

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by - CHRIS ARONSTEN – 2005 Churchill Fellow

‘To study writers’ theatres in Ireland, the U.K and the U.S.A. that develop new plays’

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Signed

Dated

Chris Aronsten

13/7/2006

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INTRODUCTION

For 7 weeks commencing March 26, 2006, I travelled to Ireland, the U.K and the U.S.A. visiting theatres wholly or partially devoted to the development of new plays.

These theatres ranged from flagship organizations such as London's National Theatre, to one-person operations, like New York's Immigrant Theatre Company.

My method consisted of an interview of one to two hours, where I took notes. I tried to glean from these interviews the ways in which theatres sourced new writers and new work, supported those writers, provided resources and stayed financially viable.

I would like to thank all the extremely busy, passionate and devoted people who took the time to meet with me (or helped facilitate a meeting.)

Emily Morse
Jenny Chapman
Andrew Fishwick
Johnny Lyne-Pirkis
Abigail Gonda
Rachel Taylor
Josie Murphy
Rosie Hunter
Jack Bradley
Christine Madden
Willie White
Katherine Mendelssohn
Russ Tutterow
Ed Sobel
Tanya Palmer
John Sanders
KJ Sanchez
John Streber
Linda Chapman
Suzy Fay
Christian Parker
Tyler Marchant
Maria Striar
Sandra Coudert
Marcy Arlin
Emily Shooltz
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Project Description

- a) To research writers' theatres in Ireland, the U.K. and the U.S.A devoted to the creation of new plays and the fostering of new talent.
- b) To report on these methods and use that report as a resource for the creation of a writers' theatre in Australia, or for the use of Australian theatres and theatre organizations that currently develop new Australian plays.

Highlights

Difficult, as I visited 25 theatres, but:

- The National Theatre in London's annual "Shell Connections" project, where 10 new plays are commissioned for young people, performed by over 200 schools and youth groups, and the best 10 productions are staged at the National with the original cast.
- New Dramatists in New York, where writers are given seven-year residencies.
- Theatre 503 in London, which, despite having no funding, no paid staff and often not enough money to keep their photocopier operating, manages to produce a vital and often cutting-edge program of 12 new plays each year.

Lessons learned.

Although new work was cultivated in similar ways by the theatres I visited, each one had its own niche, its own identity and its own unique and innovative techniques.

It is these unique and innovative methods that I have focused on in this report, as they will be of most value to those already developing new plays, and in the creation of an Australian Writers' Theatre.

I will disseminate this information through the presentation of my report to theatres currently developing new work, the Australia Council for the Arts, the N.S.W. Arts Minister, and the Federal Arts Minister.

PROGRAMME

London

Theatre 503
 The Bush Theatre
 Soho Writers' Theatre
 The Gate Theatre
 Battersea Arts Centre
 The National Theatre

Andrew Fishwick & Johnny Lyne-Pirkis
 Abigail Gonda
 Rachel Taylor
 Josie Murphy
 Rosie Hunter
 Jack Bradley

Dublin

Rough Magic
 The Project Theatre

Christine Madden
 Willie White

Edinburgh

The Traverse Theatre

Katherine Mendelssohn

Chicago

Chicago Dramatists
 Steppenwolf Theatre Co.
 The Goodman Theatre
 Stage Left Theatre

Russ Tutterow
 Ed Sobel
 Tanya Palmer
 John Sanders

New York

New Dramatists
 New York Theatre Workshop
 The Lark Theatre
 The Atlantic Theatre
 Primary Stages
 Clubbed Thumb
 Rattlestick Theatre Co.
 Immigrant Theatre Project
 Manhattan Theatre Club
 Second Stage
 The Public Theatre

K.J. Sanchez & John Streber
 Linda Chapman
 Suzy Fay
 Christian Parker
 Tyler Marchant
 Maria Striar
 Sandra Coudert
 Marcy Arlin
 Emily Shooltz
 Elizabeth Bennett
 Liz Frankel

THE REPORT

U.K THEATRES - London

Theatre 503

Background

Theatre 503 produces new work only and will accept scripts from both U.K. based and international writers. It began 20 years ago as an off-shoot of the Gate Theatre. Then, two years ago, it became a stand alone, self-sufficient new writing theatre.

Theatre 503 receives no regular funding and survives on box office income and donations. Its premises consist of a small theatre and some office space above an inner London pub, to which they have secured a 10 year lease at a heavily discounted rate.

There is a comfortable relationship between the theatre and the pub, with many patrons dining downstairs before the show, and retiring there for drinks afterwards.

All staff are unpaid. Most general managers last two to three months before they choose (or are forced for financial reasons) to leave and seek paid work. Having survived on good will alone, Theatre 503 is attempting to take steps to secure more reliable funding through sponsorship, registering the theatre as a charity and developing a board of trustees. Part of this process has begun, with the sourcing of sporadic production-specific sponsorship.

Some shows at 503 are co-productions, some are produced by the theatre its self and some are pre-packaged shows from outside the theatre. 503 presents 12 shows per year.

Theatre 503 has no formal script development program. Unsolicited manuscripts are handled by a team of outside readers - usually actors, writers or directors who are familiar with the space. Promising scripts are placed on a short list and discussed by the artistic team, who vote on which will proceed to production.

503 'turns around' scripts in about 3 months. However, they can't afford to return scripts not sent with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Often, money has been so tight that equipment such as photocopiers and printers have been out of action.

503 is a very new venture. In many ways it is rebelling against other theatres - particularly the Royal Court, which is perceived as not championing new writing as it once did. (For example, Harold Pinter's new play was about to be produced at the Royal Court).

503 currently offer no workshops, but would like to in future.

Innovation

- Bare Bones Production - 503 has nothing besides an interesting space and good will, yet it manages to produce 12 plays per year, and has been receiving a great deal of favourable press. Being small gives 503 a flexibility not available to larger, more established theatres. There is a sense that if the team feel a script is worth doing, it could be on the stage, in front of a paying audience, in four weeks. Because 503 reports neither to sponsors nor government bodies, they have maximum freedom - their only duty is to their audience. And despite its tiny size and recent arrival, 503 is already highly regarded by the London theatre community.
- As funding increases at 503, as it inevitably will, some doors will open and others will close. What is interesting about 503 now is that they are an example of how important, daring work often comes out of having nothing to lose.

The Bush Theatre

Background

The Bush theatre presents 8-10 productions of new plays a year. The theatre often brings in tours from the Edinburgh festival, and sometimes tours shows of its own – for example, “Mammals” was given an Arts Council funded tour and the British Council are funding a U.S ‘showcase’ tour.

Outside productions are generally used to fill gaps, and so most of the plays produced at the Bush are produced in-house.

Scripts received are logged on a database and acknowledged by letter. Anything from an agent or a person of interest goes into a “fast track” pile. The bush receives over 1000 scripts per year and does accept unsolicited manuscripts.

10 readers meet once a month, having read 5 scripts each, and discuss the results with the literary manager.

All writers who submit a script to the Bush receive feedback by mail, and direct contact is made with writers of interest; “interest” may mean interest in the next draft of a writer’s current play, or perhaps the next play they write. Last year, two unsolicited manuscripts made it to production.

The Bush has a “Core Writers group” – five writers who are on commission. These commissions were paid for by the Peggy Ramsay Foundation and an anonymous donor, and are worth £3,136. Writers also receive 8% of box office takings when their work is produced.

A commissioned writer is asked to deliver a first draft he/she feels can’t be taken further without a reading. A reading/workshop then takes place, after which more drafts are written. Scripts then progress to a rehearsal or another annual reading series called “Try these for size”. These readings are attended by the public, and the audience consists of readers, writers, theatre professionals, investors and some general public.

The literary manager provides access to research and information, directors, competitions, opportunities, a pool of “thinking actors”, free tickets (Monday nights), feedback and sense of community to break the isolation of writing.

The Bush also conducts a week of international play readings.

Scripts are turned around at the Bush in 3-5 months (from arrival at the offices to letter or direct contact.)

Innovation

- The ability to commission writers
- Being able, buy reputation, to attract the best writers and directors, whilst still accepting (and occasionally producing) unsolicited manuscripts.
- The “Try these for size” readings – a stepping stone between in-house readings and a full production.
- A series of International play readings.
- The sense of a ‘virtual community’ of writers, fostered by Literary manager Abigail Gonda via support and regular contact.

Soho Writers' Theatre

Background

The Soho Writers' Theatre is situated in inner London. It receives 1500-2000 manuscripts a year, solicited and unsolicited, from all over the world. Each and every script is read and a report is produced. The writer receives this report.

The Soho employs about 120 readers, and their reports follow a standardised format. Promising scripts are put forward at monthly meetings.

The Soho is an extremely open and accessible theatre, with programmes available for writers at every level of development. As well as producing plays, the Soho is also a receiving house for other plays, and a stand-up comedy venue. It houses two venues: the flexible 90-180 seat Studio and the 180 seat Theatre.

Innovation

The most valuable thing about the Soho Theatre is its accessibility across all levels:

- Open access workshops - two hours, once a month, paid for by the writer. These are for any person interested in writing. These are not about developing a specific play, but rather, deal with the tools of writing in general.
- Young Writers' Program – an education and outreach officer co-ordinates a ten week course for under 25's, during which they produce a new play. Each participant is assigned a dramaturg, and the better writers progress to a "core group" who receive further support.
- Launchpad Workshops – once a month, for a fee, any member of the public may use a Launchpad workshop to explore a new play. They are provided with professional actors and directors - the idea being to allow the isolated writer to hear his or her words spoken by a professional actor and scrutinised by a professional director.
- S.T.A.R.T.S – writers are supported by the theatre to work for 6 – 8 weeks; they are given a space in which to work, and a flexible array of other support (depending on their specific needs) such as seed money, money for research and access to dramaturgy. The project they work on is not necessarily a project that the Soho is interested in; the idea is that a writer can work full-time, with support - *as a writer* - for 6- 8 weeks.
- Attachment program – six more advanced writers are paid a commission and work under the guidance of the theatre for three semesters, during which they generally work on a full-length play.
- 6 Commissioned writers are paid £5,500-6,000. The Soho does not dictate to or negotiate with the writer regarding the nature of the play they write.

- Cross-fertilisation: The Soho encourages collaborations with other disciplines, such as puppetry.
- Entrepreneurism: Because theatre staged in a 180 seat theatre can only, at best, break even, the Soho Theatre hosts stand up comedy in a late night slot. Besides being lucrative (minimal productions costs, only one performer), it introduces a different audience to the theatre.

The Gate Theatre

Background

The Gate is dedicated almost entirely to new international work. It very rarely stages work by British writers. It does accept unsolicited manuscripts, and in general, tends to pursue more political and experimental work. The theatre utilises a team of unpaid bi-lingual readers and cannot afford to pay to have work translated. Often work produced at the Gate has already been translated.

Until recently, actors were unpaid. The Gate is unable to provide commissions, but does offer a £1,000 translation award. Receiving the award is also a guarantee of a production.

The Gate produces 6 shows a year in an 80-seat theatre. Being so small, the venue has very little profit making potential.

Writers who submit a play to the Gate receive a summary of the report written by the reader. The turn around time is about 3 – 9 months.

The Gate is very involved with the local community – (South Kensington, some of the wealthiest people in London) - who have an appetite for cutting edge, challenging theatre. They cultivate and look after Patrons from the local community, who are a major source of income.

The Gate does not buy in outside productions. It has no front of house staff, and due to limited staff, does not run a subscription season.

Another limitation of their small space is that it makes transfers difficult: things designed for a tiny space rarely work on a big stage.

Innovation

- The Gate has a commitment to international theatre unlike any other I visited. Whilst a theatre devoted entirely to new international work may not be able to survive in Australia, there is certainly more room for such work. The establishment of a translation award would be an excellent way to foster a culture of more non English language work being performed in this country.
- It is also interesting to note how the Gate theatre has established a relationship with its very wealthy local community, and tapped into their desire to “give back” and their appetite for challenging work.

The Battersea Arts Centre

Background

The Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) operates out of a converted town hall, and contains many theatre spaces, ranging from two 45-70 seat capacity studios to an 800-seat hall.

The BAC is unique in that it is a producer-driven facilitator, not a new writing theatre. Its creative team consists of four producers and an artistic director, and although it primarily produces new work, the BAC is not driven by a Literary department. BAC is also an Arts Centre in the true sense of the word, encompassing such things as theatre, music, dance and puppetry.

In the first instance, producers at BAC actively seek new projects – and it is *projects* they are seeking, not scripts or writers or directors.

Projects are then developed in close collaboration with one producer, who is involved at every stage of the creative process. Producers build strong relationships with the project's artistic team through constant communication.

The BAC seeks to minimise risk and lower the stakes for artists via its “Ladder of Development” (Scratch nights, Scratch performances, two or three night runs of finished work, then the work moves on.) BAC particularly recognises the immense pressure artists come under, after they have produced a successful show, to produce another.

The BAC is more often a venue for hire than a producing theatre.

Innovation

- The BAC is unique in two major ways: Firstly, it is a project-focussed producers' theatre; secondly, BAC does not end up producing most of the work it develops, and because of this, is not limited by the imperatives of having to fill a gap in programming, making money through box office, or a play needing to turn out a certain way in order to conform to a “house style”. A project taken on by BAC is taken on simply to help it reach its full potential.
- The BAC recognises how high the stakes are for productions of new work, and seeks to minimise the risk via its “Ladder of Development”. A large part of this process involves “Scratch” performances, where work is presented in a barebones way for an audience, who provide feedback. There are three levels of Scratch performances:
- Freshly Scratched – open to anyone, but projects are selected by producers. Artists present a small portion of something they are working on, and also nominate two questions they would like to ask of the audience. Audiences watch the show, and are then given forms where they can answer these questions. Producers collate the feedback, concentrate it, and meet with the artists to discuss it.

- Scratch Double – a project is invited to be part of a double bill with another project in development, which is repeated two or three times. Audience response is collated and discussed with producers, and artists involved continue to develop their work.
- Scratch Performances – a performance of the entire show, with minimal production values, for an audience who again provide feedback by answering specific questions nominated by the artists involved.
- BAC is a theatre that not only understands plays, but also its audience, with whom it interacts with in a meaningful way.
- BAC is vigilant in constantly seeking new people to work with, and not falling into to easy, comfortable relationships with the same people.
- BAC actively promotes interdisciplinary work, which in the wider theatre scene is difficult because arts funding is very single-discipline focused.
- The “Supported Artist Scheme” - where a small number of artists are given an extensive network of support for two years. The aims are: to support the development of work so that it can be staged at the BAC, advise and support artists or companies on the development of their infrastructure so they can stage their work outside the BAC, and for artists or companies to be ambassadors for the work that the BAC does.

The National Theatre

Background

The National Theatre receives over 1,500 unsolicited plays a year, and aims for 50% of its annual productions to be new work.

A team of three people meet with the writer/s of any interesting unsolicited material. These writers may then take part in a week-long workshop where they are taught about how the industry works, and are also able to meet directors, producers, agents, designers and other theatre professionals. They are paid for this time.

The 'Studio' is the National's primary venue for the development of new work. It also hosts directors' workshops, classes, project work, rehearsed readings and any other development-related work not connected with new plays (for example, senior directors often use the Studio to try something new, develop a new skill or attempt something high risk)

The National actively seeks writers from the fringe, whom they invite in for a discussion. Some are paid £3,000 to go on an 8-week attachment to the Studio and write a play. Writers can use the time to finish a play, or the play might take longer to write. During their time in-house, each writer will meet two other writers, which is seen as an important part of the process.

Jack Bradley, literary manager, notes that there is a large amount of new work being produced in Britain, because there is a large amount of new work specific funding available. The problem is, second productions of new work are rare (almost impossible.)

Innovation

- The National Theatre's most striking innovation is its 'Shell Connections' program. Every year, in collaboration with the artistic staff at the National, 10 new plays for young people are commissioned. These plays are delivered in August of each year. In November, 200 groups (schools, youth groups) attend a week long conference where they choose a plays to perform, then do so early the next year. A sample of these productions are then performed at a regional level. Staff from the National either attend or watch video tape of these productions. The best version of each play is then performed at the National Theatre, for a paying audience, with the original cast. Major sponsor, Shell, pays for the entire process.
- The National sees writers working on-site and being paid for their time as crucial to the process.
- Five times a year, the National "match makes" composers and lyricists on the hope of fostering new music theatre collaborations.
- Also important at the National is its emphasis on educating writers about how the industry works.

IRISH THEATRES - Dublin

Rough Magic Theatre Company

Rough Magic is a small theatre company that receives about 100 unsolicited scripts per year, and only accepts work from Irish or Irish-based writers. The turn around time for a script from reading to response is about 2 – 6 months.

For a small company, Rough Magic is able to provide a large number of commissions (seven this year). These commissions are open ended. The theatre employs 4 readers, and also utilises directors to assess new plays. As a production company, they stage between two and four new shows per year. Workshops with actors are provided as necessary.

Rough Magic was founded in 1984. After initially presenting mostly Irish premieres of major International plays, the theatre began producing new plays by Irish writers, and in 2001 established a full time literary department.

Innovation

- **Festival Collaboration:** In 2001, Rough Magic collaborated with the Dublin Fringe Festival to initiate the SEEDS project – an initiative designed to develop new Irish writing. Out of the six plays developed, 5 went on to be produced (two by Rough Magic). After the success of SEEDS, SEEDS II was launched in 2004. The program sees playwrights mentored one-on-one by a director. Each project in the programme is guided through 3 to 4 drafts, 2 workshops, a public reading, and is then provided with a fringe budget for the festival.

The Project Arts Centre

Background

The Project Arts Centre began life as a three week festival at the Gate Theatre in 1966, but soon evolved into a season of experimental music, visual arts, seminars, children's theatre and debate. Following on from this success, the Project Gallery opened in 1967. In 1969, Project moved to the basement of a YMCA and film screening and plays were introduced into the programme. For example, paintings were taken down from the walls in order to make way for a play at night, and re-hung in the morning.

Project has continued to develop along the same lines as an artist-driven company and now resides in a purpose built space in the heart of Dublin. It incorporates all contemporary art forms: theatre, dance, live art, video and film, traditional, jazz, electronic, classical and popular music, painting, sculpture, photography, multi-disciplinary installations and performance pieces.

Theatre comprises about 70% of Projects output.

Innovation

- Project's philosophy is that disciplines, when brought together in one space, can influence each other.
- As facilitator: The Project uses its resources to fund other people's project and to provide services. One of these services is to function as a production facilitator, saving artists the expense of running a production office.
- Rather than commission work, Project sees its self a curator of a space. It is not a hall for hire, or a production company.
- A refuge from the mainstream: Project was founded as a home for art that could not find a home anywhere else, and continues to operate in this way.
- Project is flexible in its approach, and occasionally provides support to individual artists whose work it feels in particularly important.
- Project aims to produce work that is contemporary in a political sense, and not just "universal" in theme. This means Project does not limit itself to producing new work just because it is "new".

U.K. THEATRES - Edinburgh

The Traverse Theatre

Background

The Traverse Theatre has been entirely devoted to new writing for 43 years, and is the only theatre in Scotland with a literary department. It receives 300-500 scripts a year (including unsolicited manuscripts) and has a turn around time of 3 – 6 months. The Traverse is primarily devoted to new Scottish writing, but also produces international work. Two theatres are used: 150 seats and 300 seats.

The Traverse Theatre Company (TTC) produces 6 – 8 plays a year (including a touring production), with other companies and festivals filling the gaps in between. The Traverse is a major venue during the Edinburgh Festival.

For non-TTC productions, the Traverse will consider work from all kinds of production companies.

Innovation

- The Traverse Theatre Company commissions 6 – 10 writers per year under its “Playwrights in Partnership” scheme. This includes at least 6 new plays and a number of translations/versions of leading Scottish writers of contemporary international plays.
- Each year, the Traverse funds a Playwriting Fellow (Writer-in-residence)
- In collaboration with the BBC Scotland, the Traverse records Radio plays in its theatres, in front of a live audience.
- For 16 years, “Class Act” has allowed young people in schools to work with a professional director and see their work realised on the Traverse stage. In addition, the Traverse Young Writers Group, led by professional playwrights, has been running for three years.
- The Traverse realised that many of the writers it was investing in ended up working in television. Based on that reality, the theatre has secured enough money from Television companies to fund their readers for a year.
- The Traverse makes a point when commissioning that it is commissioning the writer, not the play; it is a vote of confidence in the artists, not a specific work. The writer sets the time frame for delivery of the play in collaboration with the TTC and most of the plays commissioned by TTC end up being produced.
- The development process at the Traverse is centred around what the writer needs – it might be a public reading, or a private script development sessions with directors and actors, or both. Sessions are not about “fixing” plays, but about helping the writer realise the play he or she wants to write. Also available are one-on-one dramaturgical sessions with the Literary Manger.

- The Traverse actively shares in international script exchange, with aim of sharing new plays with other leading theatres and companies who are committed to producing new work.
- The Traverse facilitates writers' events around the world to showcase Scotland's playwrights.
- The Traverse runs a number of Public Writers' Workshops, which are led by major playwrights and practitioners and targeted at a range of experience.

U.S. THEATRES - Chicago

Chicago Dramatists

Background

Chicago Dramatists is a theatre devoted entirely to playwrights and new plays. Founded and run by playwrights themselves, it now employs three full-time and three part-time administrative staff.

Chicago Dramatists provides services to playwrights at all levels of development, with the aim of expanding their professional affiliations, showcasing their work, and facilitation collaborations with actors, directors, dramaturgs and audiences. Audience and peer response to work during development is central to the CD philosophy.

CD facilities include a 77 seat main theatre and flexible workshop space.

Innovation

Chicago Dramatists has two distinct programs for playwrights.

1. The Residency Program

- This program forms the core of the Chicago Dramatists operation. Writers must have some level of professional accomplishment to take part, and must also submit two plays, a 'letter of intention' outlining how they would use their time at C.D, and a letter of reference when they apply. There are currently 27 residents, who are on 3 year renewable terms. Those accepted into the program are given access to resources such as actors, theatre space, staff, workshops, public and private readings and feedback. Every Saturday at 2pm, C.D. stages a public reading, usually from a writer in the Residency program, and the reading is then followed by a moderated discussion. The audiences for these discussions are usually made up of other playwrights, plus friends and family.
- CD produces three shows per year, drawn from the pool of residents. Competition is fierce. But in general, Chicago Dramatists is not developing writers in order to produce their work; it sees its self as developing writers for the nation as a whole.

2. The Associate Program

- Called the "playwrights network", this program is made up of around 200 writers. Anyone can join, and writers are not screened. About 160 of these writers are able to make it to the theatre, the rest are generally isolated people in the mid-west. Writers pay a fee of \$125 to be part of the program, and are allowed to send as many scripts as they like (one at a time) to be assessed by a part-time staff member entirely devoted to the playwrights network. Associates also take part in the Saturday public reading series. Although rare, CD has twice produced plays from a Network playwright.

- Part of being a Resident at C.D. involves giving back to the theatre community by reading plays by the less experienced members of the Playwrights Network. After reading plays, residents provide written feedback.
- CD runs regular classes, open to anyone. Playwriting classes are often taught by Residents or Artistic Director Russ Tutterow. Classes are a major source of income, along with box office, membership fees and rentals.
- Table Readings: these are private readings (including invited guests of the playwright), followed by a moderated discussion.
- Annual Weekend Master Class: Led by two members of the Residency program, the master class gives Network playwrights the chance to come together and “share their experiences, diversity, and skills”.
- Deadline Workshop: Resident and Network playwrights work with the same actors over a two month period and experience “writing on demand”, via weekly deadlines. The six participants write a 30-45 minute play (either one act or the beginning of a longer play). At the end of the project, the plays are performed in the Saturday Series. (Fee: \$185)

The Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Background

In 2006, The Steppenwolf Theatre Company celebrates 30 years as an actor-founded and driven theatre company. New plays often come to the attention of the theatre via the ensemble, or via directors associated with the theatre. Steppenwolf also receives about 500 plays a year from agents, and around 750-1000 10 page samples from unrepresented writers.

Out of the 9 -14 shows produced each year at Steppenwolf, around half are new plays.

Innovation

- **New Plays Initiative:** this is a commissioning program for new plays, engaging three to five writers per year. There are currently nine writers under commission at Steppenwolf, ranging from writers of international prominence such as Sam Shepherd and Tony Kushner, to early-career playwrights. This initiative operates via invitation, not application. A customised program is designed around the needs of the play and the writer, and includes readings, workshops and research. Steppenwolf's intention is for the commission to be finite - to ensure plays don't remain in limbo forever. The aim is to establish within 6 – 8 months whether or not the play in development is something Steppenwolf can produce, or if it would be better suited to another theatre company. Steppenwolf only develops plays it is likely to produce.
- **New Plays Lab:** a short residency of 2-3 months where Writers work with actors and directors to improve their plays.
- **Land development:** Through the foresight of a board member with extensive property development experience, Steppenwolf was able to purchase land which ten years ago was situated in a mostly industrial area, but which is now part of an affluent middle class neighbourhood. Steppenwolf now owns an extremely valuable asset, and not all the land has been developed yet.
- **First Look Repertory of New Work:** this program is designed for work which is ready for production, but for which no slot is available. Steppenwolf sees them as “developmental productions” rather than “world premieres”. Plays are minimally produced and performed in repertory. The program is unique amongst development programmes in that it culminates in a production. Important people (i.e. board members, supporters, industry people) are invited to key moments in the development process with the aim of making them better theatre goes and more involved with the theatre.
- **Films:** “Steppenwolf Films” was created to “develop and produce independent feature films and unique television projects generated by and for the acclaimed Steppenwolf Ensemble and its artistic associates.”

The Goodman Theatre

Background

The Goodman Theatre is an 81-year-old director-driven theatre and a Chicago institution. Many projects come to the theatre via these directors, or other artistic associates; the rest from scripts sent via agents and unsolicited 10-page script samples. The Goodman produces a season of 8 or 9 shows per year, with around 50% being new plays. Two theatre spaces operate: the 800 seat Albert and the flexible, (approximately) 300 seat Owen. New work is generally produced in the Owen theatre.

Innovation

- The Goodman runs many community based theatre programs, including a student subscription series, a teacher training initiative, the Yollocalli Youth Drama Workshop (in collaboration with the Mexican Fine Arts Centre Museum), a general theatre studies program for students and an audience education program centred around post-show discussions.
- The Goodman currently offers 3-4 commissions per year to established writers; the focus is on new plays, rather than new writers. Some commissions are “no-strings” commissions, generally given to writers who know the Goodman and have some previous association with it (usually a successful production). Other commissions involve a pre-writing negotiation with the playwright - an attempt to ensure that the finished play will suit the Goodman. Resources available to writers include access to the large pool of talented Chicago actors and directors and one-on-one dramaturgy with the literary department. The Goodman is aware that mid-career playwrights can often fall through the cracks and get lost, and so seeks to redress this issue.
- If a project requires it, the Goodman will stage a 2 week workshop, comprising of a weeks rehearsal, 3 performances, a further weeks rehearsal and a further 3 performances.
- An annual formal festival of readings of new work, usually comprising a days rehearsal followed by a reading.
- Latino Theatre Festival: featuring the work of local, national and international theatre companies, this two-week festival comprises theatre for young people, staged readings, and full-fledged dramas.
- The artistic staff of the Goodman are active producers, travelling frequently and extensively to seek out new and interesting plays and playwrights.

Stage Left Theatre

Background

Stage Left is a 25-year-old theatre seeking to produce plays that create debate on social and political issues. The theatre will translate an international play if they believe it is particularly relevant, but mostly produces work by Chicago writers. It is an ensemble theatre (2nd only to Steppenwolf in longevity) and this ensemble includes three playwrights. “Down Stage Left” is the new writing wing of the theatre, and accepts manuscripts and applications for development funds from agents, as well as unsolicited 10-page synopses. The Stage Left ensemble is very involved in the selection of plays.

Stage Left operates out of a black box, 50-seat theatre.

If a production is picked up by another theatre, Stage Left considers this a marker of success.

Innovation

- New plays at Down Stage Left progress through four levels of development:
 1. An exploration of ideas to examine the potential of the work, using pre-scripted ideas or partial scripts. There are limited rehearsals and one 20-50 minute presentation.
 2. For projects which have progressed from level one or are full length works in progress. Limited rehearsals followed by two public presentations.
 3. “LeapFest” – Stage Left’s annual new plays festival.
 4. Full production.

U.S THEATRES – *New York*

New Dramatists

Background

New Dramatists has been entirely devoted to the development of playwrights since 1949 and does not produce plays. At the core of its program is a free, seven year residency for playwrights, during which they develop their craft through readings, workshops, and the provision of educational and career support.

Over 250 people per year apply for the residency, and must submit, amongst other things, two full-length plays. Residents are chosen by a panel that includes current member playwrights, alumni and theatre professionals.

New Dramatists offers support to writers ranging from readings with top-notch actors, the “Scriptshare” program, national and international exchange programs, clerical support, workspace, a script library, and even temporary accommodation.

New Dramatists seeks to foster a sense of community, and so tries to use the same pool of actors and directors for all of its workshops. New Dramatists sees the playwrights as the “Artistic Director” of his or her seven years in the program.

Key to the freedom enjoyed by New Dramatists as an organisation is the fact that they own their building.

Innovation

- No other theatre offers such long term support for playwrights. The length of the Residency program is based on the idea that in order for a playwright to develop, he or she must not only have their first play produced, but their second, and third, and fourth as well.
- “Playtime”: run once a year. Five writers work with their own collaborators and cast for two weeks, culminating in a reading. This is a goal-based process and the project to be developed is discussed before hand with ND artistic staff. The five writers selected are also encouraged to interact with each other during this process.
- Composer/Librettist Studio: five writers work with five composers and five performers. The singers and composers come from diverse backgrounds – opera, jazz, avant garde, classical. For two weeks, Writers and Composers work together for 24 hours, then move onto a new collaborator, resulting in 25 new pieces, which are presented at the end. The process is not about product, but about learning to collaborate.
- Van Lier Fellowship: a person of colour (out of university, but under 30 years old) works with a mentor for 2 years. (The mentors are graduates of the 7 year residency).

- The Princess Grace Foundation Award: Open to U.S writers, this award provides funds for a one month residency, culminating in a public reading.
- Working Sessions: funds are allocated to each writer in the residency to use for ‘working sessions’ – they might want to fly a composer in, record a demo, or a hire cast for a workshop.
- There are three levels of funding for Residents:
 1. Money for an “imagining session” – usually around 3-5 days. People involved work for free.
 2. Money for singers or other collaborators to workshop an idea, culminating in a performance.
 3. Money for a public viewing of a work, or part of a work. All people involved would be paid for this.
- Loewe Award (\$25,000): an award for a writer/composer team.
- “Playground”: in association with the Children’s Theatre of Minneapolis, this is a program for playwrights who haven’t written for children before.
- Exchange Program: a writer from the Australian National Playwrights’ centre spends time at New Dramatists, and a writer from the New Dramatists’ Residency program attends the Playwrights’ Conference in Australia.
- Salons and Forums: playwrights may call a forum on an idea or issue – e.g. ‘How to make a living in between productions’.
- Advocacy: New Dramatists seeks to facilitate meetings with literary managers, agents and other useful industry contacts.
- The “Nocturnal Commissions” fund raising dinner this year raised \$55,000 in one night. 30 possible donors are invited, knowing they will be asked to bid \$5,000. They bid to option a play that doesn’t yet exist. The writer they bid on has 20 minutes to write a short play based on a discussion with the bidder. It is cast and rehearsed for 20 minutes. After dinner, the bidders are handed a printed program and all 12 plays are performed.

New York Theatre Workshop

Background

As the name suggests, The New York Theatre Workshop functions as both a theatre and a workshop. It produces 5 - 6 on and off-broadways plays (and occasionally musicals) per year, in its own 188-seat theatre. NYTW does accept unsolicited 10-page synopses, but sources most of its scripts through agents and a network of people associated with the theatre called “The Usual Suspects”.

A typical week at NYTW would include four to six readings and related workshop events. NYTW is dedicated to nurturing and supporting artists at all stages of their careers.

Innovation

- “The Usual Suspects” are a network of theatre artists associated with the NYTW, and range from internationally renowned writers such as Tony Kushner and Caryl Churchill, to newly emerging talent. “The Suspects Lab” takes place in Thursday evenings, and is a forum for reading and discussing work. Resources are provided, but the work being read or workshopped is not curated or mediated by NYTW artistic staff.
- The NYTW provides many minority-specific internships, including several full-time paid internships for people of colour. The aim of these internships is to teach both the craft and the business side of the theatre industry.
- The NYTW runs two retreats each year: one to Vassar College in June (10 days) and one to Dartmouth in August (1 week), which culminates in a public reading.
- NYTW uses the ‘Critical Response Method’ - a formalised system of feedback guidelines used after readings and workshops that ensures these sessions are focused and constructive.
- After a long period of negotiation, NYTW was able to acquire a council-owned property across the street at no charge (the local council no longer required the property). NYTW is located in a street with many other theatres and galleries, and the council gifted the building to NYTW as a way of cementing the identity of the street and surrounding neighbourhood as an “arts precinct”.
- NYTW first developed the musical *Rent* over ten years ago, and since then, the theatre has enjoyed over a million dollars in royalties from the project.

The Lark Theatre

Background

The Lark is a play development centre that aims to create an environment where writers can “write whatever they choose, without political or commercial pressures”. It also seeks to nurture diverse voices and perspectives from all over the world. The Lark includes the community in the creative process, in the belief that the creative energy shared is of great benefit to both the artist and the community.

The ‘literary wing’ of the Lark is responsible for sourcing scripts. There is a nine month open submission period each year. Every script is read twice and a written evaluation is sent to the playwright. The results of the reading are discussed at monthly meetings, after which the Literary Manger creates a shortlist of 20 plays. These 20 plays are then sent to a committee comprising members of the literary wing and outside theatre artists (different every year). This committee chooses 6 plays to be presented at “Playwrights’ Week”.

The Lark studio is an 80 seat studio theatre, and productions seen here are more like highly produced rehearsals than full productions. Although the Lark does not mount full productions, plays developed here often go on to receive them elsewhere.

Innovation

- ‘Roundtables’: These are focused readings, designed as an oasis from the isolation of writing. The director functions as a liaison at these sessions. Goals are set, a cast is provided, and a response session follows each reading. Members of the Playwrights’ Fellowship generally receive three roundtables.
- ‘Barebones’ comprises 125 hours of development time spread over two weeks, culminating in a series of 10 performances. The writer continues to write during the process, with the aim of actors being “off book” by performance time. Production values are minimal – some set, some lighting. The Lark usually produces 3 – 4 Barebones shows per year.
- Playwrights Workshop Fellowship: a playwright chosen by an advisory panellist to join the Fellowship meets with playwright Arthur Kopit and a member of the Lark artistic staff every Monday between 6:30pm and 10:30pm for a couple of months, then less often for the remaining 4 months of the fellowship. The idea is to develop new work in a rigorous, flexible, professional environment free of commercial restraints. Professional actors are also involved in this process.
- Studio Retreat: Playwrights are given 30 hours of rehearsal time over a week, to work with directors and actors in order to focus their piece. The writer is required to write daily during this intensive workshopping time, the process culminates in a public reading.

- Playwrights Week: this week long festival of new plays is the culmination of the work of the Literary Wing. Writers are provided with a creative team (including a director and actors), ten hours of rehearsal time and “a public presentation to work on specific developmental goals in his or her play”.
- Panel Discussion: Every year the Lark runs a panel discussion: “The Playwrights’ role in fostering social change”.

The Atlantic Theatre

Background

The Atlantic Theatre was founded by David Mamet and William H. Macy in the belief that, “the story of a play and the intent of its playwright are at the core of the creative process”.

As a producing theatre, The Atlantic is very selective about the plays it chooses to develop. Four shows per year are presented in the Mainstage Theatre (185 seats.) Three or four are usually “new plays” (U.S or World premieres); one or two are usually plays the Atlantic has developed in-house.

Officially, the Atlantic does not accept unsolicited manuscripts, but tries to be flexible where possible. It does accept unsolicited 10-page synopses. Most plays are sourced by staff at the theatre, artistic associates and from scripts sent by agents.

Readers provide the Literary Manager with a report, but writers receive only a letter. The Atlantic operates on the principal that constructive feedback should only be given if the theatre wishes to develop a relationship with the writer. If the theatre does not wish to pursue a relationship, no feedback is generally given on their script.

All of the Atlantic’s new play development is done by “Stage Two”, which includes commissioning, readings, workshops and fully staged productions. Stage Two has its own home, a 99-seat theatre that produces two full productions per year.

Innovation

- The Atlantic believes the best way to keep seriously committed writers writing is by commissions. Recently, the theatre was able to fundraise four US\$10,000 commissions. This year, to celebrate their 20th anniversary, the Atlantic commissioned 20 ten minute plays from playwrights who have had work produced at the theatre in the past.
- The Next Page: last year, six plays were read in this formalised reading series. The aim is to “introduce new plays at an early stage of their development to our audiences, bring new voices into the organization and allow us to begin an artistic relationship with a wider range of artists.” The Atlantic also has a summer residency at the Flynn Performing Arts Centre in Burlington, Vermont, where two readings took place last year.
- Atlantic for Kids: two shows a year a produced especially for children.

Primary Stages

Background

Primary Stages was formed 22 years ago as a writer-driven, producing theatre dedicated to new work. Although formed initially to support early to mid-career playwrights, acquiring a larger 199 seat theatre two years ago has led to Primary Stages taking on “bigger” playwrights, such as Terrence McNally and A.R. Gurney.

The mission of Primary Stages is to produce new plays (four per year), rather than new plays by new playwrights.

Innovation

- The Dorothy Strelsin New American Writers Group is the chief way Primary Stages develops new writing. Every year 6-8 writers are chosen and write a full-length play. In autumn, writers participate in eight, weekly sessions. Writers are required to bring 10 new pages to each session, but this work need not be part of a specific project; rather, writers are encouraged to “explore the scope of their vision”. The spring sessions comprise a further eight, weekly meetings where playwrights continue to produce new work, but are now “encouraged to focus their energies on an individual project in preparation for more formal, staged reading of their finished plays at the sessions’ end.” These readings are rehearsed and presented to invited guests. Most playwrights are “mid-career”, with some sort of pre-existing relationship with Primary Stages. Prominent US theatres have performed 45 of the new plays created in the Writers Group.
- Primary Stages also runs an exchange program with the Old Vic Theatre’s new writing program, where four British writers make their New York stage debut, and four US writers are produced in London.

Clubbed Thumb

Background

Clubbed Thumb is essentially run out the living rooms of its two founders, Meg MacCary and Maria Striar. The company rents a theatre for productions and has no rented office or rehearsal space. Clubbed Thumb is quite specific about what it is seeking to produce: New York premiers of work which runs between 1 hr and 1:30 hrs, has no intermission, has reasonable representation of women (both in quality and quantity of roles), and has at least three characters.

Apart from a full production each year in January, Clubbed Thumb runs a summer festival, a reading series, a new play ‘boot camp’ and also commissions one writer every two years via a competition.

Clubbed Thumbs seeks to develop and produce plays that are actively being worked on, and would benefit from further, vigorous development.

Innovation

- Clubbed Thumb invested a substantial donation and uses the dividends to provide a \$15,000 commission every 2 years. Entrants are given a theme (seen as a “jumping off point”), and must submit a description of the play and a sample scene. The winner is given \$5000 on selection, \$5,000 on completion of the first draft and \$5000 on submission of the first draft. (The final draft is due no later than one year from selection.) Clubbed Thumb then reserve the exclusive right to produce the play for 2 years, but is under no obligation to do so.
- ‘New Play Boot Camp’ involves a playwright, a director, some actors and a laser printer intensively workshopping a play over four days. The aim is to revamp, renew, and recharge work by allowing the writer to hear their work at least three times from beginning to end. Writers set their own goals for boot camp; they may want to work on one scene, or the whole play. The results are presented to a paying audience.
- “Summerworks” is a curated festival of play development and rehearsal that culminates in three fully realised, low budget productions, which run for a week each. A series of unstaged reading are also presented concurrently with Summerworks.

Rattlestick

Background

Rattlestick is a producing theatre that receives over 600 unsolicited scripts a year and stages three or four full productions. It seeks to foster on-going relationships with playwrights, believing in writer August Wilson's maxim: "If you want to support a writer, produce the first five plays he writes."

Submissions to Rattlestick are read by a team of volunteer agents, directors, friends, and associates of the theatre. Meetings are held every couple of weeks and all readers fill out a response form. Scripts of interest are read a second or third time, after which a cast of actors is brought in for an informal workshop/reading. Rattlestick is primarily interested in emerging American playwrights, but periodically produces work by other writers, whose voices wouldn't otherwise be heard.

Rattlestick has an on-going lease to a theatre, which it sublets to other theatre companies in quiet periods. The realities of operating a 99-seat theatre mean that a production might cost \$100,000 to mount, but the most the theatre can recoup through box office takings is around \$45,000.

Innovation

- Exposure Festival: Staged readings and bare-bones productions of fifteen new works-in-progress.
- 60-70 closed readings per year with actors, a dramaturg, the playwright and a director. Scripts for the Exposure Festival are sourced from these readings.
- Rattlestick Playwrights Project: every year a new group of writers are invited to take their work through the development process – the aim being a full production.
- Emerging Playwrights Project: In a mentoring scheme unique to Rattlestick, new playwrights are paired with an experienced artist (such as Edward Albee, Zoe Caldwell, Terence McNally) who provides them with advice and support.
- Translations Project: a newly conceived project, where contemporary playwrights make new translations of seminal works – the idea being to make them "live" for a modern audience.
- The Discoveries Project seeks to produce plays that would not otherwise be produced in New York City.

Immigrants' Theatre Project

Background

The Immigrants' Theatre Project was founded to present traditional and experimental plays by and about immigrants to the United States. The theatre aims to train people in theatre techniques, thus enabling them to tell their own stories.

Productions at I.T.P ask challenging questions, such as 'Are slaves immigrants? Are convicts?' It aims to tell stories that would otherwise not be told – like that of the Mexican man living in the United States, trying to get back to Mexico.

I.T.P is dedicated to giving immigrants a voice, and to that end presents anything from "notebook" readings to staged readings. Scripts arrive at I.T.P via directors, friends and associates, and are also sourced by Artistic Director Marcy Arlin from the internet.

Since 1988, I.T.P has presented the American or World premiers of over 250 plays. Not limited to staging work in theatres, I.T.P has produced plays in libraries, community centres, museums and schools.

Innovation

- I.T.P is unique in presenting work solely by, and about, immigrants.

Besides developing these plays, I.T.P also runs many programs, including:

- Playwriting, acting and directing workshops
- Q & A sessions after performances and staged readings
- Teaching English as a Second Language Using Theatre
- Using Improvisation and Theatre Games in the Multicultural classroom
- Intercultural Communication

Manhattan Theatre Club

Background

M.T.C. is a thirty-year-old Writers' Theatre, solely dedicated to producing new plays and musicals. Having operated as a multi award-winning and prolific off-Broadway theatre for most of its life, M.T.C recently purchased the Biltmore - a Broadway theatre.

M.T.C has a foot in both camps. Before the purchase of the Biltmore, the large number of M.T.C subscribers meant that very few single tickets were available for purchase. (Single tickets sell for much higher prices and are crucial to profit making).

Although the purchase of a Broadway theatre has alleviated this problem and opened up the potential for enormous growth, it has increased the commercial pressure on MTC to find plays which can turn a profit in a much larger venue. MTC continues to stage four plays per year in its two off-Broadway spaces – a 300-seat proscenium space and 150-seat thrust stage – plus a further three at the Biltmore.

M.T.C. only accepts manuscripts submitted by agents, but still receives 1,000 scripts per year. MTC are active producers, sourcing plays and meeting new writers by attending performances in person, or through their national and international networks of associates.

Innovation

- MTC runs an annual development reading series on Monday nights at 7pm called "6@7". The aim is to introduce audiences to brand new work (five plays and a musical) from both emerging and established writers.
- M.T.C employs a staff member dedicated to Musical Theatre, and runs workshops of 20 hours over a week with actors and a pianist.

Second Stage

Background

Second Stage is a producing Writers' Theatre. Its original mission was to produce second stagings of neglected work only, but this mission has now evolved to incorporate American and World premieres by emerging and established playwrights.

Of the six shows it produces each year, one will be the second staging of a work which failed initially (either through scheduling problems, inappropriate venues or limited runs), four will be New York or World premieres at a 300-seat mid-town theatre, and two will be productions by emerging or early career writers at a 125-seat uptown theatre.

Second stage aims to get plays out of the “workshop/reading ghetto” and into full productions. Second stage does not accept unsolicited manuscripts, and sources most of its play through agents, commissions, a vast network of theatre contacts, and LMDA – “Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas” – a valuable resource for finding new writing talent.

Second Stage must try and balance the relative financial security of producing a new play by an established writer, and high risk of producing work by emerging writers. Adding additional pressure to this balancing act is the shortage of (and fierce competition over) world premiere plays by established writers (e.g. Richard Greenberg, Terrence McNally.)

Innovation

- Re-staging important work that failed in its first run for reasons other than poor quality of the script.
- At any given time, Second Stage will have 10 commissions in progress. Those commissioned tend to have an established relationship with the theatre. Second Stage does not commission work it cannot produce, and all writers must write a detailed proposal for their play before a commission is finalised – the investment is too large to risk on a play that the theatre will not be able to stage. As the commissioned plays progress, Second Stage provides in-house workshops and readings as required.

The Public Theatre

Background

The Public Theatre was founded 50 years ago as a Shakespeare Workshop and has since evolved into a cultural institution which produces new plays, musicals, Shakespeare and other classics in its main theatre, plus more intimate performances by musicians, spoken-word artists and solo performers at “Joe’s Pub” (a cabaret style venue). The Public also stages two “Shakespeare in the Park” productions every year at the Delacorte Theatre in Central Park.

The Public has a distinguished record with new musicals – both “Hair” and “A Chorus Line” debuted at this theatre.

The Public seeks plays that speak to the moment; they want powerful, politically relevant work. To that end, they try and produce as many World Premieres as possible. The Public also has a social mission to be highly accessible, community-minded and representative of New York City.

The Public does not accept unsolicited scripts, but will accept a 10 page synopsis and a letter of inquiry. The Literary department of the Public reads and responds to over 1,000 scripts and synopses a year, and replies normally take around 6 months.

Innovation

- “New Work Now”: a festival of new play readings held every year. The Public uses this festival to try out work it is interested in, in front of an audience. After the festival, an in-house debrief takes place.
- Spontaneous in-house readings – this year 21 of these readings were held to investigate and further develop plays the Public is interested in staging. The actors and directors involved are provided by the theatre.
- Commissions: writers are paid according to their experience, with the average commission being between US\$7500 and \$10,000.
- A focus on, and investment in, innovative and politically relevant musicals. (Recently, the acclaimed *Caroline, or Change* was produced by the Public)
- Student Ambassador Program – college (university) students are given the opportunity to go behind the scenes, see free theatre, and meet the artists who work at the Public. The theatre educates the students, and they in turn educate the theatre in ways it might better reach out to student audiences.

CONCLUSIONS

The ideas and innovations outlined in this report were developed in countries with populations large enough to support a vast array of niche theatre companies.

No theatre company in Australia could (or would want to) adopt all the recommendations in this report. Even a newly established Australian Writers' Theatre could not do so.

I don't believe we should seek to copy, wholesale, any of the theatre models I have described. We have our own theatres, which have evolved within their own cultural framework and service their own individual audiences and communities.

What I believe this report *can* do is a) act as an inspiring resource for theatres in this country already developing new work, helping them to add innovative and bold ideas to their current programs; and b) demonstrate the incredible potential a new Writers' Theatre in Australia would have if it incorporated just *some* of these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I see my role as a disseminator of information, and to that end I will be making sure that theatre companies, funding bodies and government ministers have access to, and awareness of, this report.

I also see the personal relationship I have developed with these theatres as an ongoing resource.

Below are my recommendations - a summary of the most important innovations gleaned from my trip.

- More play readings that are open to the public, in order to further involve the community in the process of making theatre, and as a way of trying new work out in a safe, inexpensive environment before further investment is made.
- Incorporation of Film and Television “readings” into a theatre’s writing program.
- Paying writers for their time, even if for only a month.
- Commissioning writers, even if the amounts are small.
- Fostering Music Theatre collaborations, with a focus on process and learning how to collaborate.
- A “Shell Connections”-style program which combines new writing, theatre training and education.
- “Scratch” nights, where small portions of a new work are performed, and a couple of specific questions are asked via a form of those attending.
- More “Producer driven” theatre, where a project, rather than a script alone, is taken on and developed.
- The encouragement of interdisciplinary collaboration and the creation of interdisciplinary funding.
- A translation award to foster the translation of plays from non-English speaking countries in the region (including indigenous languages).
- “Active” producers.
- Gifting of deeds of property by local councils to theatres.
- Collaboration with festivals – fringe and mainstream – where the theatre company is the development arm and the festival is the venue.

- Replacing the model of a “Theatre” with that of an “Arts Centre” – a multidisciplinary space that could encompass experimental music, visual art, seminars, children’s theatre and debate – a kind of permanent Fringe Festival.
- Young Writers’ Groups, attached to major theatres.
- Collaborations with ABC Radio National and Theatre companies, where plays are recorded live in front of an audience: minimal production costs, great practice for writers.
- The sourcing of funding from television production companies and network, to in acknowledgement of the reality that theatres are training writers who end up using those skills in television.
- Facilitating the “showcasing” of Australian playwrights around the world.
- “Resident” playwrights, giving back to theatres by teaching or assessing plays.
- Community-based festivals – e.g. the Goodman Theatre’s Latino Festival.
- Teacher training in theatres.
- Matching writers with experienced mentors.
- Empowering immigrants with theatre techniques, thus enabling them to tell their own stories.