

## **Backstage – the play within a play**

**Utilising a dramaturgical metaphor to consider the rapid development of team culture in short-term stage crews.**

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*I would like to sincerely thank the men and women who gave their time to contribute to this research project.*

*You are a unique and passionate group who are often unacknowledged, theatre would be missing all of its magic without you.*

## Executive Summary

This research project asks the question of how short-term theatre production teams (stage-crew), are able to rapidly develop a strong team culture within an environment which does not allow the luxury of time for the standard stages of team culture formation. Utilising a dramaturgical metaphor as a methodological framework, allowed consideration of how these groups create trust, shared rituals and behaviours and establish self-governing tools that may benefit both the individual and the group. The research results showed evidence of four key practices which are critical to their ability to rapidly develop team culture; specific context, individual strategies, techniques that aid self-governance and emotional management.

This research is beneficial not only to those studying the formation of team culture, but also the study of temporary, project and mobile teams. In addition practitioners will benefit from this research within a number of areas including, those within the creative industry, (particularly those with similar extreme time limitations), those interested in roles where physical safety necessitates the rapid development of trust and those interested in the collective nature of team development and group efficacy.

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## Introduction

The importance of team culture to any organisation cannot be underestimated and management literature has considered the development and effects of team and organisational cultures for many decades. The term ‘culture’ encompasses the collective beliefs and values within the team or organisation – the ‘how we do things around here’. Scholars such as Schein (1992), Deal and Kennedy (2000), and Kotter (1992) have developed a number of models, theories and frameworks to consider how this culture develops, with well-known examples such as Bruce Tuckman’s Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing Model (1965) which have been well utilised within management theory. There are however, many situations where teams are required to develop a strong team culture more rapidly than the standard models which allow for these periods of forming, storming and performing. This research considers one of these groups to answer the primary research question of how they are able to rapidly develop a strong team culture within an environment which does not allow the luxury of time for the standard stages of culture formation.

This research was initially considered through the lens of a dramaturgical metaphor which holds that “social and organisational life may be treated metaphorically *as if* it were theatre” (Mangham, 2004, pp. 38). This metaphor allowed the research to be undertaken within a two stage analysis initially utilising an established metaphorical framework within the methodology to frame the interview questions and initial data analysis. The second stage of the research analysis moved beyond the dramaturgical framework in order to draw out relevant themes in order to answer the primary research question.

Individuals in this industry move from production to production with a variety of actors involved each time and are heavily reliant on their reputation to ensure they continue to be hired. The importance of the collective nature of their work is also highlighted with the development of team boundaries, group efficacy and group reputation.

This research is beneficial not only to those studying the formation of team culture but also the study of temporary, project and mobile teams. These types of teams are becoming more prevalent within organisations today and some argue are a key strategy to an organisation's survival in tough economic environments (PMI, 2010). In addition, practitioners will benefit from this research within a number of areas including, those within the creative industry, (particularly those with similar extreme time limitations), those interested in roles where physical safety necessitates the development of trust and those interested in the collective nature of team development and group efficacy.

## Literature Review

Metaphors have been widely utilised by scholars as a lens within organisational behaviour theory, particularly to analyse organisation and team culture, including those such as chaos (Thietart, 1995) or the family (McGregor, 1988). This research considers the metaphor of a ‘play’ or theatre as a framework to consider how team culture develops within short-term theatrical technical crews (stagehands). This metaphor is widely referred to in academic literature as the dramaturgical metaphor which holds that “social and organisational life may be treated metaphorically *as if* it were theatre” (Mangham, 2004, pp. 38).

These research participants are theatrical and production crews (stagehands), considered through this metaphorical lens enabling consideration of how they learn how to act, dress, and perform within the short lifetime of each production. These teams are an interesting study due to the necessity for them to form a strong team culture including rituals and self-governing tools rapidly without the benefit of time to develop the normal stages of forming a team culture. Individuals move from production to production with a variety of actors involved each time and form unique rituals and shared values within the team as part of their daily work. As noted “the achievement of a flexible and well-rehearsed work force which can move easily between a variety of roles with skill is considered to be a desirable accomplishment” (Schreyogg & Hopfl, 2004, pp. 693).

## The Dramaturgical Metaphor

The interest in the relationship between organisations and theatre emerged many decades ago, but the development of a ‘dramaturgical metaphor’ began not in management but in sociology. The concept that people’s lives can be seen as performing or acting on a stage began with scholars such as Goffman (1968); Burke (1969); and Brissett and Edgeley (1975). Further study on the more focused relationships to organisational behaviour and management was developed by scholars such as Mangham and Overington (1983, 1987) Messinger (1968), Clark (1984), Turner (1982) and Schreyogg and Hopfl (2004). In addition, scholars such as Hopfl (2002), have considered this metaphor within his studies of the service industry and the requirement for individuals to ‘fake’ or act as part of their daily role. It has been argued that this metaphor can assist in linking the performance of organisations, with that of theatrical performances (Schreyogg & Hopfl 2004).

Arguably sociologist Ervin Goffman is acknowledged as one of the earliest champions of this metaphor with his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1969). Goffman comments that within all social interaction there is an underlying fundamental dialectic and that individuals are concerned with a motivation to maintain a positive impression by those observing them. He comments that at some point they feel the necessity to “band together and directly manipulate the impression they give. The observed become a performing team and the observers become the audience” (Goffman, 1969, pp. 243). Goffman’s work inspired a large number of future scholars to consider how this impression management and motivation to create positive images of performances, can be observed and studied within both social and organisational environments. Goffman’s comments on individual’s motivations within this framework are particularly relevant to this research project as these



short-term production teams are individually motivated (as often each is individually hired to perform their role), however there is a strong need to act collectively to provide a positive shared performance to their audience and therefore the metaphor may be used to extend an analysis of the collective nature of the performance and motivation.

Kenneth Burke is considered by many scholars as one of the earliest developers of this metaphor with his leading works such as *Dramatism* (1968) and *A Grammar of Motives* (1969). Burke was also responsible for developing a pentad framework for this metaphor which has been widely considered and utilised as an analysis tool. This framework requires five key questions which are necessary to be asked within the framework: what was done? (act), when and where it is done? (scene), who does it? (agent), how do they do it? (agency) and why? (purpose) (Schreyogg & Hopfl, 2004). Key to Burke's argument is the concept of motive - why individuals choose to do and behave the way they do in each situation. He argues that utilising his pentad framework, it is possible to discover these motives (Burke, 1969). Building on Burke's early work, later scholars argue that people are more than performers with individual motives, but that they are actors playing characters, and further, that they consciously move from one character to another adapting to their audience (Mangham and Overington, 1983).

Management theorists in the late 1980's began to embrace this metaphor more widely to consider organisational and team culture more specifically. One of the most significant scholars to utilise and develop this metaphor was Iain Mangham. His works bridged the study of dramaturgical analysis in sociology to management theory and with his contemporaries such as Michael Overington and Timothy Clark they developed and

broadened their research within this framework. Mangham's works such as *Power and Performance in Organisations* (1986) and *Organisations as theatre: A social psychology of appearances* (1987). Significant aspects of Mangham's theories were developed while he undertook research observing the British National Theatre in 1984, where he studied the backstage workings of two large productions. The success of this research led to later studies within the Welsh National Theatre and the BBC. His findings following these studies showed that all the individuals, from actors to backstage crew, were working together collectively to "mystify an audience" (Mangham, 2005, pp 951). Mangham argues that this metaphorical framework can be utilised for both individual and group conduct. Mangham's later work with Timothy Clark (2004) built on these theories while working directly with organisations and management during periods of large company sales conferences, launches and mergers. They comment that company management used actors, directors, set designers, and technicians to manipulate the portrayal of the company's performance during their annual sales conferences and brand launches. In addition their study considered how consultants employ theatrical techniques within these organisations. This research highlights the corporate power of organisations who are able to utilise this theatrical framework successfully to seduce rather than confront their audience (Clark & Mangham, 2004). There is however, no consideration by Mangham or Clark on the relationship between the utilisation of this metaphor and the development of team culture.

Other scholars have drawn more specific lessons for organisational behaviour by focusing on the 'production' of theatre and the techniques used by directors, actors and writers. An example of this is the model of theatrical improvisation for "enhancing organizational flexibility or as a device for encouraging innovative behaviour" (Schreyogg & Hopfl, 2004, pp. 692). This was developed further by scholars such as Nissely et al (2004), who consider

the utilisation of the dramaturgical metaphor within theatre-based corporate management training programmes and more specifically the politics of performance within these programmes. Although this is outside the scope of this research project, it does provide a useful background on the use of this metaphor within broader management theory.

William Gardner III (1992) shows how this dramaturgical metaphor can be utilised as a framework within situational case studies. His research using a variety of scenarios where individuals are required to use assertive impression management (job interviews for example). This research shows five key 'performance' strategies that individual's utilise in these situations: ingratiation, self-promotion, intimidation, exemplification, and supplication. He also notes the key point that dramaturgy is not necessarily about manipulation or deception but that impression management is part of how we present ourselves to others every day.

The relevance of this research project is highlighted further by the work of Panteli & Duncan (2004), who focus on the dramaturgical relationship within virtual project teams. Their key theme considers how trust is developed and maintained, how it is "mutually negotiated and jointly constructed" (Panteli & Duncan, 2004, pp. 691). This links well with the context of the research project in which 'actors' must rapidly develop a joint sense of trust and unspoken agreement on how they will perform individually and as a team. Panteli and Duncan recognise the existence of 'scripts' and in particular 'pre-existing scripts' that allow these teams to ensure 'situated' trust is established within this virtual environment without the luxury of time. They draw on the previous work in this field by scholars such as

Jarvenpaa & Leidner (1999) who consider communication and trust across global virtual teams and Meyerson et al (1996), who look at the development of trust within temporary teams. Meyerson et al (1996) is particularly useful as their research recognises the concept of 'swift trust' which develops within temporary teams. They suggest that this trust can be resilient enough to survive the life of the temporary group because it focuses on the competencies and enactment of clear roles and each individual members roles. Meyerson et al (1996) also comment on the often "high risk and high stakes" (Meyerson et al, 1996, pp. 167) nature of these temporary teams and that this necessitates the team to behave and "act as if trust were present" (Meyerson et al, 1996, pp.167). A common thread amongst the research in this area of trust within virtual and temporary teams, is that the trust that develops is not a scaled down version of normal trust, but that it comes from a "unique form of collective perception" (Meyerson et al, 1996, pp 167). Although there are similarities between the need for trust in virtual teams and this research, the key differences include both the physicality of the work of stage crew and the extreme time pressures within this industry.

This physicality aspect builds on the work undertaken by past scholars such as Jack Haas (1979) who observed American high steel ironworkers while they undertook extremely dangerous work. He comments on these workers as 'acting' and performing 'on stage' to portray their either real or masked bravery. He also comments on the rituals associated with these workers who rely so strongly on each other for their own personal safety. His research shows examples of how they collectively test new workers, their shared communication styles and how they establish reputations. The development of shared values and trust is also vital to these research participants, due to a large part of their role requiring work which involves working at heights and other potentially dangerous situations.

Studies such as those undertaken by Haas are also echoed by later scholars such as Joanne Martin (2002) who considers the importance of rituals and the link between rituals and drama. She argues that activities are planned and carried out in a social context with an audience, with beginnings and endings like a play and with roles that are defined like a script. She also comments on the use of costumes and artefacts being utilised. Martin comments that rituals give us an opportunity to “show how the functionalist intellectual tradition has influenced cultural theory and research” (Martin, 2002, pp, 67). This link between rituals and drama is an important aspect to consider as part of this research project. The research allows determination of whether this group have developed specific rituals which are unique to the behaviour and performance of the group, and would also be a signal of the group’s expectations to new comers who are looking to integrate into the group.

A number of scholars have recognised the existence of ‘stagehands’ within their dramaturgical analysis and linked them to positions that are able to manipulate aspects of how management or organisations are perceived. McCormick (2007) considers the concept of stagehands within times of organisational change who are able to manipulate the way that organisational performance is conveyed to the audience or observers of the organisation. He highlights the reluctance of management to allow access to ‘backstage’, which may expose the reality behind the organisations performance. He also argues that within times of change or conflict there is often a strong reluctance by teams to allow access to sharing the ‘backstage’ knowledge with those they consider are not part of the team. He comments that this can be evidenced by the media and management during times of change where, “just as a lighting technician may shine a spotlight on a certain performer or a sound technician may

amplify selected portions of the performance, so do the media select conceal and amplify organisations performance” (McCormick, 2007, pp.691). This research project looks backstage at the real stagehands to consider if they also have a reluctance to allow access to backstage knowledge and the boundaries of the team. In addition, consideration is given to whether they also manipulate how their group performance is viewed by outside observers.

There have also been a number of critics of this dramaturgical metaphor. Cornelissen (2004) addresses a new model where he argues are the key principles of how a metaphor works and considers the organisation as theatre metaphor against this model. His conclusion poses that this metaphor has “provided a language of theatre (actors, scenes, scripts) for framing and communicating identity and role enactment within organizations” (Cornelissen, 2004, pp. 705), but that the metaphor is limited by the subject (organisation) and the number of constitutive principles which he argues govern the use of a metaphor. McCormick’s conclusion is that the dramaturgical metaphor fails to meet his second governing rule in that it “has not provided for a conceptual breakthrough or for startling new insights that were inconceivable before” (Cornelissen, 2004, pp. 705). In defence, the use of a metaphor as a question framework can be helpful in drawing out new insights that may be more difficult to determine otherwise.

Understandably, acting in a role within an organisation, team or socially is not the same as theatrical acting. Advocates of this dramaturgical metaphor have also referred to the limitations of the dramaturgical perspective and offered comment on the importance of acting to an observer or audience to an individual’s reputation. As Goffman comments, individuals are ‘performers’ and ‘characters’ but “an action staged in a theatre is a relatively contrived illusion and an admitted one; unlike ordinary life, nothing real or actual can happen to the

performed characters – although at another level of course something real and actual can happen to the reputation of performers *qua* professionals whose everyday job is to put on theatrical performances” (Goffman, 1969, pp 246). The relevance to the participants of this study is evident as they must rely strongly on their reputation from job to job, and therefore their ability to maintain a strong reputation is vital. This means that not only must they perform their role, but that this performance is being portrayed to an audience that they rely heavily on for their future success.

Tuckman’s (1965) model of team development poses four clear stages of team development (forming, storming, norming and performing). The influence of time on the development of team culture within this model however, is not considered. Tuckman does note the relevance of the length or life span of the team “we would expect relatively equal time to be spent in each stage. This however, can undoubtedly be further modified by group composition as well as by the duration of group life” (Tuckman, 1965, pp. 385). Time is a vital component of the daily work of these teams and scholars such as Gersick (1988) considered the effect of time on task force teams concluding that these teams “did not accomplish their work by progressing gradually through a universal series of stages, as traditional group development models would predict. Instead, teams progressed in a pattern of “punctuated equilibrium””.

## Summary of Literature

This review of the literature shows the significant history of scholars who have focused on this field and also highlights the benefits of a dramaturgical metaphor as a helpful lens to

consider the interaction of individuals, organisations and teams and as a methodological tool for analysing the development of the research analysis.

This research considers how the ‘actors’ know how to perform, the customs and rituals that are associated with these groups and the importance of ensuring a strong reputation of their performance as both an individual and a member of a group to ensure they are able to be offered their next role. Key questions consider how these teams are able to rapidly build trust, shared behaviours and self-governance tools within this short-term environment, without the luxury of time for the emergence of standard team trust development stages. It also considers if there are specific scripts or pre-scripts that impact on this rapid development, including how this impacts on new entrants to the group. This research will be fundamental to understanding how these types of teams are able to rapidly develop strong cultures and will benefit all organisations and industries that utilise mobile, virtual or temporary project teams. In particular the key extensions to knowledge will be temporary teams, team development, boundaries, creative industries, time pressured teams or those with a physical aspect. In addition, the collective nature of team development and link between group efficacy and team development.

The wealth of past research draws out a number of key concepts for consideration within this research project. Goffman (1968) outlined the collective nature of performance and motivation, particularly in relation to an individual’s motivation to impress their audience and how individuals band together to create a positive performance where necessary. Building on the work of Goffman, scholars such as Kenneth Burke (1968, 1969) developed a pentad framework for use within this framework and posed that individuals are actors who are not only performing but are playing a variety of characters. Mangham (1982, 1986, 1987, 2004,



2005) and his contemporaries such as Clark (2004) and Overington (1982, 1983, 1987) developed these ideas further within the study of management and considered how individuals, teams and organisation adapt their performances by employing theatrical techniques to perform to their audience. Scholars such as Gardener (1982) also utilised the dramaturgical metaphor as a framework to study impression and argues that there is a strong link between individual's impression management strategies and reputation.

The temporary and time pressured nature of these teams builds on the work of Panteli & Duncan and Gersick (1988). The consideration of both time and life-span on the development of these teams is an important aspect to highlight the differences between these types of teams that may not fit within the standard stages of team formation.

Summary of Key Themes of Dramaturgical Metaphor and Theory	
Dramaturgical Concepts	Literature
Actors	Burke (1969) Schreyoff & Hopfl, (2004) Haas (1979)
Audience/reputation	Goffman (1969) Gardiner (1992) Mangham (2005) McCormick (2002)
Performance	Mangham (1986, 1987) Gardiner (1992) Clark (2004)
Scripts/ pre-scripts	Panteli & Duncan (2004) Meyerson etl al (1996)
Beginnings and endings	Martin (2002) Panteli & Duncan (2004) Gersick (1988) Meyerson et al (1996)

## Methodology

This research involved the analysis of a specific group of individuals using the dramaturgical metaphor as an initial framework and therefore lends itself strongly towards a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative analysis involves “working in a world that accepts and even values: the search for holistic meaning; research conducted in natural settings; emergent methodological design; small numbers; non-random sampling strategies; rich qualitative data; inductive analysis; idiographic interpretation; and the possibility of negotiated outcomes that recognize the need for the researched to be party to a researcher’s constructed meanings” (O’Leary, 2004, pp. 114).

This qualitative research was conducted within an interpretivist, social constructionist paradigm. Interpretivism “acknowledges and explores the cultural and historical interpretations of the social world” (O’Leary, 2004, pp.10) and social constructionists are concerned with the development of theory “derived inductively from the “real world” to enhance understanding of how actors intersubjectively create, understand, and reproduce social situations” (Turnbull, 2002, pp. 319). This paradigm has allowed the research to utilise the dramaturgical metaphor framework while recognising that the social world in which these individual subjects operate is one in which “no absolute truth is deemed to exist but, instead, only socially constructed realities that in themselves may develop and change, influenced by context and time” (Turnbull, 2002, 318).

## The Method

The research has been conducted using informal structured interviews. The interview schedule shown in Appendix II (page 44) outlines how these interviews were framed within the dramaturgical metaphoric framework, which allowed the key factors to be considered against the research question and key themes that have emerged from the literature review. The use of the metaphor in this way has helped to bring a greater depth to the research as these descriptions helped to categorise meanings of the key concepts (O’Leary, 2004, pp. 197). The use of interviews within social constructionist research is common as this research is seeking to draw out each individual’s perspective through detailed interviews and capture their description of the social world (Turnbull, 2002, pp 321).

Interviews were conducted using audio recordings which were then time-coded. Where relevant themes emerged, these sections and quotes have been transcribed and analysed. Each of the research participants have been kept confidential and allocated a code to ensure quotes cannot be directly linked to any particular respondent.

## The Participants

The participants for this research have been sourced from personal networks. The criteria for selection was limited to people who are hired on a contract bases from job to job within the theatre industry and who are working as back stage crew. Back stage crew can be defined as any of those working in the following roles; lighting crew, sound crew, mechanists, fly-men or riggers.

It is considered that within the scope of this qualitative research method that a group of between six and eight participants was an appropriate sample size and the final participants totalled eight. Attempts were made to ensure a variety of ages, genders and backgrounds have been included.

## Analysis/Data

Using a qualitative methodology necessitates the discovery of themes within the raw data and involved interpretations of these themes in relation to the research question (O’Leary, 2010, pp. 260). The analysis lent itself to a two phased analytical approach. The initial phase summarised and organised the data in relation to the dramaturgical framework. The second phase analysed the data to draw out answers relevant to the research question. This approach was therefore inductive, as the main focus in the second phase was to explore the data to allow the generation of key themes to emerge.

As expected, using the dramaturgical metaphor to frame the questions allowed a rich wealth of data. It was necessary to explore this data to ensure “that it tells a full and powerful story that is in rich dialogue with theory” (O’Leary, 2010, pp. 263). This has also meant that the second phase of analysis allowed acknowledgement of anything unexpected or inductive which emerged during the analysis process.

The interview transcripts utilised the framework of the dramaturgical metaphor allowing alignment of the experiences of the participants to this framework. This type of analysis links to research undertaken by scholars such as Gardner (1992) who utilised this framework to analyse individual's impression management strategies. It was necessary to ensure that there was a systematic approach to the analysis of the data enabling the themes to be captured effectively and therefore the framework outlined in Appendix II (page 44) was utilised to draw out the key themes for the second phases of data analysis.

## Limitations

The limitations of research within a social constructionist theory begs the question “if knowledge is constructed situationally through social interaction within communities or organizations, how do we know whether the theory that we are generating is “valid”, and by what standards should we be judging validity?” (Turnbull, 2002, pp. 319). In addition, due to the nature of data collection and the limitations of an interpretivist paradigm being “entwined with researchers biases, prejudices, worldviews and paradigms” (O’Leary, 2010, pp 262).

## Planning

Interviews were conducted following HEC approval in August 2015 and completed by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015. Each participant was asked the full set of question as noted in the schedule outlined in Appendix II (page 44).

As noted previously, interviews were conducted using audio recordings of interviews which were then transcribed and time-coded. Where relevant themes emerged, sections and quotes were transcribed in full to allow these themes to be considered alongside the dramaturgical metaphor framework.

Each interview was approximately one hour in length and held at a location most convenient to each participant. Participant's responses are confidential in the final report by ensuring that each respondent is allocated a code to ensure anonymity when quoting and only relevant samples are provided in this report.

## Discussion

The analysis of the participant's interviews drew out a number of key themes that answer the question of how these teams are able to rapidly develop team culture within an environment which does not allow the luxury of time for the standard stages of team formation. The key themes discussed below show four key practices that are critical to this rapid team development; specific context, individual strategies, tools that aid self-governance and emotional management.

### 1. Invisibility and the 'magic of theatre'

One of the key themes to emerge from the data analysis is 'invisibility'. This invisibility can be defined as, the need for the work they are doing within the production to be undertaken without the audience observing them. This invisibility allows the maintenance of the 'magic of theatre' as the audience cannot see what happens behind the scenes to make the production

possible. This evidence clearly indicates the demarcation of those inside and outside the group. This therefore reinforces the boundaries of the team. Those within the group have specialist, even secret knowledge and know more than those on the outside.

This also highlights that individuals are not seeking recognition from outside their own peers, but are able to feel part of the bigger production, unrecognised publically, which is in comparison to the way that others such as performers are acknowledged for example.

*Respondent 1(R1) "if it's a good production, they shouldn't notice, like a swan on the top not the thousands paddling...if not noticed we've done our job right"*

*Respondent 6(R6) "in theory they shouldn't actually know, shows are sold to an audience, they are there to see the show not the crew"*

*Respondent 7(R7) "gets bound up in the magic of theatre"*

*Respondent 2 (R2) "magically it's fixed in front of them, I think every performer would have come across that at some point and realise ah XXX is just as important for the show.....ninjas, we need to be able to appear and disappear without being seen"*

That is not to say that these individuals are unaware of their vital role in the production itself. All participants noted their critical role in the success of a production, but they allow this invisibility to ensure that the audience are able to enjoy the 'magic' of theatre. This strongly indicates these teams ability to quickly develop group efficacy to enable the establishment of

meaningful effectiveness within the team. Group efficacy is the extent to which a group believes that it can accomplish its tasks successfully through concerted effort (Gibson, 1999). Although individuals are all aware of their lack of recognition outside their own peers, these teams are able to compensate this with a strong sense of group efficacy. The need for individual performance appears to lie strongly within the group which may indicate that in the absence of an outside audience to recognise them, the standard formation of team culture is strongly linked to an early development of group efficacy.

The consideration of group efficacy and its development is important in these teams as all participants agreed that they are seen ‘collectively’ by those outside the crew and not as individuals and therefore the group’s collective reputation is crucial to their success. “Efficacy affects the internal dynamics of a team as it develops a belief in itself, and this belief has a strong relationship to a team’s effectiveness. Team reputation is also related to effectiveness in terms of earning new business and maintenance of clientele. Expanding our understanding of the composition based antecedents of group efficacy and team reputation will serve to improve our knowledge of how to create more confident and reputation-worthy, and thus more effective teams” (Tyran & Gibson, 2008, pp. 70).

Both the team and individual’s success and reputation rely heavily on each other and participants are all aware that within the group it is important that their own abilities are known. As highlighted by the participant’s responses when asked if there was a time when they were recognised for being good at their job this link between being hired and acknowledgement of their ability is clear.



*R1 "always been called for crew so must be doing something right....part of it is if you're not being called you would start to wonder if that was your core business".*

*Respondent 5 (R5) "when my phone started ringing"*

*Respondent \* (R8) "work chasing you instead of you chasing work"*

These teams are all reliant on each other for a collective reputation outside the group and their own individual reputation within the group. This reliance on the effectiveness of the collective group necessitates a rapid development of group efficacy to ensure their own recognition and reputation lead to being hired in the future.

## **2. Watching – but not waiting**

The time pressures involved in this industry mean that the development of these teams relies on individual crew being able to determine the abilities of the others within the group very early in the team's development. This early recognition assists to indicate trustworthiness or contrastingly warning signals with unknown or new crew members. The data analysis strongly signals a key technique which is employed by all participants of 'observation'.

*Respondent 4 (R4) "observing - if you send cv I can't tell, I have to observe them or hear from 3 or 4 people that they are worth using"*

*R4 "if not known can't give them responsibility until you know what they are capable of, until you see they can do what they say they can do"*

*R4 "I make swift judgements on whether someone is a muppet or not, I can spot it quickly, I'm happy to be proven wrong but on whole I'm rarely surprised"*

It is evident that the use of observation as an individual strategy, allows for an early indication and assessment of each other. This includes the observation of new crew and allows individuals to determine if a crew members or a crew team are going to be effective. This is possible, as the work these individuals are undertaking within this setting is physical, interactive and visible to other members of the group unlike teams within an office environment for instance. This observation however is rapid, the speed with which all participants noted that they are able to determine the effectiveness of a crew was unanimously noted as fast R6 "*within seconds*", R1 "*by morning tea*" and R8 "*in the first half an hour you get a feel for the way the work flow is going*".

This is evidence of how this team are able to utilise this technique to gauge the effectiveness of the team as it is rapidly developing. This relates strongly to the work undertaken by Gersick (1988) who considered the effect of time on task force teams brought together to “to do projects within a limited time period – actually get work done”. Her conclusion was that these teams “did not accomplish their work by progressing gradually through a universal series of stages, as traditional group development models would predict. Instead, teams progressed in a pattern of “punctuated equilibrium””. Her finding showed that “lasting patterns can appear as early as the first few seconds of a group’s life”. The establishment of expectations early in the a team’s development can be greatly assisted by the ability to observe each other’s work and may be another indication of how these teams are able to develop their team culture and begin working collectively so rapidly. As noted by Gersick (1988) a team’s “progress was triggered more by members’ awareness of time and deadlines than by completion of an absolute amount of work in a specific developmental stage”.

Tuckman's forming, storming, norming and performing model offers no comment on observation as a technique in the initial stages of team formation. He characterises the initial forming stage as "orientation, testing, and dependence constitute the group process of *forming*" (Tuckman,1965) and the storming phase as "conflict and polarization around interpersonal issues, with concomitant emotional responding in the tasks sphere". It could be argued that these groups' specific use of observation as a strategy, allows them to determine the individual and group effectiveness within the pressure of time limitations and therefore negates the need for the storming phase.

Trust is a vital component to individual crew members and the wider team as they often rely heavily on each other for physical safety. This ability to observe team members and quickly develop a warning signal that may affect their personal safety, echoes the importance of time pressure as part of the formation of these teams. When time is a factor, the storming phase may be unnecessary and therefore observation could be a technique used to replace this stage of "conflict and polarization". A common thread amongst the research in this area of trust development within virtual and temporary teams, is that trust that develops within these teams is not a scaled down version of normal trust development, but that it comes from a "unique form of collective perception" (Meyerson et al, 1996, pp 167).

*R2 "from the beginning there has to be a certain amount of trust that they've employed the best team possible and available"*

*R3 "if everyone doesn't know each other that's critical, finding out who else is there you can trust"*

*R5 "largely comes down to same as anything, you get an immediate impression and form a bond with someone you'll enjoy talking to and that would be the same in any temporary situation"*

*R8 "guess it's just observing each other and see how well they can achieve that job and see that they know what they are doing and you trust them if you see that they know what they're doing"*

*R8 "also age and experience chatting about previous jobs and experience gives you confidence"*

This is highlighted by the participants comments that the effectiveness of a team was directly correlated to teams where individuals were experienced and did not requiring monitoring or managing. This comes through clearly in the comments from the participants when asked what working in an effective crew is like:

*R1 "easy relationship, works getting done but there's a lot of fun and laughter generally ticking over...like a zone everyone is slotting in doing the work but carrying out a conversation"*

*R2 "actually fun, goof around without getting into danger"*

*R2 "like a ballet of technical stuff going on when it's smooth it's beautiful"*

*Respondent 3(R3) "no one has to ask questions of each other, no one gets in each other's way...you learn from people doing it badly and you learn from people doing it well"*

*R4 "everyone is communicating positively, trusting"*

*R6 "exciting to work with - a well-oiled machine that at the of the gig it's exciting"*

*R8 "all similar skill level and all know what rate we can work at so the work rate is a lot higher"*

*R1 "guess the other things is when it's good it feels like people have got your back, they won't make an example of you if you made a mistake, they might call you out but everyone makes mistakes"*

The descriptions of these effective teams shows the movement of these groups into Tuckman's fourth stage of performing described as a "work phase, intimacy, integration, mutual synthesis" (Tuckman 1965). It is important to these teams to get to this phase as quickly as possible due to the time pressures involved in their work (and it may not always be possible for all teams to be this effective), but their awareness of the benefits of a high performing team both to themselves and the group is obvious to all members. This performing stage is where the individuals are at their most effective and both the individuals and the group benefit strongly from an effective team culture being developed and therefore, they are strongly aware of when they are working with others who are at the same level of experience and ability.

### **3. The slab**

Within these types of teams there is a need to self-govern and self-manage as they are often working within different production hierarchies. The ability of these teams to self-govern is evident with the ritual of being 'slabbed'. Slabbing occurs when an individual crew member makes an error during a show and "*involves a box of alcohol*" (R5) provided by the crew member who made the error. This slabbing shows the team's ability to self-govern and self-

manage within the team without the need for others outside their team to be involved. This can have two interesting effects, both the financial implication for the individual and the issue being dealt with within the boundary of the group while allowing a sense of closure as noted:

*R1 "you get slabbed, it a great tension release – it's over and done with, it's costly as we don't earn much but no one dwells on it - it's done and dusted"*

The individual incentive therefore leads to a desire not to make mistakes that are financially costly to the individual and in addition, are a way of ensuring that the team are able to talk through their error in an atmosphere that is safely within the boundary of the team. This is a collective analysis of the error, and enables the issue to be dealt with while allowing the individual to move on. This self-governing links to the invisibility aspect as noted earlier, as the collective nature of their reputation means that there is a benefit to the team to be able to manage errors without it being detrimental to the wider group or how they are seen by others and therefore damaging to their reputation. Fine (1979) noted in his study of the development of small team cultures, that cultural forms are created and utilised if they are: “*known* to the members...*usable* in the course of group interaction...*functional* in supporting group goals and individual needs, *appropriate* in supporting the status hierarchy of the group, and *triggered* by events which occur in group interactions”. This type of self-governing tool aligns with Fine’s model as they are known, functional, usable, appropriate and triggered by events that occur within the group’s work. This is helpful in understanding the pre-existence of these types of self-governing techniques within these teams as the development of the team’s culture is assisted by pre-determined rules and rituals which do not necessitate any formal communication prior to the group’s formation, therefore assisting with the rapidity of the development of team culture.

This self-management is helpful to the team and the wider production as “high employee involvement, including self-managed teams in proximal settings where power and control is shared, tends to produce better results” (Workman, 2005). Workman also notes in his virtual team study, that “explicit virtual team management apparently served to help regulate the forming, storming, norming and performing type of group adjustments typically experienced by teams by serving to establish expectations and guidelines for group objectives quickly”. The ability of these groups to have predetermined self-management strategies allows these teams to develop more rapidly and to therefore work more effectively.

#### 4. The final act

In the course of the interviews an additional question was added to the original framework as it became evident from the first interview that the end of a production, may necessitate individuals to have a sense of closure due to the temporary nature of the roles. The additional question asked whether at the end of a production, individuals felt a sense of sadness. Participants all noted that in the past, when they were beginning their career, they did experience sadness and emotion at the end of productions, but that this had changed as they had matured.

*R1 "probably did in my younger days when it was my entire life and social life, now I'm more than happy to go home"*

*R3 "definitely a sense of loss"*

*R5 "at the time shit loads of tears, now it wouldn't because I'm a grown up"*

*R6 "months with some people and end of that a lot of tears"*

*R7 "used to when I was younger, less now"*

This emotional management shows that these individuals move from a learning phase early in their career to a career phase. Career phases have been considered by many scholars including Stephen Adamson (1997) who determined the existence of three distinct phases; adjustment/reality shock; career success/self-affirmation; and re-evaluation/congruence. The participants in this research had all experienced initial shock and adjustment periods however, the movement onto a stronger phase of career success allowed them to recognise their maturity within the roles and assist to ensure the development of self-affirmation that they are doing a good job. This ability for individuals to see this as a real career assists with the team's development as each individual is reliant on the success of the group for their career to continue and succeed within the lifetime of each production.

Tuckman himself considered an additional stage in his own team development model in his 1977 work *Stages of Small-Group Development Revisited* - "Because the 1965 model was a conceptual statement determined by the literature, it is reasonable, therefore, to modify the model to reflect recent literature. The model now stands: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning" (Tuckman & Jensen 1977). The final stage is important as these crews and productions are short-term and the individual team members must be able to have closure on one production before moving onto a new team where the process of developing team culture needs to start again.



## Conclusion

This research sought to answer the question of how short-term production teams are able to rapidly develop team culture within an environment which does not allow the luxury of time for the standard stages of team formation, such as Tuckman's (1965) forming, storming, norming performing model. The research results showed evidence of four key practices which are critical to these team's ability to rapidly develop team culture; specific context, individual strategies, tools that aid self-governance and emotional management.

The invisible nature of these roles necessitates that individual's personal recognition must come from within the group not those outside the team and is therefore a collective recognition. This invisibility also reinforces the boundaries of the team and the importance of specific context as those inside the team have specialist knowledge. This means therefore, that the maintenance of context and the rapid development of group efficacy is vital to ensure all team members can see the importance of the work they are doing, and the importance of the group to the wider production. Individuals are aware of their own importance to the production so this ability to develop group efficacy early, leads to a belief in the strength of their own worth and that of the group, without the need for confirmation from an outside audience. The ability to be hired in an often very competitive industry, means that being hired is part of an individual's recognition and their ongoing reputation. The effect of this is that being seen to be good at your job by their peers is crucial to their future success. There is a direct benefit to the wider group if all individuals are able to quickly get on with the job which ensures that the team culture must develop more rapidly.

This leads directly to the importance of individual strategies such as observation as a key techniques utilised by these individuals to determine whether crew members and crew teams are going to be effective. The worth of a team member is not only obvious to other members (from physical observation), but because they have earned their right to be there by being hired. Trust needs to be developed quickly within these teams who rely heavily on each other for their physical safety. The ability to use strategies such as observation allows individuals to gauge trustworthiness of other team members very early in the development of the team particularly when faced with new crew members. This type of strategy indicates the storming phase of Tuckman's (1965) model is not necessary to these types of teams and therefore shows how the development of these team's culture varies from Tuckman's model.

The ability to utilise self-governance techniques such as 'slabbing' not only allows the team to manage behaviour within the group, it also brings the team back to equilibrium within a predetermined ritual. This type of self-management tool also allows the group to maintain its boundary and as it is an established penalty it can assist with speeding up the formation stage of Tuckman's (1965) model. This self-governance also provides an individual incentive not to make errors which benefits the collective team and their reputation.

This research project has drawn out some key concepts that allow consideration of how these teams are able to rapidly develop team culture within tight timelines and in an environment of physical constraints. Further research in this area may include the collective nature of physical working environments and the benefits of group efficacy. As noted by Gersick (1988) "knowledge about group development should stimulate and enrich our learning about inertia and change in human systems across those levels of analysis".

*“The idea of life as theatre appears to be particularly fecund in that not only is theatre a special kind of activity that consists in composing a plausible semblance of human action as a matter of consequence, but we readily use the terminology of drama and the theatre as a means of understanding human action itself.” Mangham (2005).*

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## Data Analysis Phase I

Questions	Theme's	Quotes
<b>Actors:</b>		
Describe the people that you are working with on these jobs.	Varied but noted that they are mixture of pure loaders who may be happy to load for a living and those who are more technically minded with strong skills. Some comments on people who can be artistically minded attracted to the industry, or those who they consider misfits.	R1 "people people, generally really friendly". R2 "it's work but there's an element of perfectionism". R7 "people who aren't attracted to the mainstream"
What do you think makes them good at their job?	Mixture of personality, technical ability and being able to see the big picture.	R1 "depth of knowledge" R2 "meticulous, professional" R3 "being able to think for yourself but see the larger picture and follow that at the same time" R4 "passionate and see the end product and they have the tactile skills and the trade type skills to do things" R8 "definitely more experienced crew makes them good at their job" R6 "personality is a big part of what we do - having people that are bland can make job a bit harder, people enjoy a laugh"
What other people/roles are the crew in close working relationships with?	varies but most cited is production manager, smaller productions may be others or crew bosses or heads of department (such as head of lighting)	
Is there a cohesive culture amongst everyone in the production or are there usually subcultures? What are these?	Strong response that there are subcultures with all respondents agreeing.	R3"working with a touring crew, absolutely evident right away that they react to each other, sometimes there can be a clear division people keen to work together and cues are taken for that"
<b>Audience/Reputation:</b>		
Who do you think is "managing" the crew?	A number of respondents noted the self-selection of leaders.	R4 "always a senior one who will rise to the top and take on that management of the team". And R8 "obviously you end up taking instructions from older crew because they're more experienced" R5 "someone like myself might step in and say I'll run these par cans or shall I take these guys and be interim chief"



Is there a hierarchy of crew members (eg – those who have been there the longest or those who are more technically savvy?)	Strong consensus yes but varies	R4 "some people have been around number of years but show no sign of wanting to lead" R1 "becomes tricky if two people of the same get into a pissing contest"... "all levels of hierarchy even two new students might be the same" R8 "people who've been there longer but it's a good thing because you know who they are and you respect that they're right"
How do you think stage crew are viewed by other members of the production (eg directors, actors?).	Does this mean they have to have their own way of feeling important?	R1 "hired help" R6 "scum" R8 "bottom of the food chain"
How do you think stage crew are viewed by those outside the production (eg the audience?)	Invisibility very strong theme here.	R1 "if it's a good production, shouldn't notice, like a swan on the top not the thousands paddling" "often don't which is a good thing actually ...if not noticed we've done our job right" R6 "in theory they shouldn't actually know, shows are sold to an audience they are there to see the show not the crew" R7 "gets bound up in the magic of theatre"
Do you consider that either of these groups see you as individuals or as a group?	Consensus group	
What do you think helps a crew member get hired from job to job?	Mixture of ability, personality and technical skill - being known for that skill.	R7 "people who can talk to the talk" R8 "word of mouth" R5 "affability is one particularly if one production manager will have a "go to" group they are comfortable with they'll go the them first" R8 "word of mouth and relationships with other crew members" R2 in wellington you can't get away with anything if you have a big ego - you won't get hired for the next one, if you're not a team player you're not going to get any jobs"
If you are in the position of hiring the crew for a production what things do you take into account before you hire them?	Personality, technical skill (often technical skill taken above personality) - linked to trust?	R1 "reliability, pleasant or nice but fun...not a Prema donna or precious" R5 "reliability if I call someone I expect them to be there"

Do you think you are aware of other crew members who hire crews when you are working?	Varied.	
<b>Performance:</b>		
Do you remember what it was like when you first began working in this industry? Describe what that was like.	Everyone has come to the industry from a different route - some formal others informal. Responses range but a number talk about the excitement.	R7 "really exciting" R1 "adventure.... stood back and observed a lot more and then just adapted to the culture whatever it was at the time"
Was there a particular moment or time when you started to feel like you really knew what you were doing?	Strong theme of not ever really knowing all they need to know - changing and updating knowledge all the time but also slightly insecure about it?	R6 "the day a tech says they know everything you walk away from them, I learn something new from every show -even basic stuff".R4 "don't know if I ever feel I know what I'm doing, there are days were I go "I'm pretending" - but they are getting few and far between these days".
Was there a particular moment when you started to feel like you were recognised for being good/excellent at your job?	Being hired onto the next job is recognition - observation is key to getting hired... also need to be able to fix stuff!!	R1 "always been called for crew so must be doing something right....part of it is if you're not being called you would start to wonder if that was your core business". R5 "when my phone started ringing" R8 "work chasing you instead of you chasing work"
Are new crew members treated differently?	Unanimously yes	R1 "people don't have the tendency to put their hand up and say I'm new I don't know what I'm doing" R2 "need to show initiative and don't be shy to ask questions" R4 "if not known can't give them responsibility until you know what they are capable of, until you see they can do what they say they can do" R4 "observing - if you send cv I can't tell, I have to observe them or hear from 3 or 4 people that they are worth using"

<p>Are there any particular things that they have to do or show before you consider they really know what they are doing?</p>	<p>As above strong theme of observation and then if they ask they will show them how to do something and then watch.</p>	<p>R1 "doing the basics right" R8 "need to prove their worth they're accepted if they are seen to do the same amount, if not more, work than the rest of the crew" R8 noted their recent experience working in a new town the local crew commented 'oh I wasn't sure about you after the first two days but after today seeing you throw that over your shoulder, nah you're one of us now'. R4 "I make swift judgements on whether someone is a muppet or not, I can spot it quickly, I'm happy to be proven wrong but on whole I'm rarely surprised"</p>
<p>How important are the stage crew to a production?</p>	<p>Unanimous - vital</p>	
<p>Follow on question: Do you think those outside the stage crew are aware of this?</p>	<p>Strong theme of invisibility</p>	<p>R2 "magically it's fixed in front of them, I think every performer would have come across that at some point and realise ah XXX is just as important for the show"</p>
<p>Please describe how an effective crew works – What is happening when a crew is working really well together? Or how would you describe a great crew?</p>	<p>Smoothness - people know what doing and can focus but still enjoy and banter - no waiting or bottlenecks.</p>	<p>R1 "easy relationship, works getting done but there's a lot of fun and laughter generally ticking over...like a zone everyone is slotting in doing the work but carrying out a conversion" R2 "actually fun, goof around without getting into danger" R2 "like a ballet of technical stuff going on when it's smooth it's beautiful" R3 "no one has to ask questions of each other, no one gets in each other's way...you learn from people doing it badly and you learn from people doing it well" R4 "everyone is communicating positively, trusting" R6 "exciting to work with - a well-oiled machine that at the of the gig it's exciting" R8 "all similar skill level and all know what rate we can work at so the work rate is a lot higher" R1 "guess the other things is when it's good it feels like people have got your back, they won't make an example of you if you made a mistake, they might call you out but everyone makes mistakes"</p>

How does this contrast to a crew that doesn't work well?	Bottlenecks, people in the way having to redo things and things needing to be redone - the time pressure important.	R1 "running into each other, physically running into them, not connecting"
Are there ways that yourself or the crew ensure that people understand how important you are to a production?	Magic again - and saving the day	R8 "we are magic" R6 "saving the day which happens a lot... generally what crew do is save the day and go beyond the call of duty many times"
If a crew member makes a mistake what happens?	Slabbing - a slab of beer for a mistake in the show	R1 "you get slabbed, it a great tension release – it's over and done with, it's costly as we don't earn much but no one dwells on it - it's done and dusted" R5 "Slab, that involves box of alcohol"
Do you ever feel unsafe with any crew members that you are relying on when you are for example on a belay line?	Avoidance of those they consider to be unsafe, if it's someone new however and they will say something.	R1 "walked away from situations.... I might take them on nowadays.. if it's effecting my safety I would speak up" R2 "there are people that I won't be around - not in my proximity" R7 "depends on whether I feel comfortable to rectify it, ... might live with it" R8 "wouldn't put myself in that situation" R4 "some cases they will always be that way so avoid that person"
<b>Scripts/pre-scripts:</b>		
I understand that stage crews have particular technical and theatrical language they need to understand to work in theatre. Did you learn this before you came to the industry or is this something you have learned along the way?	Stong consensus that learnt along the way - although some came with formal training still a need to learn more and still need to learn a variety of international terms.	R8"diff crew have difference slang for things... touring overseas learning their slang"

How would you describe how stage crew talk to each other?	casual, swearing, etc.	R1 "informal language not acceptable in the boardroom" R4 "some rough and ready generally fairly respectful" R5 "prissy flower won't enjoy it. R7 "casual and banter" R8 "casual, keeping it fun" R3 "causal in general, definitely no formalities"
Follow up question – does this change during the life of the production?	Changes as people get to know each other more.	R1 "first few days sussing it out and then when it comes to show crew you've got a banter going" R4 "changes as you get to know someone and as you gain respect and learn to trust each other" R6 "definitely evolves, relationships evolve" R8 "definitely starts of stricter and firmer and as goes on it's more friendly and loosens up"
<b>Costumes:</b>		
Do you think there is a particular way that stage crew members dress?	Invisibility strong theme here.	R2 "ninja, we need to be able to appear and disappear without being seen" all noted "black" often noted "black and bogun".
If you change from backstage to show crew do you change your clothing and if so does that feel different?		R4 "not necessarily changing clothes but changing of the roles as well" R6 "right tool for the right job and clothing in a tool" R 1 "if I'm performing another role, if I go backstage people call me out if a I'm wearing my corporate shirt"
Follow up questions – where do you think style that comes from?		
What do you think would happen if someone deviated from that?	R 1 "if I'm performing another role, if if go backstage people call me out if a I'm wearing my corporate shirt, even working in festival office and they'd say what you dressed up for degree of practical if dolled up assumption" wouldn't be able to do your job	R1 "even working in xxxxx and they'd say what you dressed up for? .....if dolled up there's an assumption you wouldn't be able to do your job"
<b>Beginnings and endings?</b>		

How would you describe how a production team interacts and feels at the beginning of the production?		
How do you form trust with the other crew members? The Director? Actors?	Noted need to trust and that if people have been hired it is because they are worthy of the job. Lot of observing again.	R2 "from the beginning there has to be a certain amount of trust that they've employed the best team possible and available" R3 "if everyone doesn't know each other that's critical, finding out who else is there you can trust" R5 "largely comes down to same as anything, you get an immediate impression and form a bond with someone you'll enjoy talking to and that would be the same in any temporary situation" R6 "when you go to a job and everyone knows you and it's actually warming" R8 "guess it's just observing each other and see how well they can achieve that job and see that they know what they are doing and you trust them if you see that they know what they're doing" R8 "also age and experience chatting about previous jobs and experience gives you confidence"
Are there any rituals, practices that you go through to help establish ways of working with each other?	none noted	
How quickly can you identify if a crew is going to be effective?	very quickly - by first morning tea break a number note observing the "flow" R1 "by morning tea, does it flow reasonably well", R8 "in the first half an hour get a feel for the way the work flow is going" R6 "witin seconds" R4 "quicly build crew from beginning that will work together and that's knowledge of the community and the people around here who you put together in a group and that's something I think about quite strongly when putting a group together"	R1 "by morning tea, does it flow reasonably well?", R8 "in the first half an hour you get a feel for the way the work flow is going" R6 "wihtin seconds" R4 "quickly build crew from the beginning that will work well together and that's knowledge of the community and the people around here who you put together in a group and that's something I think about quite strongly when putting a group together"
Are there any warning signs that you look for in new crew members/new crews?	arrogance, not talking, over loud, argumentative - very strong correlation to the type of personality rather than technical skill	R2'personally comes down to the way they handle themselves or act around other people"

Mid-production		
When are problems most likely to arise between crew members/actors/directors in the production process?	Varied	
How are conflicts resolved?	walking away often noted	
How would you describe how a production team interacts and feels at the end of the production?	All agreed relief	
Other questions. Sadness	Moving into a career phase - in the past would get sad but not anymore.	R1 "probably did in my younger days when it was my entire life and social life, now I'm more than happy to go home" R3 "definitely a sense of loss" R5 "at the time shit loads of tears, now it wouldn't because I'm a grown up" R6 "months with some people and end of that a lot of tears", R7 "used to when I was younger, less now"

## Interview schedule framed within the dramaturgical framework:

Interviews have been conducted following Victoria University Human Ethics Committee (HEC) approval in August 2015 and were completed by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015. Each interview was approximately one hour in length and held at a location most suitable to each participant.

### Questions:

#### Actors:

- Describe the people that you are working with on these jobs.
- What do you think makes them good at their job?
- What other people/roles are the crew in close working relationships with?
- Is there a cohesive culture amongst everyone in the production or are there usually subcultures? What are these?

#### Audience/Reputation:

- Who do you think is “managing” the crew?
- Is there a hierarchy of crew members (eg – those who have been there the longest or those who are more technically savvy?)
- How do you think stage crew are viewed by other members of the production (eg directors, actors?).
- How do you think stage crew are viewed by those outside the production (eg the audience?)
- Do you consider that either of these groups see you as individuals or as a group?
- What do you think helps a crew member get hired from job to job?
- If you are in the position of hiring the crew for a production what things do you take into account before you hire them?
- Do you think you are aware of other crew members who hire crews when you are working?

#### Performance:

- Do you remember what it was like when you first began working in this industry? Describe what that was like.
- Was there a particular moment or time when you started to feel like you really knew what you were doing?
- Was there a particular moment when you started to feel like you were recognised for being good/excellent at your job?



- Are new crew members treated differently? Are there any particular things that they have to do or show before you consider they really know what they are doing?
- How important are the stage crew to a production?
  - Follow on question: Do you think those outside the stage crew are aware of this?
- Please describe how an effective crew works – What is happening when a crew is working really well together?
  - How does this contrast to a crew that doesn't work well?
- Are there ways that yourself or the crew ensure that people understand how important you are to a production?
- If a crew member makes a mistake what happens?
- Do you ever feel unsafe with any crew members that you are relying on when you are for example on a belay line?

### Scripts/pre-scripts:

- I understand that stage crews have particular technical and theatrical language they need to understand to work in theatre. Did you learn this before you came to the industry or is this something you have learned along the way?
- How would you describe how stage crew talk to each other?
  - Follow up question – does this change during the life of the production?

### Costumes:

- Do you think there is a particular way that stage crew members dress?
  - Follow up questions – where do you think style that comes from?
  - What do you think would happen if someone deviated from that?

### Beginnings and endings?

- How would you describe how a production team interacts and feels at the beginning of the production?
  - How do you form trust with the other crew members? The Director? Actors?
  - Are there any rituals, practices that you go through to help establish ways of working with each other?
  - How quickly can you identify if a crew is going to be effective?
  - Are there any warning signs that you look for in new crew members/new crews?
- Mid-production
  - When are problems most likely to arise between crew members/actors/directors in the production process?
  - How are conflicts resolved?
- How would you describe how a production team interacts and feels at the end of the production? Follow up question – do you ever feel sad at the end of a production?





## Consent Form for Personal Interview

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### Personal Interview CONSENT FORM

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I agree to be interviewed by Sue Sealy-O'Donnell for the purposes of her MBA Business Research Project and consent to the use of my opinions and information. I understand that none of the opinions or statements that I make during the interview will be attributed to me personally, and that I may withdraw from the research before 28<sup>th</sup> August 2015. I am also aware that the findings derived from this study will be published in the Victoria University Library and excerpts may be included in academic publications and/or academic conferences.

I have been informed of the purpose of the research and the confidentiality conditions.

I understand that raw data collected during the interview will only be available to the researcher, name, and her supervisor, Sarah Proctor-Thompson.

A summary of the research will be provided on request.

Name: ..... Date: .....

Signed: .....

If you would like a copy of the research summary please add your email/address below:

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