

The RESEO Artists' Development Project 2004 Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

The Artists' Development Project 2004 (ADP) was a programme of professional development for artists working in opera education, developed and managed by RESEO, the European Network of Education Departments in Opera Houses, in collaboration with six member opera houses.

An informal learning programme with broad objectives, the ADP was based on the *action research* model of training – a process of active participation, followed by shared critical reflection. The project was built on a simple model of exchange, using RESEO members' own education programmes as a learning resource. Three opera companies, Scottish Opera in Glasgow, Finnish National Opera in Helsinki, and the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris acted as project hosts, inviting artists and education managers from the RESEO membership across Europe to participate in four different projects.

The four projects highlighted different approaches to opera education. In Glasgow the focus project was Scottish Opera's primary school tour, where artists rehearse and stage an opera with 100 children in a day. At Finnish National Opera, ADP participants took part in the company's Opera Train, a project which aims to open the opera house to young children and families and involve them in creative activity together. The Châtelet hosted two projects. The first was a second family workshop, a new project for the theatre, based on the Finnish Opera Train model, which ADP participants helped to develop. The final project of the ADP was a creative residency in which artists developed two performances in response to the new commission at the Châtelet of Peter Eötvös' *Angels in America*, one by lycée (high school) students and one by the ADP artists themselves. At each stage of the project ADP participants took part in a preparation process, which introduced them to the project; an element of live participation, working directly with the general public in each of the three countries; and a process of reflection and discussion in a formal feedback session.

The four projects also demonstrated different approaches to the involvement of the visiting artists. In Glasgow a small group of visiting artists was able to work as members of the primary school opera team, contributing both to the development of the project and to its delivery in schools. Finnish National Opera successfully accommodated a much larger group of artists in a seminar-like structure of participation and reflection, although some of the artists felt that their creative involvement in the project was too limited. Both projects at the Châtelet, in contrast, involved ADP artists in new projects, giving artists direct responsibility for developing aspects of both projects within a framework established by the theatre. In both cases this process was challenging but artists were proud of the outcomes of each project. The advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches taken by each host company are discussed in detail in the report; in effect, the projects served as four case studies for the sharing of practice between RESEO members.

The different approaches of the host opera houses reflected differences in attitudes to artists' training and in more general terms to artists' roles: their level of involvement in project development, for instance. For some education managers, and artists, the opportunity for artists to explore their own creativity was a key aspect of the ADP. For other managers and artists, the development of a broader understanding of the practice and objectives of opera education was more important.

The Artists' Development Project had broad objectives, aiming to offer a development programme to artists, contributing through that process to the development of opera education across Europe. The project was also an opportunity to explore the role of the opera artist in education, and to focus on the shared values that underpin diverse practice in opera education.

The project had equally broad outcomes. It offered a wide range of learning outcomes to artists, including skill development, the opportunity to explore their own creativity, and a broader understanding of opera education across Europe. For opera education departments and particularly for the host departments, the ADP also had outcomes in terms of artform development, in that the

project contributed to the development of both new and existing education projects. For both artists and education managers the ADP provided a valuable opportunity for reflection on the purpose of opera education, and a reminder of the importance of that process.

The ADP has provided RESEO with a number of models for the sharing of practice between artists, education managers and education departments. It offers the network some useful lessons in developing collaborative projects, highlighting the need for a shared planning framework and process, and, in terms of artists' development, a framework of learning objectives. Future projects should also ensure a balance between managing the experience of the artists and achieving the objectives of the project.

While the ADP highlighted the diversity of practice among artists in opera education and education departments across Europe, it also demonstrated a strong shared commitment to the artistic, social and educational goals of opera education, and, in doing so, provides a foundation for the development of future collaborative projects through RESEO. All ADP participants are keen to develop further programmes of exchange between artists, education managers, and education departments. The ADP offers a flexible model on which RESEO can build, perhaps as an on-going aspect of the network's programme of activity. RESEO members now need to address the issues of funding and organisation which would make such a programme sustainable.

RESEO appointed an independent evaluator to assess the effectiveness of the ADP as a programme of professional development. This report contains the outcomes of that evaluation process. It should be emphasised that this is not an evaluation of the projects themselves – this remained the responsibility of the host opera houses – nor of the artists' contributions to the projects. The focus of the evaluation is on the process of learning, skill development and reflection that was facilitated through the four projects; and how well the structure and organisation of each of the four projects, as well as the programme as a whole, contributed to the ADP's broad learning objectives. In addressing these questions, however, the report gives an account of each of the four projects and the different approach to education work that each represents. In doing so it is hoped that the report will contribute to the ADP's aim of disseminating good practice in opera education.

The success of the Artists Development Project is a reflection of the benefits of sharing practice between opera education departments. The project's success can also be attributed, however, to the energy, commitment and seriousness of intent of all the ADP participants – artists, co-organisers, education managers and RESEO staff alike. Those participants also made a vital contribution to the evaluation process. The evaluator would like to express both admiration and gratitude to all those whose observations on the ADP have contributed to this report.

Alice King-Farlow
London, 29 December 2004

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1 Introduction to the Artists' Development Project

The RESEO Artists' Development Project 2004 ('ADP') was a programme of professional development and exchange for artists working in opera education during the period November 2003 to November 2004. Built around four separate projects run by three different opera houses, the ADP was developed and managed by RESEO, the European Network of Education Departments in Opera Houses, in collaboration with six opera houses ('the co-organisers'). The ADP was funded by the Culture 2000 framework programme of the European Commission.

RESEO appointed an independent evaluator to observe the Artists' Development Project, carry out a detailed evaluation with participants, assess how far the project met its formal and informal aims, and make recommendations for future projects. This report outlines the findings of that evaluation process. It should be emphasised that this is not an evaluation of the four projects that made up the ADP – this remained the responsibility of the individual opera houses – nor is it an evaluation of the artists' skills and contribution to those projects. The focus of the evaluation process was on artists' development *through* the four projects: an assessment of the value of each separate phase of the ADP as an opportunity for skill-development, exchange and reflection.

The report is in four sections. Part 1 is an introduction to the ADP, its aims, objectives, context and background. Part 2 contains a brief survey of the artists who took part, offering an insight into the background, training, skills and views of some of the artists working in opera education across Europe. Part 3, the longest section of the report, gives an account of each of the four stages of the ADP and considers their outcomes in terms of artists' development. Part 4 contains a summary of outcomes for both artists and opera houses, considers some of the organisational issues raised by the ADP and, in a final section, sets out a number of recommendations for RESEO and its member opera houses to consider for the future.

1.1 Outline of the Artists' Development Project

The Artists' Development Project was, at its core, a programme of exchange between opera education departments. It was set up on the premise that artists could learn new skills and approaches, and reflect on their own practice and experience, by direct involvement in the education programme of another opera house and the opportunity to work with other artists working in opera education across Europe.

The programme of exchange was built around four projects, in three different opera houses. RESEO members were invited to nominate artists to join each project. The first ADP project took place in Glasgow in April 2004, where artists were invited to join Scottish Opera's primary school tour, a project where a team of four artists rehearse and stage in a day a short opera involving 100 primary school children. The opera was *The Minotaur*, a primary-school version of a main-house commission, Scottish Opera's first full scale commission for family audiences.

The second stage of the project took place in Helsinki, where artists were invited to take part in Finnish National Opera's Opera Train for families, a project linked to the premiere in Helsinki of Kaija Saariaho's new opera *L'amour du loin* and designed to open up the opera house to young children and their families.

The third and final stages of the ADP both took place in Paris at the Théâtre du Châtelet. In October artists were invited to contribute to the creation of a second family project. This would be based on the Helsinki Opera Train model, adapted for the Châtelet, and introducing a new opera commissioned for family audiences, *Le Luthier de Venise*.

The final stage of the Artists' Development Project also invited artists to contribute to the creation of a new project, in this case a week-long creative residency at the Châtelet. ADP artists would work with lycée (high school) students from Paris and Brussels to develop a short performance by the students based on the Châtelet's new commission *Angels in America*, by Peter Eötvös. In parallel with their work with the students, the artists would also work together to create their own separate performance on themes from *Angels in America*.

The ADP did not set out to focus on education work linked to new operas, but it is nonetheless interesting that a project aiming to develop the practice of education work in opera should focus entirely on works from the new century.

A total of 53 artists and education managers from 15 RESEO member institutions (opera houses, a youth opera festival and an international opera academy) based in 10 EU countries participated in the Artists Development Project. This total includes both those artists and education managers who took part as *visiting* artists to one or more of the three opera houses, and the artists and managers who took part from the three host opera houses. For clarity the group of visiting artists and managers is referred to throughout the report as ADP participants, artists or managers; artists and managers from the three host opera houses are described as 'host' artists or managers. A detailed breakdown of participants in the ADP is set out in Part 2 and a complete list of ADP participants and host artists and staff is attached to this report in Appendix 1.

Through the four ADP projects artists worked directly with more than 550 participants, most of them children, with teachers from schools in Glasgow, Belgium and Paris, and with staff from many different departments of the three host opera houses.

The six project co-organisers of the Artists' Development Project were Finnish National Opera, Scottish Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet, the Royal Opera House, La Monnaie/De Munt and the Hungarian State Opera.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the Artists' Development Project were set out by RESEO as follows:

Aims

- To bring opera in a variety of contexts to citizens across Europe and its bordering regions.
- To encourage co-production, the mobility of artists and to disseminate good practice.
- To help artists and their employers work together to deliver quality opera education projects.

Objectives

- To increase access to opera by creating a programme of professional development through which artists can learn from colleagues across Europe and have the opportunity together to consider the values that underpin education work.
- To run workshops with participating artists to involve the wider public in opera.
- To allow artists to develop their creative ideas by producing a new short piece of work at the Châtelet.

- To organise a series of seminars to highlight the variety of approaches to opera outreach across Europe today.
- To help opera managers and other employers train/identify motivated/experienced artists who can bring opera to varied audiences.

In addition to the formal aims and objectives set out above, RESEO managers and project co-organisers expressed the informal aim that the ADP should contribute not just to artists' training but to the broader development of participating opera education departments. This would be achieved both through the sharing of practice and approaches between opera education departments; and through building the capacity of artists to contribute to the development of opera education.

In this way the ADP can be seen as a programme of *artform* as well as artists' development. The project could also be seen as an opportunity for RESEO to research new models for collaboration between members: not just in terms of artists' development, but related to the network's broader aims to share practice in opera education across Europe.

1.3 The project context: training for artists in opera education

The Artists' Development Project 2004 builds on an earlier RESEO programme for artists in opera education. During the three years from 2000 to 2003 a working group of RESEO members and other experts considered the issue of artists' training and development in the field of opera education as part of RESEO's *Why/How opera education in Europe today?* programme funded by the European Commission through Culture 2000. There were a number of outcomes to this process, including a detailed survey of relevant training provision across Europe commissioned from an independent consultant, Judith Staines¹, and two artists' seminars at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in September 2002, and at the Opéra National de Paris in September 2003. Evaluation reports on both these events are available on the RESEO website².

The Staines Report noted that there were no training programmes specifically designed for artists working in opera education, other than ad-hoc, in-house training programmes run by opera education departments, which were often linked to specific projects and open only to invited artists. The two artists' seminars in 2002 and 2003 were a first step towards addressing the need for training in opera education which was specific to the artform, but broader in focus than in-house training, which, in general, reflects the individual approach of the providing opera house.

The development of the 2004 Artists' Development Project was influenced by the success of the two artists' seminars and by a number of suggestions from artists and managers involved in the seminars for further artists' development projects. These included

- further opportunities for sharing skills across countries
- enabling more artists across Europe to work in educational contexts
- facilitating a cross-European collaborative project as a training opportunity
- the opportunity to share practice by observing work in other education departments
- a focus on developing their own artistic skills and creativity.

The 2004 Artists' Development Project builds on these ideas and in doing so introduced a new model for artists' development. Rather than set up specific training events, like the 2002 and 2003 Artists' Seminars, it used existing projects planned by RESEO member opera houses as a training resource. Artists would share skills and practice through a programme of exchange, participating in projects in opera houses, cultures and countries other than their own. As such the ADP builds on the success of RESEO's previous artists' development projects, but in doing so develops what is perhaps a more sustainable model for facilitating professional development through the network in the future.

¹ Judith Staines: *Opera Education – Professional Development Opportunities for Artists in Europe*. RESEO: 2002. Downloadable from the RESEO website.

² Renee Smithens: *Evaluation Report on the Artists Summer Seminar 2002*; Kate Castle: *Evaluation Report on the Artists Summer Seminar June 2003*. RESEO 2002/2003

1.4 What do we mean by 'artist'?

We always speak about 'collaborators', not about 'artists'. In the beginning we thought that this ADP project was not for us because we never worked with 'artists'. The word 'artist' in Belgium is used much more for singers in opera productions... Now we know that our collaborators are artists as well! And good ones! (Co-organiser, ADP)

The term 'artist' is open to diverse interpretation, especially in the context of a multi-national and multi-lingual network and project, as is the concept of opera education. Similarities and differences between RESEO members in their understanding of what is meant by an artist working in education were explored during the 2002 RESEO Artists' Seminar, where managers discussed the differences between animateurs – those involved primarily in an educational role – and performing artists who 'share their artistic skills and performing expertise, giving inspiration'³. Many artists involved in the ADP, however, combine careers as performing or practising artists in a professional context with their work in education contexts, suggesting that the distinction between animateur and performing artist is often blurred in practice. The range of training, experience and artform of the participating artists is explored in more detail in Part 2 of this report.

In recognition, perhaps, of the diversity of artists, definitions of artists, and education work across its membership, RESEO did not specify the skills and experience of artists invited to participate in the ADP, beyond the general definition of 'opera artists, who undertake education work'. Instead the host opera houses were asked to identify the artists they thought would benefit most from participation in each project, or, in the case of the Châtelet, the artists they needed to deliver the two new projects. This information was set out in 'Artists Profiles' on the RESEO website for each of the four projects. Member opera houses were then invited to nominate the artists they felt might benefit from the experience of the ADP.

Despite the information set out in the Artists Profiles documents, artists and managers had very different understandings of what was meant by 'opera artists, who undertake education work'; and, for some, the type of activity in which they were involved through the ADP was entirely unexpected. For future projects, RESEO should consider offering a definition of what it understands by 'opera artists working in education' to ensure clarity at the outset of the project. A helpful model is provided by a recent UK-based research project and report entitled *The Art of the Animateur*, developed by Animarts and described as 'an investigation of the skills and insights required of artists to work effectively with schools and communities'. The report offers a definition of the term *animateur* as

a practising artist, in any art form, who uses her/his skills, talents and personality to enable others to compose, design, devise, create, perform or engage with works of art of any kind.⁴

The Animarts definition offers two interesting reflections on artists working in education, which are highly pertinent to RESEO and to the ADP. Firstly, the definition recognises that artists may have parallel careers as performers or practising artists in a professional context and as artists working in education contexts. Secondly, it suggests that the role of the artist in education is different from that of a teacher, in that the artist uses his or her skills *as an artist* to enable others to participate in creative activity and learn through the arts⁵. The Animarts definition certainly applies to the artists who took part in the ADP; it also echoes some of the artists' own reflections on the role of the artist in opera education.

³ Smithens report, p. 10

⁴ Animarts: *The Art of the Animateur*. London: 2003. Partnership with the Guildhall School of Music, London and the London International Festival of Theatre. Available at www.animarts.org.uk

⁵ This echoes Alain Kerlan's presentation at the RESEO 2004 conference, where he discussed the partnership between artists and kindergarten teachers in Lyon: the partnership functioned best 'where artists and teachers retained their own identities'.

2 The Artists

This section of the report gives an overview of the artistic discipline, training and experience of the ADP artists, and offers an illustration of the diversity of practice outlined above.

A total of 21 ADP or visiting artists and 10 visiting education managers took part in one or more of the four stages of the Artists' Development Project. Of these, three artists took part in two of the ADP projects, and one artist in three.

In addition to the 30 ADP artists and managers, a further 22 artists and managers were involved in the Artists' Development Project through the host opera houses. All participating artists were EU nationals and of white European origin.

The information contained in this section of the report is drawn from responses to the first part of the evaluation questionnaire distributed to the ADP artists. (See Appendix 2 for the artists' evaluation form and for an outline of evaluation methodology.)

Responses to the questionnaires demonstrated strikingly that many artists working in education are multi-skilled, practising not just as professional artists and as educators, but across a number of artistic disciplines. Examples include 'actress, musician, director and writer' and 'art teacher, actress, puppeteer, animateur/facilitator'. This makes the process of listing the artists' disciplines more complex: the following analysis lists the ADP artists according to their primary skill and training, or the main discipline that they draw on in their education work:

- three are primarily instrumentalists
- four work mainly as singers
- one is a composer, working both within and outside the education field
- four had trained originally as dancers or dance teachers
- four are primarily drama specialists, including actors and directors
- one described himself as an animateur (but elsewhere as a music animateur and director)
- two are interdisciplinary artists.

Including the artist who defined himself as an animateur, eight of the artists described themselves as an educator as well as an artist: terms used included animateur/facilitator, artist in education, drama-animateur, opera-animateur, primary school teacher and dance teacher.

Most artists are regularly involved in either participatory education work, of the type exemplified by the four ADP projects, or in developing introductory performances to opera and ballet for young audiences. Artists were also involved in teacher training; and in composing and directing operas for children as performers. Two of the artists had undertaken some training projects in opera education which involved participatory activities with children, but had only limited opportunity to engage in other education projects. Two of the ADP artists worked in opera, but had no previous experience of opera education as understood by the majority of RESEO members; one, however, taught in a conservatoire. Most had a regular relationship with a an opera house; for some this was a formal engagement and two artists were employed as a member of opera education staff.

A minority of the artists had undertaken training in opera education, varying from short in-house training sessions to summer courses and the previous RESEO artists' seminars. A number had qualifications in teaching, including training as a music teacher, a primary school teacher, a dance teacher and as a teacher of dramaturgical analysis; two others had studied drama education. Many answers referred to experience as an artist, for example: '*No special training. I have got my skills through the 20-years practice as opera orchestra musician*'. Others felt that they had learned through practice, and by working alongside other artists, for example: '*No formal opera education, I have learned from the many talented specialists I have met and worked with in recent years*'.

One of the aims of the ADP was to encourage the mobility of artists. A number of ADP artists had taken part in previous cross-European projects: three in opera education projects, and four in the RESEO 2002 and 2003 Artists Seminars, as had two host artists. Several other artists had taken

part in arts or education projects outside their country of residence, but these were unrelated to opera.

Despite their difference in training, experience and artistic discipline, there were strong similarities between artists' views on the essential qualities required of an artist working in opera education. Most artists described a range of 'soft' or personal skills, including communication and listening skills, flexibility, energy, the ability to work in a group, the ability to work under pressure or react quickly to changing situations, openness to working with others and to new ideas. Artists also emphasised the importance of knowledge and enthusiasm for the artform, the ability to share it, and an interest in other artistic disciplines. Teaching skill, experience (and enjoyment) of working with young people, and the ability to involve children were mentioned by a number of artists: *'the maturity to let the children be "the stars"; 'the ability to see the world through the eyes of children'*.

There was a similar consistency in the artists' views of the key challenges of opera education. Many of the artists focused on the artform itself: the challenge of broadening access to opera for people of all social backgrounds, confronting both public perceptions of opera and the culture of the opera house.

Artists had varied expectations of the ADP. A number pointed out that they had been asked to attend by managers, rather than making the choice to attend themselves, but were nonetheless very positive about the opportunity. Artists hoped to see other ways of working, in other cultures; meet colleagues working in the same field; discover new approaches and develop new skills; exchange ideas; and broaden their experience. They hoped to use their skills and contribute to a shared project; one expressed an interest in taking part in the *'every day work'* of another opera education department. Others had fewer expectations, but came to the project with an open mind: *'I did not really have any expectations. I was just curious, open-minded and available'*.

These responses to the evaluation questionnaires offer a very brief survey of a small number of artists working in opera education; and questionnaires were, of course, completed after the projects, so some of the similarities in responses might be attributed to the fact that artists had recently shared an experience of working together. While the responses demonstrate diversity in training, experience and practice in opera education, as well as in artistic disciplines, they also show a striking consistency: many artists working across disciplines; a shared sense of the importance of social, communication and group skills as well as artistic skills; a focus on the challenge of sharing opera with a wider public. This suggestion of a shared value system was reinforced by the facility with which the artists were able to collaborate in the projects themselves, to which this report now turns.

3 The Projects

The Artists' Development Project offered artists the opportunity to join one, or more, of four very different projects, demonstrating a variety of approaches to opera education.

The four projects also took very different approaches to the involvement of the ADP artists, and can be evaluated in terms of the models they might offer RESEO for future artists' development projects based, like the ADP, on the idea of exchange.

RESEO did not define which projects should be included in the ADP, but invited the co-organising opera houses to suggest projects which they felt

- were representative of their approach to opera education
- offered useful models and experience for visiting artists
- and had the capacity to enable visiting artists to take part actively in a project.

In the case of Scottish Opera and Finnish National Opera, the projects chosen were already in existence, that is, they had been created with a local team of artists. Visiting artists were able to participate but were not actively responsible for the creation or delivery of the projects. The Châtelet took a different approach, using the opportunity of the ADP to develop its own family workshop based on the Helsinki Opera Train; ADP artists were invited to contribute to the process of developing the new project. The second Châtelet project, *Angels in America*, was based on an existing project model developed by Châtelet team, but was in all other respects a new project in which the visiting artists shared responsibility for the delivery of the project with the Châtelet team of artists. Both approaches to artists' development – involvement in an existing project, creating a new project – have advantages and disadvantages, which will be discussed further in the detailed project reports which follow and in the final section of this report.

Although different in approach, each ADP project shared three key processes, based on the *action research* approach to training, which combines active participation and critical reflection:

- a preparation stage, in which visiting artists worked alongside the host artists to familiarise themselves with the project and to establish what role they could play in it
- the 'live' element of the project, where ADP artists worked directly with local participants
- a reflection stage: a feedback session where visiting and host artists and managers could reflect on what they had experienced together and discuss the approaches to opera education that the project had demonstrated.

A detailed account of the four separate stages of the ADP follows. The four sections give an overview of the each stage of the ADP as an approach to artists' development; an introduction to the project and the aspects of opera education work it demonstrates; an account of the involvement of the ADP artists; and a survey of the artists' responses to the project itself and to its value as a learning experience. The artists' responses are drawn from the feedback discussions and from their evaluation forms; artists' responses in French have been translated into English. Three of the four feedback sessions were recorded (the Glasgow session was not) so in some cases quotations from artists are drawn from these discussions.

3.1 Glasgow, April 2004: Artists and primary schools

The Glasgow phase of the Artists' Development Project was an opportunity to focus on Scottish Opera's primary school opera tour. The project is led by a small team of artists who work with around 100 primary school children over the course of a school day to rehearse and stage a performance, in costume, of a specially commissioned opera.

A very small group of visiting artists joined this first stage of the ADP. They were able to integrate fully with the local team of Scottish artists, contributing to a rehearsal and devising process and working as a member of the team in three schools in Glasgow. As a model for artists' development the project demonstrates the value of an exchange involving a small number of experienced artists joining an existing project, which required very little modification to accommodate visiting artists.

3.1.1 Scottish Opera For All's Primary School Tour

The Scottish Opera For All (SOFA) primary school tours are a long-established and highly successful core project for the Scottish Opera education team, reaching more than 20,000 primary school children each year in schools throughout Scotland. Jane Davidson, Head of Education at Scottish Opera, sees the primary tours as representative of Scottish Opera For All's methodology, style and approach: the programme demonstrates the close partnerships the department has built with schools and education authorities across Scotland, including some of its most remote communities; and its commitment to involving children of all abilities and background in SOFA's work. The primary tour project supports the requirements of the primary school expressive arts curriculum and is designed to enable the participation of around 100 children of mixed ability and often mixed age groups in each school. The project visits five schools each week, over a ten- or twenty-week tour.

Each primary tour is based on a specially-commissioned score which is sent out to schools before the project with a CD to assist teaching; the songs are taught to the children in advance by their teachers, supported by a half-day visit by a SOFA music specialist. Schools also receive a detailed cross-curricular pack enabling them to link the project into other subject areas. On the day of the performance a SOFA team of four – three music-theatre or drama specialists and a music specialist – run an intensive workshop and rehearsal process to stage the piece. The performance is largely devised in advance and taught to the children, although there are opportunities for them to contribute ideas for dialogue, as well as the flexibility to allow solo performances and the addition of a small percussion group if appropriate to the school. The style of the performance is light-hearted and comic, challenging children's perceptions of opera; but the music is written to stretch their abilities, in a variety of styles and sometimes in two parts. The SOFA team travels with a vanload of props and costumes, and at the end of the day the piece is performed in costume to an audience of parents, teachers and other classes from the school; the SOFA artists perform alongside the children.

The 2004 primary school commission and the focus of the ADP project was *The Minotaur*, a commission which represented a new direction for the SOFA primary tour, in that the piece is a version of a main-house commission by composer Julian Evans and writer Allan Dunn, both regular collaborators with Scottish Opera for All. *The Minotaur* exists in two versions: a 25-minute version for a cast of primary school children, and a full-length version for a professional cast. The primary school tour of *The Minotaur*, then, also served as an introduction for children to the main-house production.

3.1.2 Involvement of the ADP artists

Scottish Opera invited ADP artists to join the *Minotaur* team for a three-day period of preparation workshops, slightly extended to facilitate the involvement of the visiting artists. The preparation sessions were followed by three workshop days in primary schools in Glasgow. The aim was that the visiting artists should observe and learn the techniques used by the Scottish Opera team during the rehearsal sessions, and then 'shadow' the SOFA team during the schools workshops. Two artists from La Monnaie/De Munt joined the full project; a third artist, from Finnish National Opera, observed the project in two schools.

The preparation workshops had two aims; one was the integration of the ADP artists, but the second related to the project. The *Minotaur* primary school performance had been devised earlier in the year by the team who had taken the project into schools during January to March 2004, and a new team would take over during the summer term, from April through to July. The primary aim of these sessions was, then, to teach the performance to the new, local team members. It also offered a chance for all the artists to re-work and develop some aspects of the production. This provided an ideal structure for the involvement of ADP artists. It offered not just a thorough introduction to the opera and to the process of teaching and staging it, but an opportunity for the artists to contribute, through a team-led workshop and devising process, to the development of the production. This detailed rehearsal process also meant that, once in schools, they were able to participate as a member of the team in teaching and staging the performances.

The school workshops followed a fast and practised model to teach and rehearse the production in a day. This was, necessarily, led by the Scottish Opera artists, who also performed alongside the children, but the visiting artists were able to support the teaching and rehearsal process, demonstrating sections, making suggestions directly to the children or to the workshop leaders or teachers, and singing and rehearsing with the children. One of the artists then took part in the performance alongside the children. Visiting artists also collaborated fully in the practical aspects of the project – including unloading and loading the SOFA van.

3.1.3 Responses to the project

A feedback and discussion session was held after the workshops in schools, involving the two Belgian artists, the Scottish Opera artists, Jane Davidson and Alison Cowan of Scottish Opera, and the RESEO evaluator and Network Manager.

The visiting artists had been struck by a number of aspects of the project: notably, the team-teaching approach and the energy, enthusiasm and commitment that the team brought to the project; the Belgian artists were more used to working alone. They felt the team approach was necessary both to the impressive task of teaching and rehearsing a production in a day with around 100 children, and to the demands of touring to five schools each week for several weeks at a time. The Belgian artists enjoyed the use of humour in the production; one of the SOFA artists commented that this was very much a Scottish tradition, linked to popular theatre and pantomime.

Discussion focused on the musical and vocal aspects of the project. The Belgian artists are both musicians by training, whereas the SOFA team at this stage in the project were largely drama specialists. The visiting artists had been able to make some helpful suggestions about integrating the music and drama, and promoting the children's singing skills and confidence.

Artists also explored the goals of the project, comparing the objectives of the Scottish Opera project with the ADP artists' work in Belgian schools. The Scottish Opera project was based on stronger partnerships with schools and focused on involving children in a fully-staged performance. Projects at La Monnaie/De Munt tend to take place over a longer period of time, work with smaller groups, are less connected to the school curriculum, and demand less of teachers; but perhaps allow more focus on the individual child's creativity. The visiting artists were very struck by the contribution of schools to the project and were interested in exploring opportunities to involve Belgian teachers more closely in their work. Discussion also focussed on the skills required for education work, in particular for the demands of the primary tour project. Artists agreed that, in this context, the ability to manage, communicate with and inspire a large group of children was critical, over and above a knowledge of opera.

The feedback discussion highlighted the value of the exchange enabled by the ADP. For the visiting artists this was the chance to participate fully in what one described as 'ordinary workshops – extraordinary workshops', and a rehearsal process which was real and not staged for the purpose of the ADP. They also welcomed the opportunity to see the project in more than one school, and experience how the process was adapted to different needs and levels of ability. The Scottish Opera team valued the contribution of the visiting artists, feeling that their fresh responses and constructive suggestions had contributed significantly to the development of the project. The ADP had also provided an opportunity for the Scottish Opera team to reflect on and discuss both the *Minotaur* project and the primary school tour in general; this was welcomed by both artists and management.

The artists' evaluation forms reiterated some of the points discussed in the feedback session:

We were considered as partners in the same project and I had the feeling we could really contribute especially being a singer/musician as well...

Seeing how team-teaching works really made an impression on me

In effect the [preparation] session served equally to train the team who were going to replace the first team in the weeks to come, so it wasn't a training session organised especially for us, but a real working session. So we collaborated actively in the modifications and improvements to the staging. And then the work in the schools over three days, very rich! We were plunged into the everyday life and the real work of the team... We took part in the heart of the school and really saw the work of the team in the school setting.

I was able to suggest ideas for the staging, for instance when I thought it should follow the musical setting more closely.

Our workshops ... give a little more room for creativity of the children during the day. The Scottish project is embedded in school life and curricula on a bigger scale than ours.

It's a very different project as it involves a huge collaboration with the school and music teachers, since when the team arrive there has already been project to teach the music

All the visiting artists felt they had gained skills and ideas that would contribute to their future work in opera education, specifically mentioning the use of humour, the team-teaching approach and the skills demonstrated by the Scottish Opera team in managing a group of 100 children.

3.1.4 Summary of outcomes: Glasgow

As a first stage in the Artists' Development Project, the Glasgow phase was extremely successful, and the process of involving the visiting artists well-planned. Both visiting and 'host' artists benefited from the process of exchange, discussion and reflection. The enthusiasm and experience of the visiting artists and the open and inclusive attitude of the Scottish Opera team were equally important in enabling the visitors' full participation in the project. Their experience was perhaps strengthened by the fact that so few ADP artists were able to participate in the project; with only two visiting artists joining the rehearsal process, they could be more fully integrated into the Scottish Opera team. The sharing of ideas and experience could therefore be informal and on-going (one visiting artist mentioned the opportunity to travel with the team in the Scottish Opera van as a productive opportunity for discussion, for instance.) Language difficulties were also minimal, as all visiting artists spoke English.

The team-led approach of the *Minotaur* project enabled the genuine participation of the ADP artists in the work of Scottish Opera for All. Watching the team of Scottish and visiting artists working together on the second day of the rehearsal process underlined this point. What was apparent to an observer was not a structure of demonstration and observation, but a sense of a team with shared values and a strong sense of professionalism, commitment and rigour. The artists demonstrated a common vocabulary of skills and approaches which transcended specific differences of experience, approach and language.

3.2 Helsinki, September 2004: artists and families

In the second stage of the Artists' Development Project the focus moved from schools projects to events for families in the opera house, as developed by the education department at Finnish National Opera (FNO). RESEO artists and education managers travelled to Helsinki for an intensive week-end of workshops and discussion around the FNO's Opera Train project, designed to introduce children aged four and above and their families to aspects of opera and to the opera house itself.

A much larger group of visiting artists and education managers was involved in the Finnish stage of the Artists' Development Project. The programme for the week-end was carefully designed to enable participants to develop a detailed understanding of the Opera Train, to discuss the project and its aims in depth, and contribute ideas and suggestions for its development. There was less opportunity for direct involvement of ADP artists than there was in Glasgow, and some participants were disappointed that their role in creating and delivering the project was more limited than they had

expected. Nonetheless, the Helsinki week-end provides a useful model for future artists' development projects with larger groups; one that could be described as an opera education seminar with a focus on reflection, discussion and shared artistic experiences.

3.2.1 Finnish National Opera's *Opera Train* project

The Opera Train project is an established part of the FNO Education department's annual programme: this Opera Train, called *Friend beyond the sea*, was developed in response to the premiere in Helsinki of *L'amour du loin* by the Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho, directed by Peter Sellars.

The Opera Train model was initially developed as an introduction to the opera house for families, rather than to any specific repertoire, although more recently it has focused on operas for family audiences. The *Friend beyond the sea* Opera Train was a new development in that it was inspired by an opera for adult audiences. Although none of the participating children would see *L'amour du loin*, its central themes of separation and of a sea journey were echoed in the family project by the idea of searching for a friend across the sea; the musical colours, textures and harmonies of Saariaho's score provided the starting point for the use of music in the workshops. The Opera Train project is planned around a simple concept: there is a question to be answered, or a problem to be solved, here the question of how to unite two friends across the sea. The families tour the opera house and take part in music and movement and drama workshops, in search of a solution which is revealed in a final performance in the FNO's Alminsali (studio theatre), in which adults and children participate together. The first round of *Friend beyond the sea* workshops took place in April 2004, so both script and workshops were created in advance of the ADP project.

Ulla Laurio, Head of Education at FNO, chose the Opera Train project as a focus for the ADP because she was interested in exploring the theme of working with families with colleagues from other opera houses. She also saw it as an example of a project that had been created in-house by the FNO education team, that was representative of her department's child-centred approach to opera education, and which, in opening up access to the opera house and in its use of technical facilities, demanded the participation and co-operation of departments across the company – a key concern for many education managers.

3.2.2 Involvement of the ADP artists

The Helsinki stage of the Artists' Development Project drew a much broader group of participants – perhaps as a result of discussion of the ADP project at the May 2004 RESEO conference in Glasgow, and also reflecting an interest shared by many RESEO members in developing programmes for families. Participating artists, education managers and observers came from the Estonian National Opera; Yo! Youth Opera Festival in Holland; La Monnaie/De Munt, Brussels; Théâtre du Châtelet; Opéra de Paris; Opéra de Nancy; Scottish Opera; the Royal Opera House; English National Opera and Glyndebourne. Education managers, observers and artists were all involved in the same process of participation and reflection.

That process was structured over three days. The first day of the project, the preparation day, served as an active introduction to the project, but also included opportunities for reflection and discussion. Participants were fortunate to have an opportunity to meet Peter Sellars, whose comments on opera, collaboration and the role of education departments provided an inspiring starting point for the week-end. The Opera Train project was briefly introduced by Ulla Laurio and members of the FNO team, but a much more vivid introduction to the project was provided by a full run-through of the project, in English, in which all the ADP participants, artists, education managers, RESEO staff and observers alike, participated, experiencing the project from the perspective of the families. The Opera Train rehearsal was followed by a discussion session, where participants made a number of suggestions about the project and discussed the role they might play in the 'live' version of the Opera Train project with Finnish families.

Some of these suggestions were immediately incorporated into the two Opera Train projects which took place the next day. Participants' suggestions had included focusing more strongly on story-telling throughout the day, including the idea that reminders of the central question (reaching the friend across the sea) might be placed around the opera house. One group of ADP artists tried out this idea, positioned in the corridors of the opera house with objects suggesting the sea. Other artists were involved in the music workshops, where five ADP artists supported the two Finnish composers as 'conductors', working as section leaders for each group of participants. Other ADP visitors were able to join the families as a participant, seeing the project in practice with families and children. At the end of the day both ADP and 'host' artists and participants were invited to a performance of *L'amour du loin*, giving an opportunity to experience the connections between the Opera Train and the main-house production.

3.2.3 Responses to the project

All the ADP participants and all but one of the host artists and managers took part in a feedback session the following morning.

Participants had found the preparation day very useful. Peter Sellars' talk was felt to have offered an inspiring framework for reflection and a reminder of the broader philosophy and the political context of developing wider access to opera. The artists had enjoyed the experience of participating together in the Opera Train project as a means both of understanding the project and of getting to know each other: *'we were introduced to the piece by doing it, always the best way to learn, and so we had an actual understanding of the flow of the family day'*; *'once you have played together...there's no limit to the discussion'*. The discussion session after the workshop run-through had been a positive experience. As in Glasgow, visiting artists valued the opportunity to make a genuine contribution to the development of a project: *'that was the moment we really shared our experiences and although the Opera Train was fixed, it changed a little bit after this session'*. The contribution of the visitors, their positive spirit and participation, was in turn warmly welcomed by the Finnish team. Visitors, in turn, admired their openness to suggestions.

Participants responded very positively to the project: they admired its careful structure and planning, *'but so relaxed in the way it ran'*; the enthusiasm and highly effective teamwork of the Finnish artists; the simplicity of the project and the idea of the single, central question - *'sometimes its very difficult to do something simple'*; and the use of theatrical space and effects in the final performance.

Both visiting and Finnish artists commented on the benefits of meeting and sharing experience with artists from different backgrounds, cultures and experiences: *'meeting so many people from different cultures, who do the same work for very similar reasons, has excited me again about what I do'*. Artists also commented on similarities of approach, of ethos, across different cultures and languages – as observed in Glasgow:

...even though the manifestations of why we do it are very different, there is something about it that we all understand instinctively... you meet people who are ostensibly doing work that's very different to you, you scratch the surface and it's very similar – it's universal and that's very reassuring.

Both the project and Peter Sellars' talk had stimulated reflection on the purpose of opera education – and of the role of art in society. This theme developed from a discussion of the aims of the Opera Train project, which one participant described as 'social art', referring back to a point Sellars had made about the need to democratise opera. Participants were inspired by the fact that the project was seen as a complete artistic process in itself, rather than serving as an introduction to seeing a main-house performance. The project was felt to be child-centred, an approach Ulla Laurio described in the context of Finnish culture:

The main thing about this work is that here is a child, here is art, and somehow we have to create the meeting. This is a naïve country... and I can say that there is something sacred about that meeting, about where and when [it] happens... we should respect that very much and... give each child the freedom to feel exactly what that child feels

The project's aims could equally be described as family-centred; participants commented on the value of involving parents alongside children, promoting communication between generations at a time when parents are becoming less closely involved in their children's lives (this observation was made by several artists from a number of different countries). Peter Sellars had discussed the decline of creative activity in everyday and family life, with access to culture a process of consumption rather than participation; artists returned to this theme in the context of the Opera Train project and its aim to involve adults and children together in communal creative activity. *'Creative everyday life has been part of human beings' way of living until very recently... but creativity has now been given to professionals, to technology, and now there is very little spontaneous art'; '[creativity] seems to me to be one of the basic needs of human beings... it is so important that another human being feeds the imagination [of the child]'*. Other participants, however, questioned whether it was within the remit and the capacity of the opera house to re-introduce creativity into everyday life.

Visiting artists and education managers continued to reflect on many of these themes in their evaluation forms. It is striking that all but two of the participating opera houses are actively developing family programmes; in this respect the experience of taking part in the FNO Opera Train was clearly both artistically inspiring and useful on a practical level to the planning of these new projects. Several participants commented on the involvement of technical departments and have been inspired to build new links with technical staff in their own companies.

In their responses to the questionnaire, all the artists commented on the positive experience they had shared in Helsinki, but for some the project had not entirely met their expectations. This related mainly to a confusion over what role the visiting artists would play in the project:

To be honest I really didn't know what to expect. We received the libretto and the script but nowhere was written what you expected of us as an artist...

This confusion about the role the visiting artists would play was evident during the preparation day, and two participants suggested that a discussion at the start of the project – similar in structure to the final feedback session – might have helped to focus expectations.

Some artists were expecting to be directly involved in creating the workshops within the framework of the Opera Train script (as was suggested in the project documentation on the RESEO website). The workshops were, however, planned and led by Finnish artists. One artist felt that this was an advantage:

I had thought we may have been expected to deliver workshops on our own, and was delighted to be there on a more observational level. For me this was a far more useful way to learn.

Others, however, were disappointed not to have the opportunity for deeper creative involvement:

I would have liked to have had more opportunity to cook up some ideas and try them out... I felt it would have been more interesting for the visiting artists to have found a way of skill sharing more too

I expected to be more of a creator than a reflector

Frustrating: not enough opportunity to participate in the development of the project.

One artist would have liked more opportunity to use and develop his own skills (and pointed out that the Artists Profiles document did ask for dancers, singers, musicians and actors); for him this limited his experience of the project.

I hoped that the ADP would give me a chance to use my skills as a singer for the workshops. ... Overall I think I've met interesting people with very different backgrounds... I've seen and heard a fantastic L'amour du loin and I've participated in a nice family day... But I didn't really learn any new skills or new ways of approach.

3.2.4 Helsinki: summary of outcomes

These comments underline the importance of ensuring that information about a project is clear, accurate and widely disseminated (to artists as well as to education managers); this issue of artists' expectations of a project recurred in the next stages of the ADP. The artists' comments also reflect the challenge of enabling artists, particularly a large group, to be fully involved as creators and contributors in the context of another company's project, working in another language and another culture.

Despite some disappointment about the level of creative involvement, for most participants the opportunity to share the experience of the Opera Train project and the production of *L'amour du loin*, and to take part in wide-ranging discussions with colleagues from across Europe, was extremely positive. Participants described feeling refreshed and re-invigorated by the experience. The process of involving the ADP artists over the week-end was extremely well-managed, and the hospitality of Finnish National Opera was warmly appreciated. It provided an ideal environment for reflection and exchange:

I can't express how inspiring I found this project from beginning to end. It was such a privilege to be invited to this conference to be exposed to so many new ideas, energies and experts. There is no doubt in my mind as to the power and value of conferences like this. Establishing links between workers, and a community of educators in the largest sense.

3.3 Paris, October 2004: artists and families, another approach

The next stage of the Artists' Development Project, the *Luthier de Venise* family workshop at the Théâtre du Châtelet, offered another perspective on opera education projects with families. ADP participants were invited to join a team from the Châtelet in creating a new project for families, which would be based on the Opera Train model, but adapted to different repertoire, a different theatre and a different public.

The Châtelet family day was planned as a direct continuation of the work in Helsinki, with the aim that the artists involved in Finland should build on their experience there by contributing to the creation of a second family project in Paris and playing an active role in developing and leading the workshops. Artists were also involved in the *Luthier* family day as performers: some led workshops in role as characters from the opera, and a singer and dancer gave a performance within the family day. Both aspects of the artists' involvement reflect the suggestions arising from the previous RESEO artists' seminars: that artists from different countries and opera houses should have the opportunity both to collaborate on the creation of a new project; and to develop their own skills as creative and performing artists.

The *Luthier* family day was a success, but it was a challenging project for both the Châtelet artists and staff and the ADP participants. It offers useful lessons on both the benefits and the problems of taking a collaborative approach to the development of a new project, and on the value of that approach in terms of artists' development and learning. It also offers an interesting perspective on how far it is feasible for one opera education department to adopt a model developed by another, in a different culture and context.

3.3.1 The *Luthier* family project: adapting the Helsinki model

The idea of re-making the Opera Train for the Châtelet as part of the ADP was based partly on an interest in developing family audiences at the theatre: as well as commissioning and staging *Le Luthier de Venise*, based on a popular French children's story, the Châtelet is also producing Hans Werner Henze's *Pollicino* in April 2005. Secondly, Lucie Kayas, Head of Education at the Châtelet, was interested in taking the ADP's aims to share practice in opera education a step further: not only

taking part in an project in another opera house, but building on that experience by adapting the model for another theatre.

A number of ADP artists took part in both family days, including artists from La Monnaie/De Munt and the Royal Opera House. One of the Helsinki project team was able to join the project at the Châtelet, but not the composer/music workshop leader (owing to a misunderstanding over dates). An artist from Scottish Opera who had taken part in Helsinki joined the *Luthier* project at short notice; and both Lucie Kayas and Carmelo Agnello, the project writer/director, had taken part in the FNO project.

An initial meeting about the Châtelet family day was held in Helsinki with some of these artists and education managers from both Finnish National Opera and the Châtelet. A number of concerns emerged: first, that the script for the *Luthier* family day was not yet written, meaning that the artists could not plan the workshop content in Finland, as intended; secondly, that the project was at that point lacking a music workshop leader, since the FNO composer was unavailable; and thirdly, Lucie Kayas expressed a concern that the resources of space and technical support available in Helsinki would not be possible at the Châtelet. Another key difference was that most participants would see the opera, which was being performed in the evening after the family workshops.

The script for the *Luthier* family workshop was circulated to ADP artists shortly before the project. It followed the Opera Train model, with certain key differences: the script was much more closely based on the story of the opera; the artists would be in role as characters, some drawn from the opera; and the workshops would involve participants in learning songs, an approach the Finnish team had not attempted. The Paris family workshop also introduced the idea of a performance by artists within the workshop. This was conceived by Lucie Kayas and Carmelo Agnello as an alternative to the use of lighting, shadow puppetry and other theatrical effects which had created a magical climax to the Helsinki Opera Train, since the Châtelet project would take part in the theatre's front of house spaces and would not have access to similar resources.

3.3.2 Involvement of the ADP artists

The *Luthier* project followed the same timeframe as the Helsinki stage of the Artists' Development Project: it took place over a week-end, with the Friday set aside for preparation and rehearsal, followed by two complete rounds of family workshops on the Saturday. As well as the ADP participants from Helsinki, the project team included the composer of *Le Luthier de Venise*, Gaultiero Dazzi, and the librettist, Claude Clément, who also wrote the children's book on which the opera was based; and a musician, singer and actress engaged by the Châtelet. Several education managers attended the project as observers, although all also played a practical role in realising the workshops.

The schedule and aims for the preparation day were ambitious. It was not just a question of the artists getting to know each other and exploring an existing project. For the *Luthier* family day the artists also had to work together to devise the workshops; and the full workshop, including the tours and the families' performance, needed to be rehearsed in the foyer spaces of the theatre.

The morning of the preparation day had been set aside for warm-up and discussion of the script, and the afternoon for rehearsing the workshops. Artists were concerned that time had not been allowed for them to work among themselves to plan the workshops, before rehearsing the sessions, and they were also worried about the practicality of planning workshops in a large group. No time had been specified to create and rehearse the performance element, a 'duet' between a singer from the Châtelet and a dancer from the Royal Opera House (formerly a member of the Royal Ballet and now an artist-in-residence with the education department). As time was extremely limited, this rehearsal took place during the scheduled lunchbreak. The process of combining ballet and opera is not a simple one: singers and dancers have different approaches to music. It was inspiring to watch the two artists shape their performance and find a means to communicate in their different artforms, in a very short space of time, but that process was rushed and this put a great deal of pressure on the artists.

During the afternoon participants split into small groups to devise the two workshops. One, focusing on singing and dance, was quickly devised by a small group of artists. The process of developing the music and drama workshop was more problematic. One difficulty was the size of the group; a second was that the artists involved had varying experience and expectations of education and participatory work in opera. This meant that a great deal of the session was spent in discussion about the content of the workshop; much less time was spent on planning and rehearsing the workshop and on the practicalities of how it should be delivered and managed. This was a source of stress and some frustration for the artists involved, both ADP and Châtelet.

The day ended with a planning session. Some useful suggestions for the following day were made, but the discussions mainly focused on practical and technical issues, and artists and participants were exhausted: it would have been a better use of time to have a brief plenary session to finish the day, and then a separate discussion of practical issues with those most closely involved.

A rehearsal was held the following morning, before the arrival of the first group of families for the morning workshop; a second workshop was held in the afternoon. Many participating families also came to the evening performance of *Luthier de Venise*. The ADP artists and managers not directly involved in leading workshops or performing took part in the project alongside the families, supporting the other artists and providing practical support, for instance in helping the participants to put on costumes. A feedback session was held after the second workshop on the Saturday afternoon, before the performance of *Le Luthier de Venise*.

3.3.4 Responses to the project

The two *Luthier de Venise* family workshops the following day demonstrated that, although stressful and time-pressured, the processes of collaboration between ADP and Châtelet artists had produced a successful family day. The creativity and the hard work of the Châtelet team should also be acknowledged, in particular in the way they transformed the front of house setting for the families' performance.

The success of the day was evident both from observing and participating in the workshops, and from artists' responses:

Despite the terrible stress of yesterday evening I had a wonderful time and was very moved

The event itself worked very well, especially the level of story-telling

The end of this morning's session was as strong a moment as on the main stage, it helps you redefine what strong moments in the theatre are

Participants felt the performance created by the singer and dancer was one of the most successful elements of the project: *'it is beautiful for children to see exactly what a dancer is'; 'I realised the value of... demonstrating the power of live art through the professional performance element'*.

Although the process had been stressful, at the feedback session many of the artists were very positive about the opportunity to collaborate creatively. Artists brought a *'fabulously positive energy'* to *'make the impossible work in a very short space of time'*; *'we were a great team, we were all three on the same level'*; it was good to see that *'education is teamwork... you need all the different artists – dancing, singing, movement, that's opera'*.

For ADP participants involved in both projects, the chance to compare the family day in Paris with the Helsinki Opera Train was also felt to be useful, particularly for participants from Finnish National Opera: *'it was very interesting to participate from the other side'; 'seeing [the project] taken further and in a completely different way...[gives us] so much to think about'*. This point was further underlined by comments from participants' evaluation forms:

It was really interesting to experience this twice, once as an observer in Finland and also as a participant in France.

Being involved in a second project, particularly one which in content and structure was so different from the Helsinki project, has been hugely beneficial in terms of understanding what can realistically be achieved

The different approaches to the family day in Helsinki and Paris offered participants an opportunity to explore cultural differences between the two opera houses' approaches to education. This is a large and complex issue and it was beyond the scope of the feedback discussion to go into it in any depth, but the differences in approach were touched on by a number of participants. The project director felt that the foregrounding of artists performing was *'perhaps a little bit more French'*; French colleagues also emphasised the importance of the relationship to the main-house performance of *Luthier*. The Finnish approach was felt to be more child-centred, and more focused on the *'the creativity of everyday family life'*, returning to some of the themes discussed at the Helsinki feedback session. But participants also acknowledged that the French model had opened their eyes to *'the importance and magic of bringing a performance and clearer storytelling element in from the start of the family day'*.

At the feedback session participants also discussed the challenges of the project. These were highlighted by Lucie Kayas and by Jean-François Brégy, Secrétaire général (General Manager) at the Châtelet, who was delighted with the outcome of the project but aware that the limited technical resources and support offered to the project had caused problems. Lucie Kayas underlined the point: *'In these conditions it's really hard to welcome the public. It worked because of everybody's energy but it couldn't be repeated...'* The lack of technical support and resources had compounded the pressures on the artists: for instance, having to use a kitchen as a dressing room; not having any help with make-up or costume.

For most participants, however, lack of time and lack of forward planning were the critical issues. It was pointed out that the first public workshop was, in effect, a dress rehearsal (and a number of alterations and improvements were made before the second session, for instance shortening the tours of the opera house). Time for preparation and rehearsal was short, but one participant pointed out that with better time management the Friday afternoon could have been used more effectively: *'I know it was a collaborative process... but perhaps somebody could have been in charge of time'*. Last-minute planning was also a source of anxiety: one artist was asked by email late on the Thursday evening to run the Friday morning warm-up. Stress and lack of time was felt to have undermined the artists' creative experience; a manager commented: *'I depend on the artists who work for me. I have to see that they are having a good time, which means that they feel safe and have enough time, and that the [project] is not too hard on them.'*

Some of the artists participating in the *Luthier* family day, in role as characters from the story, were involved at the same time as performers and as animateurs. This was one of the aims of the project, expressed by Lucie Kayas: *'within the framework of the ADP we thought it would be interesting to offer artists the chance to be within the same workshop artist [i.e. performer] and facilitator.'* This was a discussion point both at the feedback session and in participants' evaluation forms. For some it was a positive experience: *'Having a role as an artist and as an education worker at the same time was a new experience for me. This gave even more satisfaction'*.

Other reactions were more mixed. One point raised is that the script, sent out to participants in advance of the project, gave a fixed framework and indicated that the artist was required to perform, or to lead a workshop, but that the content of the performance or workshop was left open. Without adequate time for rehearsal or the opportunity for any collaborative planning in Helsinki (since the script was not yet available), the responsibility to devise the performance fell largely to the artist, in isolation, in advance of the project: *'The challenge in itself was not a bad thing but I would have welcomed the chance to fully explore and share ideas'*. Had more time been allowed for developing the workshops together, artists felt that they would have experienced a more creative process of collaboration.

One final point raised in both the evaluation forms and the feedback session was difficulty with language. English was generally used for group discussions, and the generosity of the French artists and managers in conducting much of the week-end's work in English needs to be acknowledged.

However the discussions around the project, particularly on the Friday afternoon, were made more challenging by language barriers: *'All the constant discussion was exhausting and ... was of course made worse by the language barrier...it might have been easier to conduct the week-end in French, with translations'*. It was also challenging for non-French speaking artists to perform in roles which required direct communication with the French audience.

3.3.5 *Luthier*: Summary of outcomes

The *Luthier de Venise* family workshop was a bold undertaking for the Châtelet education department, and an interesting model for RESEO, in that it involved the creation of a new project in the context of the Artists' Development Project. In general the project was felt to have been a success, both in establishing the family day as a project at the Châtelet and in the value of the project as a development opportunity for at least some of the artists involved. The challenges of the project, however, and the level of stress not just for visiting artists but also for the Châtelet's own education team, both artistic and managerial, underline the importance of careful advance planning. Adequate time – the project would have worked much better over three days – and proper resources and working conditions are necessary for such a project to be fully effective as both an artistic and a learning experience.

For this observer, the project also raised questions about the process of adapting a model developed by one opera house in response to its own aims, to another opera house, working in a different context with different aims. One question, for instance, is whether a full two-hour workshop and performance was appropriate preparation for children who would be seeing a two-hour opera the same day; in effect, participants experienced the story of the *Luthier* twice, when perhaps some aspects of the story might have been left open in the workshops and revealed in the main-house performance. A second important issue is that the Helsinki model was built on the collaboration and support of a number of different departments, and was able to use to the full the technical resources available in the Alminsali studio theatre. The Châtelet education team, like many other education departments, does not have access to the same level of resources. The performance elements of the *Luthier* workshop were an imaginative solution to this problem; but the project still demanded a considerable level of technical support, and much of this fell to the artists and the Châtelet education staff.

A question, therefore, for RESEO members to consider is whether it is perhaps more effective to explore and be inspired by the different models developed by other opera houses – but then to build a new model which is appropriate to the needs and resources of the individual opera house. In part, this is what the Châtelet did; but the project should be made to fit the opera house, rather than attempting to adapt the opera house to fit the project.

3.4 Paris, November 2004: artists and contemporary opera

The *Angels in America* 'Readings' project at the Théâtre du Châtelet from 5-13 November was the final stage in the Artists' Development Project, and the most ambitious. Like the *Luthier* family day, this was a new project, albeit one based on an existing project model, where the visiting artists would share responsibility with the Châtelet team for shaping and delivering the project and work directly with the participants, lycée (high school) students from Paris and Brussels. The *Angels* project also extended the idea of offering artists the opportunity to explore and share their own creative and performing skills. The team would be involved in two parallel performances, one created by the students and facilitated by the artists, and one created and performed by the artists themselves, both using the same artistic starting points.

Seven ADP artists took part in the *Angels* project, working alongside a team of a singer, project director Carmelo Agnello, project manager Mark Withers, and four composers from the Châtelet. Three of the composers were students from the University of Paris VIII department of computer-aided composition, supported by their Professor, Anne Sedes. The student composers had no previous experience of working in opera but were interested in exploring how digital music

technology could be integrated into an opera education project. This introduced another aspect of artists' development, as well as a research focus, to the project and meant that there was much less of a separation between a 'host' team and the ADP team, as for the majority of the participants the project was a new experience. For this reason, both the Châtelet and the ADP artists were asked to complete evaluation forms.

Angels, then, offers a different model again for artists' development, and perhaps also a model for artform development, in its aim to integrate new music technology into a devised opera project. How successfully it functioned in both these respects, artists and artform development, is discussed below. It is important to emphasise, however, that for the students and teachers from the two participating lycées, the project was an extremely positive experience:

'What wonderful memories of this day: the warmth of the contact between the leaders and the young people; the serenity of the interaction at the Châtelet, a sort of subverted Tower of Babel, where everyone helped the other to be understood, sometimes in English, sometimes in French, at other times in both languages simultaneously; the precision of the instructions; the constant encouragement in the teaching; the real authority born out of a kind firmness and humour; the ease with which the directions from the artists were conveyed through gesture or inflections in the voice; all of this and more created a flowering of humanity.'
A Belgian teacher

3.4.1 The Châtelet 'Readings' project and the involvement of the ADP artists

The *Angels in America* project was part of the Châtelet series of *Lectures*, or 'readings' of operas initiated by the education department with lycée (high school) students and their teachers. Lucie Kayas describes the project as an 'école du spectateur'⁶ (school for audiences): students develop an understanding of opera as a living, contemporary artform, by taking part themselves as creators and performers. The opera libretto is used as the starting point for the project (hence the title, 'Reading'), as it is seen as a means of approaching opera which does not demand a high level of experience in singing or music. Students create their own interpretation or 're-writing' of the libretto, and this text is used as the starting point for their performance at the Châtelet. The project has a secondary aim to integrate adolescents more closely into the life of the theatre: the students' performances are open to the general public and take place on the afternoon of a main-house performance. In this way the students' 'reading' of the opera is offered to the general audience as a commentary on the opera.

Angels in America, the Châtelet's new commission from Peter Eötvös based on the play of the same name by Tony Kushner, provided a challenging starting point for the students' writings: they developed texts around the opera's themes of homosexuality, the supernatural, disease, or more specifically, AIDS, death and betrayal. Work on the texts with students in two schools, in Brussels and Paris, took place during September and October 2004 and their scripts formed the starting point for the ADP project in November.

The aim of the *Angels* project was to develop two performances based on the students' texts integrating real-time sound transformation techniques⁷ developed by the team of composers. One performance would be created by the artists themselves, and the second with the students from Brussels and Paris. The project took place over eight days. A preparation week-end aimed to give the artists the opportunity to explore the project's starting points -- the students' texts and the sound transformation techniques -- and to plan their work with the students. During the week the artists would alternate working with the students with the creation of their own performance; and the two performances were scheduled to take place at the RESEO Conference at the Châtelet at the end of the week. The students, but not the ADP artists, would return to the Châtelet at the end of November to present a second performance of their piece and to see *Angels in America*.

⁶ *Une nouvelle "école du spectateur"* : an interview with Lucie Kayas and Carmelo Agnello : available on the RESEO website.

⁷ 'Real-time sound transformation' is the process by which live sound, e.g. that produced by a singer, is digitally manipulated to produce new sound effects.

The *Angels* project was hugely ambitious. It set out to combine two texts by two different groups of students into two different performances; and to combine the two groups of students in a single performance. It aimed to explore the integration of new music technology with live performance; and to integrate the student's extensive texts with music, movement and drama. The RESEO conference at the end of the week was an additional pressure, in terms of developing two performances which the artists felt were ready to show to such a specialist audience; as competition for resources of space and artists' time; and as an additional administrative burden for the Châtelet staff. Further challenges arose at the beginning of the project when a change in the arrival date of the Belgian students forced changes to the schedule and reduced the time available to the artists to develop their own performance. This meant that the plan to divide the artists into two groups working respectively with the French and Belgian students had to be abandoned, meaning the artists generally had to work as a single group, breaking into smaller groups as required by each day's sessions.

A large group of artists was assembled for the project, with visiting artists from the Hungarian State Opera, the Estonian National Opera, the Vadstena Academy in Sweden and La Monnaie/De Munt in Brussels. The ADP artists joined the project with varying levels of experience of education work, including some artists with virtually no exposure to education work as understood by most RESEO members. Of the French artists the student composers had experience of developing music projects with young people, but had limited experience of working in that context with live performance, and limited experience of opera. This variety of experience made communicating the expectations and aims of the project very challenging. Language compounded this challenge: English was mainly used for discussion and communication within the artists' group, but for all except the (British) Project Manager it was not a first language, and participants had varying degrees of fluency.

3.4.2 Responses to the project

It is a tribute to the energy and commitment of every member of the *Angels* team that this complex project resulted in two powerful and thought-provoking performances. Almost all the artists felt they had benefited from taking part in the project, and, overall, felt that it had a positive outcome, particularly in terms of the young people's experience. The project was, however, a challenging, stressful and at times frustrating process.

A major issue throughout the project was lack of time; the project aims were too ambitious for the time available. The lack of time was underlined by the timing of the feedback session, fitted in at the end of a working day, and before the completion of the project: it took place after the artists' own performance, but before the students' performance on the final day of the conference. As well as the formal feedback session, two ad-hoc discussion sessions involving the RESEO conference delegates, the artists and the students took place immediately after the two project performances. The discussion of the project which follows draws together comments from the artists' feedback session and the discussions with RESEO delegates, as well as responses from evaluation forms, and from informal discussions between the evaluator and the artists.

Most of the artists felt that the project had successfully enabled exchange. This was on a number of levels: between artists and young people, between the two groups of young people, Belgians and French; between the artists; and between artforms. The artists were very positive about the experience of working with the young people and felt that the opportunity for two groups of students from very different educational backgrounds to work together was valuable. (The French students were specialist musicians, the Belgians from a more academically focused school.)

Artists had valued the opportunity to meet and work with each other, to observe other artists' skills and techniques in practice:

... a lot of practice, a lot of new ideas to practise, the experience of seeing how ideas work out in real life and real time.

It was felt that everybody had brought a positive approach and energy to the project, and that this had enabled a group with very different experiences and skills to work together as a team.

... nobody closed or negative, we've all tried to make positive things

I'm used to working alone so it was interesting, I've learned, done many things

Artists had enjoyed the variety of disciplines: the project team included dancers, singers, instrumentalists, composers and a director:

To see how problems are solved from other disciplines has been useful not just as a teacher but also an artist.

Discussion at the feedback session also focused on the involvement of the artists in the two parallel performances. For Lucie Kayas, Head of Education at the Châtelet, this was a key aspect of the project:

I thought as this was an artists' development project it was important to work on the two levels, if we had just done the reading with the young people we would not really have responded to this issue of artists training...

For the project director, the artists' own creative work had greatly contributed to the process of working with the young people: *'working with [the artists] gave me a lot of ideas to work with the children, a lot more strength...'* The project manager also thought the parallel process was important, in that it served as a research process which fed directly into the work with the young people: *'It was essential. An artistic language did develop and it impacted on the young people.'*

Many of the artists, however, felt that the time pressures of creating both performances had limited their own work together, both in terms of their own artistic experience and in terms of developing ideas and methodology for the work with young people. Lack of time was also felt to have limited the possibility for exchange and interdisciplinary work, and for artists to engage fully with the music technology.

Two projects, performances: it was too much, it would have been better to choose between the two

If we had more time to ... experiment with our own work, and to speak about how we could use that in the children's work, then we would really have seen the connection.

Artists felt that the time constraint meant that they had not been able to use their skills fully, either in their own performance; they also felt it had compromised the work with young people:

About this morning [the artists performance] I'm just a little bit frustrated because for everyone without exception, I'm sure we didn't use our skills

Frustrating: too little time really to get to know everybody's artistic strengths and to allow a genuine creative autonomy for the students

For one artist, there were some aspects of the time constraints that were positive:

It's the first time I've done the sort of workshop where you had exactly two seconds to prepare it! It's been scary but also quite good for me to see that I can solve a situation without planning a workshop for three hours.

The lack of time, however, severely limited the integration of new music technology in both the artists and the students' performances. This was a source of acute frustration for the members of the team of composers:

A very heavy workload: planning the work, transport and installation of the equipment, rehearsals in the afternoon and work in the evening on my own creative project. Impossibility

of working properly in my area of interest (little or no time for adjustment or testing, which meant the work was superficial)

Also frustrating for the composers was the focus on group work, which they felt limited the opportunity to explore the use of new music technology, which had been a core aim of the project. They found themselves involved primarily as amateurs – or as sound engineers:

The idea at the outset was to integrate the artistic ideas of three young composers ... and to offer to the team the technological elements created by the composers. The minimum of time for planning and rehearsal was not respected by the people organising the week, nor was even the initial idea at the outset – [we] were set tasks such as warm up exercises, and leading group improvisation sessions. These things haven't got anything to do with our skills

Unfortunately I had very little contact with the students because at the last minute I had to deal with technical issues... I worked more as a sound engineer than as a composer.

Many participants felt that the aims of the project were unclear, and certainly artists appeared to have varying expectations of what they would be doing during the week; they would have liked clearer information in advance of the project. Participants also, however, felt that that the project had conflicting aims; and that the differences in approach between those responsible for directing the project – the director, project manager, and the professor in charge of music – meant that the project lacked clear leadership.

Frustrating: the lack of clarity in the creation of the project. The roles of the director and the project manager were counter-productive: the artists and the young people found themselves caught between contradictory instructions.

There was also a view that the aims of the project were too wide; that the project needed more 'constraints', in the positive sense of a framework for creative experiment. It was argued that the students' texts were in fact the only 'constraint' on the project, and that these should have been balanced more strongly by musical or other artistic aims. The planning and preparation sessions were not felt to have offered adequate clarification of the aims of the week.

In terms of their own development, the artists had valued the opportunity to work with colleagues from other artistic disciplines and other cultures. Artists felt they had been able to develop their skills – in particular those with limited previous experience of education – and had grown in confidence through taking part:

A huge amount of new experience. A new know-how how to carry through workshops with children

It was very useful for me. It was my first work of teaching, so I learned a lot from the other artists.

Everyday I notice ways in which I feel more confident and situations in which I feel helped by this work.

As with all the ADP projects, the aim of the *Angels* project was to facilitate artists' development through exposure to new experiences, rather than to offer any formal training process. Two of the artists were, however, expecting a more structured training project and had expected the project manager to carry out the function of a trainer or coach, 'to give ideas and feedback on my work with the students'. One of the artists was uncomfortable about being given feedback during the workshop process, and would have preferred an individual discussion. The process of training through direct participation was, in any case, limited for those artists who did not speak French: 'we don't have time to stop for translation and therefore it becomes natural for me to hand over responsibility to those who speak French'. Similarly, time pressure meant that responsibility was often handed over to artists with more experience in education; those with less experience had, as a result, less direct involvement with the students.

Although the time pressures of the project severely limited opportunities for broader reflection, the artists did focus in the feedback session on the role of the artist in education. One of the themes discussed was the purpose of working with young people on a creative project, and the role that artists should play. It was felt that the goal was wider than simply the teaching of performance skills, that there was a social as well as an artistic objective:

What we [as artists] have when we work on stage is faith in ourselves... this is the strongest, the best gift we can give to these young people, that in life and in an artists life you need strong values... like faith, enthusiasm, a positive approach

Part of the challenge is to facilitate them to become themselves... the major tool we have to do that is our artistic skills. That's the reason for artists development, that's why this work needs to happen, the hard challenge to find how you combine those skills in the process of helping young people be what they can be.

3.4.3 Angels: Summary of outcomes

Angels in America was an enormously ambitious and complex project, and it produced some complex responses from participants. It is important to underline that the experience for the young people was of a successful and enjoyable project which challenged and developed them; and that the majority of the artists were very proud of this achievement. Although their assessment of their own experience is more mixed, it is clear that there were some powerful outcomes in terms of new and shared experiences which will resonate in the artists' future work.

The experience of *Angels* also offers some important lessons in terms of project management. All of the elements of the project were felt to be interesting and valuable – dialogue between artforms and artists, between new music technology and opera, the opportunity for artists to develop their own performance. To attempt to address all these aims in one project, over a single week, however, was over-ambitious.

The planning process also needed to address much more clearly the respective roles of the project manager, project director and professor of music. The role of the project manager, for instance, was planned as a managerial function, but in effect was responsible for leading the artists and realising the project, without having been involved in its planning. Much of the tension in the project arose from some very fundamental differences of approach between the three key roles, cultural differences even; these could have been bridged and creatively resolved at the planning stage, but not in the heat of the project.

The interaction of the *Angels* project with the RESEO conference also needed more careful management; the feedback sessions after the performances were unsatisfactory, both badly timed from the point of view of the artists and the students, and too short for any detailed discussion. One further comment was that the *Angels* project was developed in isolation from the main-stage production and that it would have benefited from greater contact with the *Angels* artistic team at the planning stage. This much larger issue of the connection between education work and the artistic processes of commissioning and staging a new opera is beyond the scope of this report, and was addressed in some detail at the RESEO conference.

4 Outcomes, lessons learned and recommendations

This section of the report focuses on the outcomes of the Artists' Development Project as a whole, drawing together responses to the four projects and exploring common themes. How effective was the ADP as a programme of professional development and how did or how will it benefit participating artists and opera education departments? What impact did the project have on the host opera houses? How well did the planning and management of the projects and the programme as a whole support its aims?

Since the previous section of the report covers the individual projects in some detail, in this section responses are considered by group: first, artists, and second, education managers, including project co-organisers. Under Lessons Learned some of the organisational issues arising from the ADP are explored. The final section of the report sums up the outcomes of the ADP and considers how RESEO might build on it in the future.

4.1 Outcomes for artists

The key objective of the Artists' Development Project in relation to the artists' experience was:

To increase access to opera by creating a programme of professional development through which artists can learn from colleagues across Europe and have the opportunity together to consider the values that underpin education work.

4.1.1 *What did artists learn?*

The artists' responses to each stage of the ADP, discussed in the previous section, demonstrate a variety of learning outcomes. Some artists felt they had learned specific, practical workshop tools and skills which they would be able to use in their own work in the future: games, warm-up exercises, team-teaching or approaches such as the 'key words' used as cues for participants in the Helsinki Opera Train. Others felt they had learned new approaches to working with a specific group, for example, skills for managing large groups of children, a focus on story-telling with families.

Artists described increased confidence in their own skills as educators and artists; they had learned to be more flexible and more open to new approaches and processes; some felt they had learned organisational skills. The project had also stimulated their own creativity and several artists were now keen to pursue their own artistic research projects. One artist felt his involvement in the ADP and his greater understanding of working with young people would feed back into his work as a professional director. For others the project had focused their ideas on the purpose of opera education: the question of *why* they do this work as well as *how*.

4.1.2 *How did they learn?*

The process of learning, for most of the ADP artists, was through an active process of participation and exchange with other artists working in the same field, but in different contexts:

Overall we have much in common but the small differences adds flavour to our thinking, and that can lead to new ideas and new sources of how to deal with things.

Neither pure observation nor pure training, but an exchange, a collaboration, so it has a double value.

The fact that the projects were 'real' rather than a training event – 'experience' rather than 'theory', as one artist defined it – was felt to be important. Another artist underlined the importance for her of learning by doing (kinaesthetic learning) rather than by listening or watching (auditory or visual learning). Learning was not limited to the ADP projects: artists also used their time with colleagues from different opera houses to find out about their projects. Most artists reported that this process of exchange and discussion stimulated reflection on the artists' own work and approach, and some said that this process had re-inspired their belief and commitment to education work. Many artists

valued the exchange between artistic disciplines, particularly those involved in the *Angels* project, although they also felt that the process could have gone much further with more time.

The feedback sessions were seen as a key part of the learning experience: an opportunity to 'consolidate' and discuss what had been experienced and explore the objectives of the project. The discussion also allowed participants to reach a better understanding of other artists' points of view, particularly where there had been tensions or differences of approach in a project. Some artists felt that the sessions should be more directed and more focused on drawing out issues of concern from the artists. The Paris sessions were felt to be both too rushed and 'too close' to the project; the Helsinki session, held on the day after the project, perhaps offers a better model.

Around half of the artists felt that their views on opera education had changed or developed as a result of their participation in the project – generally that their perceptions had been reinforced, enriched, broadened or deepened by their involvement in the project; or that it had brought new perspectives and opened their eyes to new approaches. Finally, the project had given several artists the determination to expand opera education work in their own countries.

4.1.3 *Future projects: artists' suggestions*

Many artists expressed an interest in taking part in similar exchange projects in the future. Some suggested projects which would enable a more in-depth collaboration between artists in different disciplines, focusing as much on research and artform development as on training. Several of the artists involved in *Angels* would be interested in further projects where they could develop their own performances. Others would be interested in a more structured training programme developing skills for opera education; one artist suggested specific exchange programmes for singers. Another artist felt that the Helsinki ADP project was a good model, but that participants should undertake detailed preparation in advance of the project so that they could play a more active role once there. Many artists stated simply that they would like more opportunities to see each others' work, one arguing that this was particularly important for new and developing education departments.

4.1.4 *Summary of outcomes for artists*

These responses drawn from the artists' evaluation forms demonstrate that the majority of the participants did 'learn from colleagues across Europe', as set out in the ADP objectives. For a small minority of artists this objective was not fully met, generally because the project in which they were involved and the learning outcomes it offered were not what they were expecting.

Artists' comments on individual projects, however, demonstrate that they felt that project structures could have enabled them to learn more, for example through more active contribution to a project or by working in a less pressured environment. Many saw the ADP projects as a 'good start' and feel that now it is up to RESEO and the member opera houses to 'allow this mobility of artists to be lasting, so that teams can ... continue to work together on different projects in different countries.'

The ADP did provide artists with 'the opportunity together to consider the values that underpin education work', as demonstrated by the discussions in feedback sessions on the role of the artist in education and the purpose of opera education, both social and artistic. For many this was the most valuable aspect of the ADP: 'important opportunities to really think why we are doing this work.'

4.2 Outcomes for opera houses: project co-organisers' and education managers' views

The key ADP aim and objectives relating to education managers were

- to help artists and their employers work together to deliver quality education projects; and
- to help opera managers and other employers train/identify motivated/experienced artists who can bring opera to varied audiences.

Education managers' motives for involvement in the ADP reflected this focus on both project development – the opportunity to learn from other opera houses – and on the training and development opportunity the ADP offered their artists. It was striking, for instance, that the majority

of opera education departments represented at the Helsinki project were either interested in or actively developing family projects. This is not to suggest that there is necessarily a tension between objectives for the artist and objectives for the education manager, but it is important to recognise that education departments' training budgets are limited and that projects which offer tangible benefits to the department as well as to the individual artist are more likely to attract participants.

Education managers' responses to the ADP are drawn largely from the co-organisers. Although all education managers who had chosen to involve an artist in the ADP were sent an evaluation form, only two of these were returned, both relating to the Helsinki project. The responses to the ADP set out below are, as a result, heavily weighed towards the co-organising opera education managers and may not be representative of other education managers' views.

4.2.1 *Project hosts*

The education managers who reported the widest benefits from their involvement in the ADP were those who had hosted projects. Here the impact of the project was felt not just by those artists directly involved as ADP visitors to other opera houses, but by the larger group of 'host' artists who were able to take part in the experience of shared participation and reflection. For artists from Finnish National Opera, for instance, involvement in the ADP had given them

a new perspective to their work, a little bit wider angle from which to look at what they do. In some cases there have been very pragmatic things, new ideas and new tools for workshops and future work... and in some cases more clearly development in thinking about education.

At the Châtelet, the two ADP projects had offered new experiences and training to local artists as well as to the visiting ADP artists; in effect the projects served an additional function for the Châtelet as in-house training for both regular and new education artists.

For both Scottish Opera and Finnish National Opera, their involvement as a host for the ADP had offered an additional benefit in terms of project development. For the Head of Education at Scottish Opera an unexpected benefit of the project was the fresh perspective the visiting artists brought to the primary school project, as well as the opportunity for reflection and evaluation *during* a project rather than after its completion: opportunities for discussion and evaluation will now be planned into the primary tour schedules. In Finland concrete suggestions from ADP artists during the preparation day were put into effect immediately in the workshops the following day. The Châtelet took the idea of artform development still further and used the opportunity offered by the ADP to pilot a family day based on the Helsinki model; the theatre is now planning a second family day in 2005. The Châtelet also intends to incorporate the idea of parallel performances by artists and young people into all its 'Readings' projects, based the model tried out through the ADP.

One further point made by the Heads of Education in both Finland and at the Châtelet was that the involvement of their departments in an international project through RESEO helped to raise the profile of education within the opera house. At the Châtelet the *Luthier* family workshops' demonstration of the lack of technical and practical support for the education department has resulted in a commitment to providing better technical support for the department.

4.2.2 *Other co-organisers and education managers*

Like the project hosts, most other education managers felt that the project had been of value, to a greater or lesser extent, to their artists.

[Artists] have discovered the potential of the different teams in Europe but they have also evaluated their own potential

They had a good opportunity to compare their work with that in the other countries. And their opinion also counted: the Helsinki project took on an international face.

It has given her many ideas to bring back to [the department]... I felt that it has enabled her to be more questioning about the content and style of education work (both ours and that of

others) and to be more confident about her opinions... [This] can only be beneficial to the organisation.

These education managers also saw the benefits of the project in terms of artform development: the ADP had offered '*strong stimulation*' for new projects at La Monnaie/De Munt, for instance. Artists' experience of the two family projects in particular will contribute to the development of new family programmes in other opera houses.

Like the artists, however, these managers recognised the limits of the experience offered by the ADP. For one it was '*more a meeting and an exchanging experience than a learning experience*'. Another commented of the Helsinki project that her impression was that '*there was not enough time for the artists to become deeply involved in the delivery of the Family Day and that their role was largely as observers. The more involved they are, the deeper the effect is likely to be*'.

One of the co-organising opera houses had more fundamental concerns about the benefits the ADP offered in terms of artists' training. The Royal Opera House had been involved throughout the *Why/How Opera Education Today?* artists' programme, and several of the education staff there felt that the ADP offered a less effective model for artists training than previous RESEO initiatives. It was felt that for real development to take place, artists needed to be creatively involved as collaborators in the planning and development of a project, as suggested by the artists in the 2002 and 2003 RESEO seminars. However active the involvement of the artists in the ADP projects, it was thought that the ADP offered an experience more of observation than of participation. This might give the artists some new tools or approaches but would not provide an in-depth understanding of a project's context, aims and objectives – nor of its relationship to the department's policy and programme as a whole. The *Luthier* and *Angels* projects went some way towards the objective of a collaborative project, in that the artists played an active role in delivering aspects of the project, but they were not involved in the development of the projects, nor in establishing their own roles.

Another point made was that the opportunity for an artist to be involved creatively in developing a project from the planning stage, should not be blurred with the opportunity for an artist to participate creatively – for instance, as a performer in the *Luthier* family days, or in the artists' *Angels* performance. Other managers, however, point to the value of involving artists in activity that develops their own creativity, as this is in itself a vital aspect of their role as artists in education.

Several education managers – and a number of the artists – also argued that the broader perspective on opera education that artists developed through the ADP would enable them to play a more active role in the development of projects in their own departments in the future.

The Hungarian State Opera had a different perspective on the ADP. The opera house's education programme at present is limited to its Opera Studio, a training programme for young singers. Two artists from the Hungarian State Opera took part in the *Angels* project, and although they had enjoyed the experience, they had expected to be taking part in a programme of skill development with other young artists, rather than in an education project involving young people. The artists felt that in the long term they would benefit from this experience, although there is at present no opportunity for them to build on it by involvement in education projects in Hungary. It was also felt by both management and artists that they would have had a far greater benefit from the project had they known what to expect and been able to prepare accordingly.

4.2.3 Summary of outcomes for education managers

The responses of the majority of education managers involved in the ADP indicate that the project largely met its objectives, in terms of providing a training opportunity for artists which would contribute to the development of individual education departments and projects. Managers also saw the ADP as a valuable opportunity for exchange of practice, both between artists, and between opera education departments. The ADP also provided a means of valuing artists and of promoting their work in education to a wider public: one education manager commented that she felt the work of artists in opera education was under-recognised, that artists felt isolated, and that the ADP was helpful in addressing these issues.

All the education managers surveyed, co-organisers as well as other managers, were keen to build on the ADP with the development of future exchanges and collaborations through RESEO. Some saw the ADP as a step on the way to developing a fully collaborative project, as discussed above. Others would be interested in developing a broader programme of exchanges which could include development opportunities for education managers and directors: there was a concern that RESEO training projects should not become too focused on artists' development, to the exclusion of managers. Another suggestion was that a training strand should be incorporated into all future RESEO projects, for instance the planned Mozart collaboration in 2005-06. And, building on the research contained in the Staines Report, RESEO might also explore building a collective approach to wider issues of training, for instance the need for Conservatoires and music colleges to prepare artists for careers as artists in education.

4.3 Lessons learned from the ADP

The aims and objectives for the ADP, set out in Part 1, were very broad, and there are no specific targets against which to measure success. However, in general terms, the project met these aims and objectives, with the exception of involving participants from the EU's neighbouring regions. (The project did, however, involve artists and managers from three countries that acceded to the EU in 2004.) The ADP brought artists and education managers together to learn from each other, encouraging collaboration and sharing good practice; it highlighted contrasting approaches in opera education through the projects, feedback sessions and the two linked RESEO conferences; and it offered a training programme to artists which will have both short- and long-term benefits in the practice of opera education across Europe. The project also allowed artists to develop their creative ideas through the artists' performance at the Châtelet; and involved the wider public in Glasgow, Helsinki and Paris in opera education, with a particular focus on young people.

There are also a number of lessons RESEO can learn from the ADP in terms of the management of the programme as a whole and the organisation of individual projects. Before setting out these points it should be stressed that effective planning and project management can be a challenge for any collaborative project, let alone one which involves partners working in different countries, contexts and languages, with very few opportunities to meet face-to-face. In most respects the ADP functioned effectively as a collaborative project, to the credit of the co-organisers and the RESEO management. These are the areas in which organisation of the project, and its outcomes in terms of artists' development, could have been improved.

4.3.1 Learning objectives

The ADP was defined as a programme of professional development for artists in opera education, but did not set out any objectives in terms of learning outcomes. The views of education managers underline the point that the RESEO membership has differing training needs, and that there are differences of opinion over what is most useful in terms of artists' development – whether that is a focus on their creative skills, or on their ability to contribute to the development of a project. For future training projects, the project co-organisers and RESEO perhaps need to define more clearly the priorities for learning objectives, rather than attempting to address such a broad spectrum of training needs.

This is not to suggest that a narrow definition of learning outcomes, a curriculum, in effect, would be useful or even achievable in an informal learning project based on the different approaches of member opera houses. However, a broad framework of learning objectives for the ADP as a whole, as specific learning objectives for each stage of the project, could have been helpful to both project co-organisers and ADP participants.

4.3.2 Planning

A related issue is that a framework of learning objectives could have supported the process of planning the project. Some key differences of approach to the ADP were apparent between the co-organisers, evident in the different expectations of the opera houses and the different approaches taken by the project hosts. This was not necessarily a disadvantage: one of the interesting aspects

of the Artists Development Project was the variety of approaches taken by the host organisations to involving ADP artists in their education department.

A shared planning framework, focussing on learning outcomes, however, could have been a useful planning tool for the ADP and a means of developing a common understanding of the project aims between co-organisers. In particular, a planning framework would have defined in advance, for each stage of the project,

- the expectations of, and planned outcomes for, artists
- how the management of the project would support and deliver those outcomes
- whether the outcomes were realistic, and
- whether the opera house had the capacity to manage the project.

Shared definitions of 'artists' and 'education', however broad, would also have provided a useful starting point for project planning (see section 1.4 for additional comments on this issue).

4.3.3 *Information*

The main source of information for both education managers and artists on the ADP was the RESEO website. The information given there was patchy and, in some cases, misleading; the downloadable information on the Helsinki Opera Train, for instance, implied that the ADP artists would be involved in planning and delivering workshops within the framework of the project script. In fact the workshops had already been developed by local artists, and the ADP artists did not play as active a role as they had expected, on the basis of the information provided. Other important information was available in only one language: the detailed description of the Châtelet readings model, for instance, makes clear that the project is a creative project involving young people, not young artists, as understood by some participants – but is only available in French. The general information on the ADP provided by RESEO on the website, as well as information from host opera houses, is also lacking in clarity: the link between the Helsinki and Paris family workshops is not made clear, and the Paris family workshop is not mentioned in the outline of the ADP at the top of the webpage.

At each stage of the ADP artists arrived at a project with unclear or incorrect expectations about how they would be involved. Artists and education managers need clear, unambiguous information well in advance of a project about what is expected of them, and what they can expect to learn.

One further point relating to information was raised by one of the co-organisers: that information provided to the co-organisers was not always accurate. In one case a dancer was listed as a musician, which had an impact on the planning and the budget of the *Luthier* project. RESEO's database of artists involved in the ADP, held on the website, provided an interesting overview of the artists involved in the project, but the detail needed to be accurate from the outset of the project.

4.3.4 *Managing the experience of the artists*

The third and final stages of the ADP in Paris were both very ambitious projects; *Luthier* was an entirely new model for the house, *Angels* a complex project with multiple objectives and a team with a wide range of experiences. The key issues in both projects have already been discussed in some detail in Part 3, but it is worth underlining the point that project planning needs to ensure not just that the project itself can be delivered, but also that its aims in terms of artists' development can be met.

In both *Luthier* and *Angels* artists achieved a great deal in delivering the projects under pressure, but in both cases it was at the expense of other important aspects of the ADP: shared artistic and creative experimentation in *Angels*, and, in both projects, adequate time and an appropriate environment for reflection. One participant in *Angels* described 'the fact of being permanently under collective pressure, as if it was an exercise in itself'. Putting artists under such pressure is perhaps one approach to training, but it was not the intended approach of the ADP. The planning framework for future artists' development projects needs to ensure a balance between managing the experience of the artists and achieving the objectives of the project.

The *Angels* project raises a number of other issues in terms of the artists' experience. The profound differences in approach between the three most senior members of the project team have already been discussed in Part 3; it is vital that the planning process enables such differences to be explored in advance of the project. In some cases artists' approaches – rooted as they are in different cultures, with different approaches to art and education – may not be fully compatible.

Managing the experience of artists with very limited previous involvement in opera education also needs careful consideration. Such artists may need a more formal process of support and training, a mentoring structure, for instance, if they are to be directly involved in a demanding project. The development needs of the experienced artists should also be considered: if the objective is for artists to learn from each other, it is important to ensure a balance of experienced and inexperienced artists, otherwise the learning process may become one-way.

4.3.5 *Language*

Many ADP participants were frustrated by language difficulties. Language is a recurring issue for RESEO and there are no easy answers, but project planning needs to take language differences into consideration. It is exhausting working in an unfamiliar language and project schedules need to take account of this. Consideration needs to be given to how non-speakers of a language can interact with participants in projects, without throwing too great a burden of translation onto another artist. Feedback sessions and other discussions need extra time to allow for translation and it is all the more important that they are not planned at a point where participants are already tired. Finally, language issues need to be considered in the choice of project; projects with a musical or physical starting point may be more appropriate than those which are based on a text, and demonstration a more appropriate approach to sharing practice than discussion.

4.4 Conclusion and recommendations for the future

Artists' and education managers' responses to the Artists' Development Programme demonstrate that it was generally a successful project, with many positive outcomes for artists and opera houses, both expected and unexpected. Its more challenging aspects, and the areas where expectations were not met, provide useful lessons for future RESEO projects: not just in terms of artists' development but more generally for planning collaborative projects.

An important aspect of the Artists' Development Project was the opportunity it provided for shared reflection, both on the purpose of opera education, and the role of the opera artist in education across Europe. The project highlighted the diversity of experience and practice among the artists and education managers involved in the ADP, but equally it demonstrated a strong, shared commitment to the artistic, educational and social objectives of opera education programmes, that transcended specific differences of approach. In doing so the project contributes to the shared understanding among the RESEO membership not just of the role of the artist in education, but more broadly of the value and purpose of opera education.

As a means of artists' development, the ADP offers a simple and flexible model. The key training resource is the RESEO membership: their education programmes and their artists. Exchange can take place at different scales, and on all levels of experience. It is an interesting aspect of the ADP that the most positive responses to the project in terms of learning outcomes came from Glasgow, where artists were most directly engaged in the day-to-day work of the Scottish Opera education team. This is also the project which required the least modification for the involvement of the ADP artists. It is a model that other opera companies and artists could replicate.

Participating artists and education managers all expressed the view that RESEO should build on the ADP and enable future programmes of exchange, skill development, sharing of practice and collaborative projects between member opera houses. The key question is how RESEO should facilitate this aim, and how a programme of exchange might be made sustainable. The ADP required considerable investment of time and resources, which may not be replicated in the future. One model suggested was that a training element should be incorporated into all future collaborative

projects, whether focused on artists' development or not, and this is certainly an option the RESEO membership should consider.

An alternative model would be to approach the idea of exchange between artists, education managers and opera education departments as an on-going aspect of RESEO's work, separate from specific projects. Education managers could select projects which could accommodate visiting artists, and offer the structure of preparation, participation and reflection that was so important to the success of the ADP. Projects could be offered through the RESEO website or conferences, and exchanges arranged directly between opera houses.

The burden of organisation for opera houses would be one barrier to this model, although small-scale exchanges involving limited numbers of artists should not present too great an administrative weight – and the advantage, as felt by the host opera houses through the ADP, should balance the input of time. A more critical barrier is funding: training budgets are limited, and a training programme which requires travel and accommodation as well as covering the costs of artists' time would be prohibitive for many opera houses without the additional resources offered through the ADP.

The EU does have funding available for projects that promote exchange and the sharing of good practice, beyond its funding for cultural projects, and it is perhaps to these that RESEO should look if the membership wishes to build on the programme of exchange developed through the ADP. An example is offered by Opera Europa, which has initiated an exchange programme between technical, marketing and administrative departments of opera houses which will take place during 2005, funded by the EU's Leonardo Programme. Although these are longer exchanges, over a period of around eight weeks, and involve a number of members of staff from each opera house, it is certainly an approach RESEO members could explore at the joint Opera Europa and RESEO conference in Valencia in March 2005.

One point for the Network to consider is whether a RESEO programme of exchange might be open to artists independent of member opera houses, but interested in developing their skills as an artist in opera education. Another issue is how best to support new and developing education departments, and what training model is most appropriate to their needs. If an on-going programme of exchange is established, it is important that it remains focused on artists' development – addressing some of the points set out above under Lessons Learned. It should not be allowed to become *'a pool of cheap labour'*, as one co-organiser warned.

The Artists' Development Project is an important model for addressing the on-going issue of developing artists' training for opera education, but it should not be seen as the only answer to training needs. As an informal learning programme, the ADP model could provide a valuable important component of training in opera education, but it should be seen as complementing, rather than supplanting, the provision of in-house training, or training programmes arranged between the opera houses of one nation or region.

There is also a growing interest in the UK, at least, in the provision of training for artists in education through the higher education sector. The Animarts research programme was an investigation of the skills required by artists working in schools, which aimed to develop a framework to explore formal and accredited training for amateurs. A number of degree courses focusing on arts education are being developed in collaboration between cultural organisations and higher education. Although these are unlikely to be specific to opera, artists working in opera come from a number of disciplines – as demonstrated by the ADP – and future artists in opera education may well be able to access formal training through these new initiatives.

The strength of the ADP, however, is that it is artform specific. It provides artists with the opportunity to focus on the particular benefits and challenges of education work in opera, in a cross-European context. As such, if RESEO members can find a way to build on the project in future, the ADP model could make an important contribution to the development of training for opera artists in education.

The Artists Development Project was also an important initiative for RESEO, underlining the purpose and value of the network in enabling development in opera education through the sharing of practice between members. The willingness of education managers to open their work to observers, and of the observers to contribute to the work of other departments, is a strong illustration of RESEO's ethos and of its members' ability to approach other organisations' work in an open-minded and non-competitive spirit. It is ironic that this tangible demonstration of the value of RESEO should come at a time when the future of the Network is under threat from the absence of sustainable funding. For the evaluator, it is a hope that the positive outcomes of the ADP and its demonstration of the value of a cross-European network to opera houses, education departments and managers, artists in opera education, and to the wider public, might strengthen the network and contribute to its future sustainability.

Alice King-Farlow
London, December 2004

Appendix 1: Opera houses, artists and education managers participating in the ADP

Glasgow	Finnish National Opera La Monnaie/De Munt	Markus Fagerudd Véronique Binst Koen Laukens
	Scottish Opera	Jane Davidson George Drennan Johnny McKnight Alan McKenzie Ross Stenhouse Lesley Workman
Helsinki	Théâtre du Châtelet	Lucie Kayas
	English National Opera	Georgina Coish
	Estonian National Opera	Priit Aimla Katrín Õun Tõnu Tamm
	Finnish National Opera	Erja Alander Markus Fagerudd Timo Hietala Sampo Kivelä Ulla Laurio Ulla Raiskio Sanna Rinne Tarmo Tantt
	Glyndebourne	James Redwood
	Latvian National Opera	Kristaps Menniks
	La Monnaie/De Munt	Tineke Vandenhoudt
	Opéra National de Nancy	Carmelo Agnello
	Opéra National de Paris	Agnès de Jacquilot
	Royal Opera House	Darryl Jaffray Jane Burn Lissa Lorenzo Maurits Draijer Saskia van de Ree
Scottish Opera		
Yo! Festival		
Paris: Luthier	Théâtre du Châtelet	Jean-Michel Ankaoua Claude Clément Bérénice Collet Gaultiero Dazzi Lucie Kayas Christophe Maudot
	Finnish National Opera	Erja Alander Ulla Laurio
	La Monnaie/De Munt	Linda Lovrovic Tineke Vandenhoudt
	Opéra National de Montpellier	Jean-Michel Balester
	Opéra National de Nancy	Carmelo Agnello
	Opéra National de Paris	Agnès de Jacquilot
	Royal Opera House	Jane Burn
	Scottish Opera	Lissa Lorenzo
Paris: Angels	Théâtre du Châtelet	Laurent Alvaro Benoît Courribet Lucie Kayas Anne Sedes Baptiste Tavernier Jean-Baptiste Thiébaud

Estonian National Opera	Mark Withers
Hungarian State Opera	Tatjana Järvi
La Monnaie/De Munt	Lemme Saarma-Jarvi
Opéra National de Nancy	Anna Herczenik
Vastena Akademien	Rudolf Szitka
	Delphine Havaux
	Sabine de Ville
	Carmelo Agnello
	David Johansson
	Conny Thimander

RESEO staff

Luke O'Shaughnessy Network Manager
Isabel Joly Administrator

Appendix 2: Evaluation methodology

The evaluation of the Artists' Development Project was based on a number of processes. The evaluator attended at least part of all four projects and was able to observe and discuss the projects informally with ADP and host artists and education managers. At each stage of the project there was a feedback session involving both ADP participants and host artists and managers, facilitated by the evaluator. As well as an opportunity to reflect on the project, these sessions also served as a group evaluation of that stage of the project, and these discussions provide some of the data for this report.

ADP participant artists were also asked to complete detailed evaluation forms, as were the host artists in the final stage of the project, the *Angels in America* residency. The English version of the artists' form is appended below. All but one of the participating artists completed at least one questionnaire, and all those taking part in more than one project completed two.

Finally, the views of the co-organisers and of education managers who had taken part in the ADP or who had chosen to involve an artist were explored through a mixture of formal and informal discussion with the co-organisers, both face-to-face and by email, and through evaluation forms completed by education managers who had chosen to involve an artist in the ADP; only two out of five of these were returned.

Appendix 3: Artists' Evaluation Form

ARTISTS' DEVELOPMENT PROJECT 2004
Evaluation questionnaire for participating Artists

RESEO has commissioned a detailed evaluation of the Artists' Development Project to report on its outcomes and make recommendations for future RESEO projects. Your responses to the project and reflections on your experience are essential to the evaluation process and will contribute to the shaping of future projects.

Section 1: About you

Name:
Email:
Opera house represented:
Nationality:
How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Section 2: Your career and training

How would you describe yourself? (*singer, instrumentalist, director, animateur*)

Please give a brief overview of your work in opera education.

Please describe any training you have had in opera education, whether formal or informal.

Have you previously taken part in opera education or other arts or education projects outside your country of residence? If so please give a brief outline.

What do you feel are the essential qualities for an artist working in opera education?

What do you feel are the key challenges for an artist working in opera education?

Why did you choose to take part in the Artists Development Project? What were your hopes and expectations?

Section 3: The project

NB: these questions refer to the specific opera education projects in Glasgow, Helsinki and Paris.

Was the project as you expected? What was unexpected?

How did the planning/preparation sessions help you prepare for the project?

How were you able to use your skills and experience to contribute to and participate in the project?

Overall, how do you feel you have benefited from taking part in the project?

What did you find challenging or frustrating about the project?

What were your main observations of the education project you took part in? How did it differ from opera education projects at your opera house and in your country of residence?

Did working in another country and with other artists help you reflect on your own work? If so, how?

How helpful was the feedback session?

Section 4: The future

Did you learn anything from the project that you will use in other opera education work in the future?

What future artist development or exchange opportunities would interest you? What could RESEO do to promote these?

Did your views on opera education change as a result of taking part in the project?

The evaluator

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