ready? ‘Getting to know each other.’*
  - Create materials for a first challenge.*
  - If relevant, specific work within separate arts areas takes place with the **entire** group.*
- The project leader(s) discusses the stimulus/theme and, where relevant, creates a storyboard or basic template
  - How does one best share ideas and define particulars? In other words, how can one create circumstances?*
  - How much detail goes into the storyboard/template?*
  - How flexible is it intended to be?*
  - Are all expertises within the working group being taken into account?*
- The first task is set
  - Focused workshops are to be planned.*

*Material is generated: improvisation takes place taking careful account of the parameters relevant to the task; first selections take place.*

*Is a dramaturgy evolving? Is the ‘something to hold on to factor’ being taken into account? If not, what might that ‘something’ be and how can it best be introduced?*

*When the group feels it has reached a level of achievement (if relevant) – even if in a rough form – the first evaluations (possibly including triangulation) take place.*

*Paths towards selecting material and possible alterations are discussed and ideas are developed.*

- The devising ‘inner-cycle’ of development and evaluation begins

### **The loop**

*Follow-up tasks are set.*

*Workshops are targeted.*

*Mid – large-scale development of work, including contrast and dynamic curve are taken into account. Is the development of the piece interesting?*

*Does the interplay of predictability and surprise work well?<sup>32</sup>*

*Results are shared.*

*Evaluations and/or sharings (e.g., performances) take place, possibly involving triangulation with outsiders.*

*Does the process seem to be developing ‘organically’? If not, what is getting in the way?*

*Are the chosen dramaturgy and ‘something to hold on to factor’ consistently applied? Is the quantity of material kept within bounds? Is the structure of the work developing clearly?*

*Is the amount of ‘newness’ satisfactory? If not, what steps need to be taken to achieve this?*

*If a rigid process or structural approach) is being followed, is the process transparent? Is this leaving sufficient breadth for participants’ input to the devising process?*

*If relevant, are appropriate forms of technology being put to good use?*

*'Polishing': selections are made of content and of structure, paths towards possible alterations are discussed and ideas are developed.*

### **End of loop**

*(i.e., repeat if the project is still ongoing, including performance[s], or move on to final point)*

- Project evaluation takes place

*Workshop goals associated with the flexible framework* The workshop or devising process is structured, planned and organised as illustrated above. Facilitation takes the following interrogatives into account: who is involved, why is something being made, what does one hope to achieve as well as where and when are things to take place.

The key to any workshop is participation. Ideally aims and objectives should be understood by all involved; sharing and taking part are paramount. If everyone participating in a workshop situation feels a sense of responsibility for themselves and their creative input in relation to the rest of the group and the aim or task of the session is owned, then empowerment and artistic devising success can be achieved regardless of how skilled any participant happens to be in terms of dance and/or music ability. A non-competitive environment is crucial here. In this way a group's meaningful identity can be created. Both the individual and the group interrelate with the task as they do with each other.

The following points represent goals for participants involved in devising workshops that are all rooted in our *flexible framework*:

1. Enjoying the experience.
2. Building self-confidence and self-esteem.
3. Building trust and sensitive working relationships.
4. Being able to listen and respond as well as to clearly communicate ideas.
5. Challenging oneself and others.

6. Taking the initiative or leading where necessary.
7. Increasing one's appreciation and understanding as well as critical and evaluative ability.
8. Building relevant dance and/or music skills.

The above points are merely a selection. For *Idée Fixe*, they represent the most important ones. Their order is not listed in terms of importance, but merely illustrates what our company devisors/facilitators strive for when working with groups. Obviously there is always a balance to be found between our leadership in terms of facilitation and empowerment. This can vary significantly between different groups.

