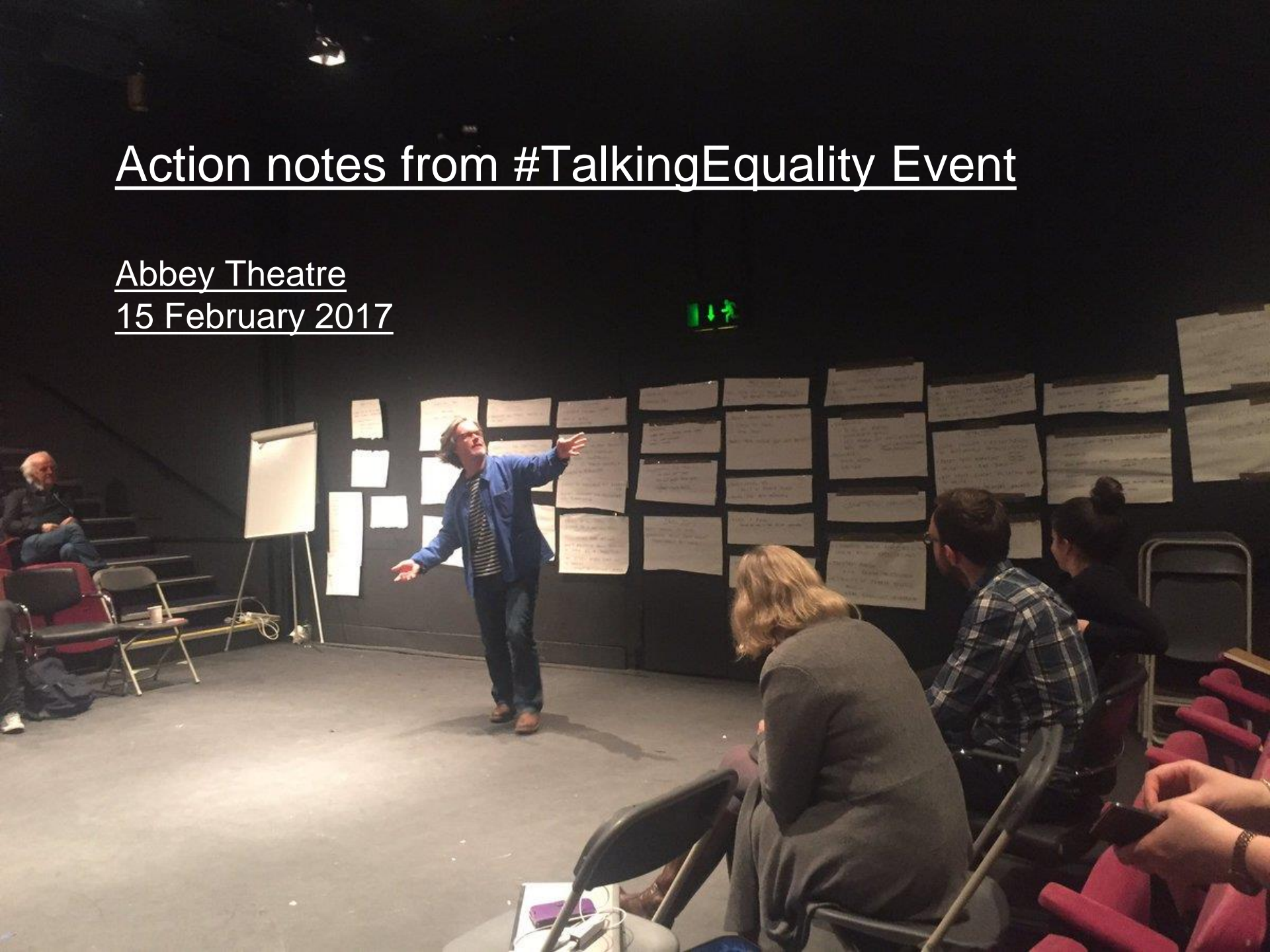


Action notes from #TalkingEquality Event

Abbey Theatre
15 February 2017



#TalkingEquality

On 15 February the Abbey Theatre invited members of the Irish Theatre Community to a day-long event to identify practical things changes that can be made to achieve gender equality in Irish Theatre.

#TalkingEquality

Together we chose 12 urgent issues to discuss and set an agenda for the day.



Saoirse Anton
@E_dayEccentric

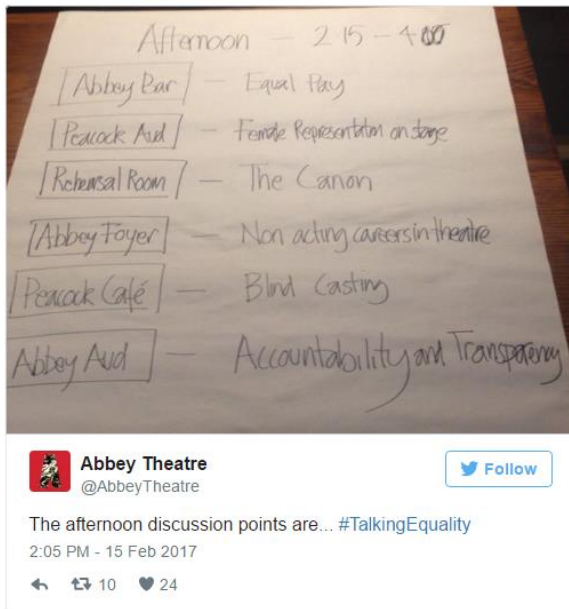


Decision making time. Choosing 12 topics to prioritise today. Everyone involved! What should we discuss?? #talkingequality
11:15 AM - 15 Feb 2017



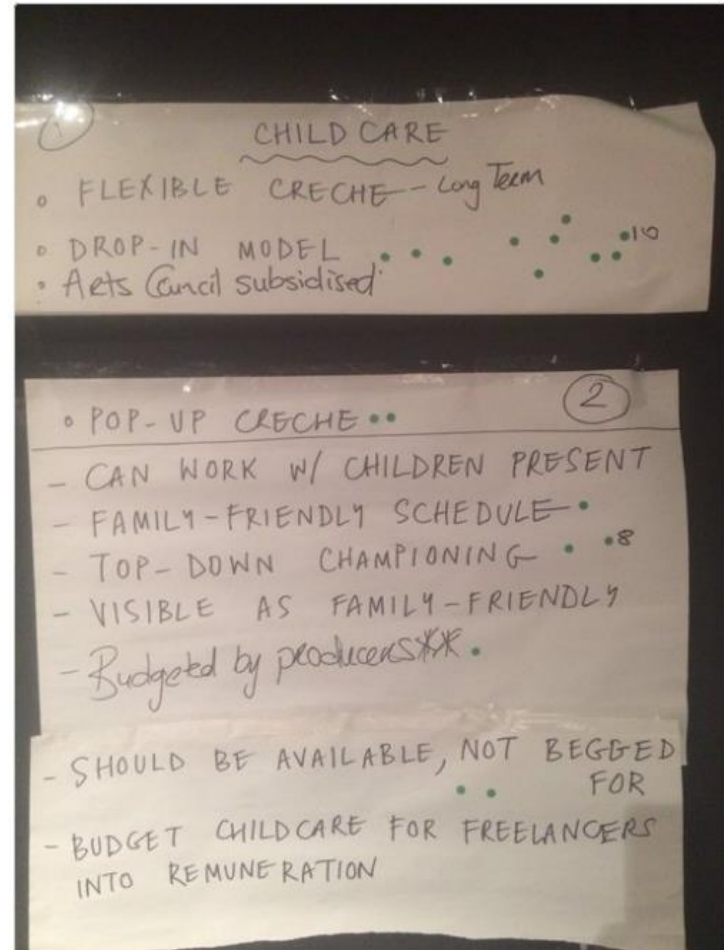
#TalkingEquality

Groups discussed these topics throughout the day and made suggestions for practical actions in each area.



#TalkingEquality

In the afternoon we regrouped and identified the practical steps we could take as a community.



MAM Ireland
@MamIreland

Follow

After some whittling...here are the points that made it to the final round up [#TalkingEquality](#) @AbbeyTheatre

9:45 PM - 15 Feb 2017

3 5

Action Points for the Community

Leadership Training

1. Hold a Board information / training session – Abbey can host in Dublin, but should also take place outside of Dublin. Reserve a minimum of 50% of places for women. 50% of attendees to be female.
2. Could Theatre Forum organise Leadership Skills for women theatre practitioners training? Talk to them.

Action Points for the Community

All organisations to put Gender Equality at the heart of their ethos

1. Take the opportunity at every table read / induction / meet and greet to state aloud that Gender Equality and Respect is at the heart of everything that we do. Make this visible. Make zero tolerance of harassment and bullying clear and visible. Clearly identify a 'go to' person, and share policies and documents online as a resource for others.
2. This happens in international venues, let's learn from our peers.
3. Companies/venues with established policies to share these as a model for others.
4. Harassment/Bullying needs to be tackled head on.
5. Lines of complaint and clear representatives need to be established especially in freelance areas.
6. Suggestion for independent redress board.

Action Points for the Community

Representations of women on stage

1. Clear policies and accountability regarding responsible representation of women on stage.
2. Abbey to host a workshop for casting, producers, directors on unconscious bias training.
3. It's not about quotas or dictating what to write.
4. How can we track and measure balance in our programmes needs to be addressed.
5. Non-playwright-led projects that are female centred are needed.

Action Points for the Community

The Canon

1. It's a living fluid thing and it should be interfered with.
2. Flip the gender of roles, make roles gender blind or gender fluid.

Action Points for the Community

Men-clusivity

1. Speak to one man about why feminism is important to me.
2. Make men active not just present.
3. Create men's groups for male feminists, a space to talk and gain tools.

Action Points for the Community

Child-care/Carers

1. Flexible Abbey crèche (which is open evenings to accommodate actors SMs creative working shows) / drop in centre FOR ALL theatre employees to use – insurance / registered child minders (similar to the old Superquinn model) RSC & Ballet use as a model.
2. Arts Council funding for theatre crèche– addressing inequality issue (include extra-curricular activities as it gets harder for parents when children start school mid-term breaks holidays extra-curricular activities). Cost to employee but subsidised by the Arts Council.
3. In the meantime look at pop up crèche for employees of theatre using registered agencies.
4. Note: You can already rehearse with children and babies in the room. This has been done twice by MAMS recently. The work doesn't stop just because you have children. Good message sent to the children involved seeing their parents perform.
5. Flexible scheduling / sympathetic scheduling policy.
6. Has to come from the top (CEOs) simple things like having high chairs in Peacock Cafe and baby changing in the Abbey toilets (a work in progress).
7. Empower parents not to apologise for their child care or other care issues.
8. A developed pathway back to work for all carers is needed.

Action Points for the Community

Casting

1. Create a checklist throughout casting process.
2. Ask writers/producers/directors/agents to check their unconscious bias.
3. Unconscious bias training needed.
4. Blind read roles. List dramatis personae as: “can be played as female OR male”, or not name the characters in a gendered way (call them The Doctor or whatever).
5. Interrogate unconscious bias at commissioning stage – whether the characters in plays are necessarily male/female.
6. Ask “who do we not see represented on stage” to check our own bias.
7. Bring the agents into this process.
8. Create space for “wildcards” aka who would we never see for this part.

Action Points for the Community

Unconscious Bias

1. Start with recognising your bias.
2. Talk about what unconscious bias means.
3. Interrogate your bias – constantly! Get out of our comfort zone.
4. Read *What works: Gender Equality by Design* By Iris Bohnet.
5. Act as leaders in society by disrupting perceived bias or norms (e.g. gender blind casting).
6. Be the tastemakers, lead as creators.
7. Create our own personal checklist around gender equality – just ask “is that equal”?

Action Points for getting more female playwrights on the Abbey Stage

Commissioning Process

1. More Communication
2. Clearly communicate what your process is and make that process as open as possible to writers to understand how the system works and what to expect.
3. Break down the sense that the building is impenetrable – give more opportunity to engage with the commissioning process.
4. Transparency in decision making.
5. Collegiate system of decision making with a diverse group (Associate artists).
6. Articulate to the creative artists what the vision for “new work” is.
7. Be open to conversations with writers at whichever stage they might be.
8. Invite work, don't just wait for submissions.
9. Timing of response – reader's reports, or decision on drafts/commissions, allowing a play to have a life quickly after the Abbey turns it down.
10. Look at the language of submission – how can it be tailored to encourage more women to submit.
11. Ensure gender parity across the commissioning process.
14. Action points discussed at #TalkingEquality event on 15 February

Action Points for getting more female playwrights on the Abbey Stage

Support for Development programmes

1. Supporting a play which won't be produced by the Abbey to have a life somewhere else.
2. Different types of development programmes – for all stages of a playwright's career and of a script's life.
3. Multiplicity of opportunity to submit work in different forms and for different strands and for differing outcomes (full production, reading, working with dramaturg)
4. Support female playwrights throughout their career - acknowledge there are different barriers at different stages of life and work to overcome those barriers

Action Points for getting more female playwrights on the Abbey Stage

Creation of a Lab

1. Focus on the Peacock as the engine room of new writing.
2. Creating a safe space where writers can “fail better”.
3. Make a safe space for writers/actors/directors to come and hang out, meet others, talk through work.
4. The sense of a Lab or hub where lots is going on.
5. Facilitate the work of writers.
6. Coffee mornings / Scratch nights / Writers nights / Lunchtime plays / Pop- up plays
7. Annual New Playwright Awards

Action Points for getting more female playwrights on the Abbey Stage

Encourage and support female playwrights at all stages

1. Support and give confidence.
2. Give helpful and constructive feedback in a timely manner.
3. Create feedback networks where women can share their work.
4. Transparency as to who is doing the reading of the plays, how they are assessed.
5. Lab/Engine room. A safe space to create a network/hub. Encourage others to try again and “fail better”. Coffee mornings for discussions or scratch nights to promote new work/work in progress in a less formal setting.