

COMPASS LIVE ART YOUNG PRODUCERS PROGRAMME 2014



YOUNG PRODUCERS

Without a doubt one of the triumphs of the Compass Festival 2014 was the Young Producers scheme that ran from July to the end of the November. From a call out to universities, colleges and the local Breeze website we interviewed 15 young people and selected 6 recent graduates who were already active as artists, producers and makers looking for experience in festival production. The programme involved workshops with the Co-Directors, Annie Lloyd and Peter Reed on budgeting, venue liaison, artistic selection and marketing. Each fortnight we visited festival partners (East Street Arts, Anita Morris Associates, The HUB) artists (Quarantine, Forced Entertainment, In Between Time Festival) Arts Council England and Leeds City Arts Development Unit and Leeds Inspired officers. After each session we de-briefed and discussed arising issues and impressions. Each young producer had one to one meetings with the Co-directors and used these to gain feedback and raise questions about their work and future prospects.

In addition, the producers chose and were allocated particular artists/projects to support. They became hands on producers liaising with artists and venues, sourcing materials, organising and supporting volunteers. They undertook community visits prior to Quarantine's arrival with *Between us, we know everything*, meeting groups, explaining the project and encouraging attendance especially in Burley and Chapeltown. They administrated the call out and auditions for Forced Entertainment's *That Night Follows Day*. Alice Withers attended and supported each dance workshop Rita Marcalo took at Headingley Hall elderly care home in preparation for *Dancing with Strangers*. Jess Sweet prepared the market stall for Katie Etheridge and Simon Persighetti. They made brochure drops all round town more than once. They helped Reckless Sleepers with get-in and get-out at Stage@Leeds. They organised all the Compass talk events from the programme launch in September to the Festival Launch, artist talks and artists' brunch. They recruited, trained and managed the 40+ volunteers who came in later to support each project. The Young Producers' confidence and efficacy grew rapidly and they became an invaluable (couldn't have done it without them) part of the festival delivery. They all speak really highly of the scheme and would recommend it to anyone interested in gaining experience and confidence in producing.

"...pre-Compass, when I found myself in unexpected situations that of course hadn't been planned or prepared for, I felt a massive lack of confidence which meant that I wouldn't do myself justice in that situation. But through the scheme I have found a way of responding to these situations confidently and in being okay with thinking/reacting on the spot. I feel that this will serve me in future employment, in networking situations, in finding opportunities, and in my own practice." Joely Fielding

"I could have never anticipated the level of trust and faith that Compass has in us, which meant we were treated like equals rather than underlings." Anna Turzynski

"The most important thing I gained from the experience was a community of young aspiring arts professionals in the other Young Producers....you have peers to learn from, in contrast to internships within companies or things of the like" Jess Sweet

“Compass YP’s has really come at a great time for me, after being out of university for 18 months now. I felt that it really gave me confidence in my own skills, and that I could really put those to great use, towards something great and inspiring. It seems to me that the first few years of a graduate’s life outside of the art school are the hardest. I’ve found it incredibly testing, and still am, to begin my career as an independent artist and producer. Compass has been a great stepping-stone, and I feel that the informal training I gained has been invaluable, and an accolade I can really boast about to potential collaborators and employers.”

After our meeting in Bristol with Residence and IBT it became clear that the Young Producer scheme is something really unique. It’s a necessity, and an opportunity that young graduates are seeking. Meeting groups like this really reinforced ideas within me that it is possible to pursue this career, it was fantastic to see people who had been in a position similar to my own. It was a great chance to create contacts within the arts field in Leeds, and reinforce relationships with people I had met before. “
Alice Withers

“It’s hard when you come out of university to find some kind of support system. You are supported at school and all the way through to university but nobody really prepares you for that sudden kick into a professional career. The scheme gave me more support and sustenance to keep me motivated. It’s provided support that is not fleeting now the scheme and the festival is over but support that will follow me as long as I work within the arts. And for that I am extremely grateful.” Mel Purdie



Compass Young Producers on a field trip to Bristol, 22 September 2014