

« Car le vrai rôle d'un festival est d'aider les artistes à oser, à entreprendre des projets... »
Bernard Faivre d'Arcier

BUDAPEST 2016

Atelier for Young Festival Managers 2 - 8 June 2016

Speech by Luanne Poh

Participant at the Atelier Budapest

Closing ceremony of the Atelier for Young Festival Managers BUDAPEST 2016

8 June 2016

Firstly, to our dear hosts from the Armel Opera, and all our cultural partners in Budapest, thank you for the grace and kindness that you have shown us, in your beautiful city.

To the European Festivals Association, Inge, our mentors and The Festival Academy team, thank you for taking such good care of us, both physically and mentally, herding us from venue to venues, from subjects to topics. But mostly, on behalf of my 42 other colleagues from, we thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for your generosity in spirit, and in sharing your wealth of knowledge and experience to all of us here, for the past 7 days, and hopefully beyond today.

It was such an intense 7 days, and the breadth of the conversations went beyond most of our own cultural worldviews. If I could even try to sum up in a succinct manner the topics we covered, the conversations shared, and the opinions gleaned, I might try to condense it to 3 points that stood out for me.

1. Defensible: In all that we do, we, as young festival managers, realized that we must always be defensible. We must practice and demand rigor in our research and presentations. Whether we are cultivating artists to push boundaries, or presenting accessible works to reach the masses, or corners of the earth, we must be able to defend our festivals. Defend it to our stakeholders, our artists, our audiences and ourselves.

2. Relevance: And yet, in our rigor to defend our festivals, we must not be blind to the ever-changing landscape. And so, we must constantly question ourselves if our festivals are still relevant, and how they can or should stay relevant. A powerful and relevant festival today may cease to exist in 5 years, and it is better to let it run its course, than to maintain a festival that is no longer relevant to its community.

3. Connection: On the opening address of this Academy, Inge mentioned, and I quote "I think that more than ever networks are important – it is the meeting of people which can create better understanding and alliances, which can take away fear", and boy, are we grateful for the opportunities we have had the past 7 days to form alliances and build friendships through understanding of one

another's festivals. And from each and every other, there is always something good to share. And, now, with greater understanding, without fear and with great inspiration from our wonderful mentors, we brave on.

So lastly, on behalf of my colleagues, and myself, we thank everyone that made this possible, and if we were ever careless in our words or behaviour, please remember us better than we were, and we hope and know that our paths will cross again.

Thank you.