CASE STUDY TWO: SCOTLAND AND JAPAN

EXCHANGES ACROSS THE AGES

Momentum welcomed its first Japanese delegation in August 2015. The visit was designed to connect with key partners ahead of the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. However, selecting appropriate delegates proved difficult and lasting connections did not transpire. In 2016 a new approach was followed with performing arts at its core. Through a programme that involved seeing work, exchanging ideas and aligning the ambitions of Scottish and Japanese funders, artistic collaboration began to grow.

These developments were further enhanced when Japan became a focus country for the British Council/Creative Scotland partnership, which supported a Scottish delegation to the 2016 Performing Arts Meeting in Yokohama (TPAM). Scottish arts organisations, festivals, companies and individual artists shared their knowledge and learning, and built upon relationships they had developed during Momentum to explore options for collaboration.
**ORIGINS**

The Momentum partners selected Japan as a target country for 2016. There had been little prior engagement between the Scottish and Japanese cultural sectors, so the focus was on making connections ahead of Tokyo 2020. The delegation included Shunsuke Manabe, Assistant Director of TPAM; Hisashi Shimoyama, Director of the ricca ricca festival for young audiences in Okinawa; and Toru Hirai from Satsama Theatre, which includes The Gold Company, an organisation for actors in their 60s and 70s. It was designed to respond to the needs and strengths of Imaginate, Scotland’s national organisation for theatre and dance for children and young people; and Luminate, Scotland’s creative ageing organisation. In addition, the programme sought to enable discussions on co-production approaches and investment mechanisms for emerging projects.

Levels of awareness of the Edinburgh festivals and the Scottish arts sector varied among the delegates. Hisashi from ricca ricca, for example, knew the current and previous directors of Imaginate as fellow members of an international theatre association. For the others in the group, this was to be their first engagement.

The programme proved to be as important in developing existing relationships and ambitions as it was to seeding new collaborations.

“Momentum has had a vital and valuable impact on Imaginate and our relationship with Japan. While Momentum did not initiate this relationship, it has enhanced and accelerated it. Having a strong delegation from Japan in Edinburgh has enabled Imaginate to create new relationships that will both extend the project through touring, and facilitate it by identifying new and alternative sources of funding. In fact, going into the Momentum programme with a pre-existing relationship and evolving project has made the experience far more powerful. The relationship with ricca ricca has given Imaginate a starting point for conversations with the wider Japanese delegation and has inspired far deeper and more fruitful conversations.”

Paul Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive, Imaginate

**LEGACIES**

The most significant project that grew from the Japanese Momentum delegation is a major showcase of four Scottish shows for children and young people at ricca ricca 2018. The festival is also working on a collaborative commission with Scottish director Gill Robertson, which is set to premiere at ricca ricca then tour Japan before coming back to Imaginate in 2019.

The Gold Company continued to explore setting up a festival of ageing in conversation with Luminate, working with artists and companies in Japan and Scotland to develop skills exchanges and projects. New connections have also been made between Scottish and Japanese policy makers, which have strengthened the foundations for future engagement with Momentum in the run-up to Tokyo 2020.

“A direct result of the visit to TPAM, two Japanese programmers of major venues decided to attend Imaginate’s Edinburgh International Children’s Festival. Already one has come on board as part of the ricca ricca project.”

Paul Fitzpatrick

**FOLLOW-UP AND DELIVERY**

Ricca ricca has since programmed work by the Scottish companies Catherine Wheels and Barriclad Ballet through its enhanced connections with Imaginate. This is part of a deepening collaboration, and the potential for investment is being explored as a direct result of engagement with Momentum.

Following constructive dialogue with the Japanese Momentum delegates, the British Council/Creative Scotland Partnership has committed to working with Japan as a focus country. As a result, a delegation of Scottish companies and artists attended TPAM in 2016. The group connected with networks linked into East Asia, and looked at ways to develop co-production partnerships for Scottish work in Japan and the wider region.

“We are a small, project-funded company. Being invited to present to the Japanese delegation at Momentum, and being part of the scoping delegation to Japan, opened up a whole world of possibilities to us. We also got the time and space to build relationships with colleagues from Scotland. As a result Tricky Hat and Luminate are in the early stages of looking at a collaboration with a Japanese artist and groups of older people in Scotland and Japan.”

Fiona Miller, Tricky Hat

“We are both island nations with cultures heavily influenced by the sea and the landscape. We share strong oral traditions in music, storytelling and playwriting. We are also both nations that are sometimes reticent to express ourselves though creativity. Nevertheless we have found out that, although we are reserved on the surface, we can be wild underneath!”

Lorna Duguid

**LINKS**

TPAM
www.tpam.or.jp

ricca ricca
http://2017teng.nichigusui-fost.com

Imaginate
www.imaginate.org.uk

Luminate
www.luminatescotland.org

**As a direct result of the visit to TPAM...**

**Momentum Stories from Edinburgh**