

## Dance Writing Clinic- 15<sup>th</sup> July

Panel Speakers: Oonagh Desire (Arts Consultant), Victoria O'Brien (Arts Council- Dance Advisor) and Catherine Young (Choreographer).

### Oonagh Desire:

#### Approach to Writing Grant Applications

- Approach to start:
  - Break the application down into sections- do not try and do it all at once.
  - Question everything- make sure you understand how you and your project fit the criteria & what information you need- set plenty of time aside.
- Three stages to a good grant application:
  - Assessment
  - Presentation
  - Doing It!
- Stage One: Assessment

You are assessing the opportunity- is this the right opportunity for you? Does your idea fit the criteria for the Dance Bursary. Be kind to yourself- do not spend time on an application that does not suit your project- another award may be suitable for you.

Read the guidelines- they are comprehensive. Really understand the purpose of the grant- why are the AC offering dance bursaries- what are they funding and what are they going to prioritise? Everything you need to know, is in the guidelines- read them a few times. You can save yourself time and energy at this first stage, if this award is not the right fit- maybe a project award is best.

What do you want to do? Look at the priorities and see do they match your own.

Are you eligible? Do not waste your time: ensure you are eligible to apply for the award.
- Stage Two: Preparation

Look at the application: Get this done straight away. If you have not already applied to an award, sign up to the services on the AC website- look through the application, and then nothing is a surprise. If there is something you do not understand on the application, email Victoria, check the FAQ- get all the help you can.

Organise & plan your time: Get organised- there are sometimes deadlines all at the same time- be prepared for the deadline approaching. Set aside an hour each day for two weeks- or do it in all in three days- you know how you work best, but make sure to have the deadline in mind, so you are not rushing to get it all in. Set up an additional spreadsheet for notes/timeline/schedule perhaps, to help you along the way.
- Stage Three: Gathering your raw materials & Do it!
- What raw material do you have? Is your CV up to date? What is your website looking like? Is there a video of your work? Do you have a DI Member Profile up to date? If anything needs work, now is a good time to do it. If anything is out of date, update it- ask yourself questions- what do you do.... how you describe yourself? Does your practice have a focus or style? Where did you study? Who have you taught? Who have you worked with? Who has funded/commissioned you? Gather all your work to date, and do not forget any little detail.
- Writing about your work: Can be hard to start to express in words what you do. Look up dancers who you know, who are successful, and see how they portray themselves- and if

you know their work, think about how you view their work, and does their text match your idea of their work. You can listen to podcasts, of people talking about their work- this can give you ideas in terms of language. In terms of practice- watch recorded footage of your work and try and describe what you are doing. Talk to yourself and record it and listen to how you speak about your work..Talk to somebody else, and ask them, what they think of the way you speak about your practice.

Give yourself the time you need. Assume that the people reading the application know nothing about you- they have not seen your work. This is your opportunity to put your work down on the page. Do not worry about language- be yourself, be genuine and real- do not use technical jargon you do not understand- you will not get points for it! It will make it harder for people to understand you- it should sound like you. When you finish- try get somebody (impartial preferably) to read your application: they can read through and give honest feedback on if you have answered the questions.

#### Application- general thoughts-

- Tell us about you- who are you, what have you achieved...what are your ambitions and dreams, what are you inspired by. Your raw material, CV, videos, website- all the info is there- this is three short paragraphs.
- Summarizing your proposal. Three short bullet points- do exactly what is asked. 'I want to spend time doing X, because of Y'. This is effectively the headline of your proposal- and then you go into more detail.
- Think about what you want to do and why...
- Does it fit into your artistic goals and ambitions?
- What is going on in the world that caused you to apply for this award? Always explain why.
- What is going to be possible once you get this award, that was not possible before?
- Look at the language in the guidelines.... find time to explore, experiment, to collaborate, to test, to research to discover...use these words for your application.
- How you fit the assessment criteria- assess the opportunity at the beginning.
- 'As you can see from the work I made last year/sell out show/residency.... Which allowed me to do X etc'
- Speak about other people, and how they wanted to work with you.
- Feasibility: will your application deliver what you say it will-10-week turnaround for AC getting back to you. Will the project work- in the timeframe you purpose?

#### Conclusion

- Do not be daunted by the application- all the guidelines are there to help you!

Victoria O'Brien:

Information on Arts Council awards and Assessments

\*\*all key dates accurate at time of presentation but subject to change. Check Arts Council [website](#).

Key Dates: July – November 2020

- Festival Investment Scheme. Maximum amount awarded: €7,000. Currently open for applications. Closing date: July 23rd. Decisions made and communicated: End of September.
  - Bursary Award. Maximum amount awarded: €15,000. Currently open for applications. Closing date: July 30th. Decisions made and communicated: End of September.
  - Project Award. Maximum amount awarded: €85,000. Open for Applications: August 11th Closing date: September 10th. Decisions made and communicated: Mid-November.
  - Commissions. Maximum amount awarded: €13,000 (approx.). Open for applications: August 18th Closing date: September 17th Decisions made and communicated: Mid-November.
- Bursary & Project Awards Are Assessed Against The Following Criteria:
- 1). Artistic Merit
- Here we assess the quality associated with the idea and the artistic people involved. We will look both at what you propose to do and how you describe those activities. We will look at how you show excellence in terms of ambition, originality, experimentation, innovation, competency and collaboration in what you propose. We will also take account of the artform or arts-practice context for your proposed arts activity.
- 2). Meeting the Objectives and Priorities of the Award.
- Here we look at how your application connects and responds to key-objectives of the award (as printed in the guidelines).
- 3). Feasibility
- Here we consider the personnel involved in administering, managing and delivering the project; the proposed budget (is the project financially viable?) does the project have other sources of income; the availability and access to other resources; the proposed timetable or schedule. That the timetable or schedule is realistic and that technical requirements will be met. That audience or public-engagement targets, where relevant, are realistic and achievable, and that there are solid plans in place to achieve this.

Notes For Applicants

- Approximately 3% of dance applications received every year are ineligible. Usually this is because: the applicant did not include the required supporting materials; the starting dates/schedule did not align with the decisions been made; the applicant is still in undergraduate or postgraduate education, etc.
- Treat each application as if it were your first. Make it clear, concise and unambiguous. Make your budget as comprehensive as possible; research your costs, and try to submit as detailed a financial breakdown as possible.
- Multiple people are involved in the assessment process (operations, the dance team, personnel from other arts teams for secondary assessments, moderators, etc.). In addition, once your application is assessed and shortlisted, another three or four individuals will be involved in the final decision at Panel.
- You need to be selective about your supporting materials. Consider editing your video clips to 3 or 4 minutes. Include evidence of financial support / in-kind support where relevant.

You should also include brief biographies of all the personnel. Reviews, visuals, and additional documents.

#### Catherine Young

#### Reading & Assessing Applications

#### DANCE BURSARY AWARD 2020

- Support professional artists at any stage of their career to develop their arts practice
- Time and resources to think, research, reflect and engage with their arts practice
- Self-directed research / structured mentoring relationship / residencies

#### Objectives and priorities of the award

- Time on working at their practice
- Time researching/thinking about/developing new idea for future dissemination
- Time time developing their technical skills in a particular area
- Time developing/learning new skills related to their practice or area of interest
- Time working with a mentor, or collaborator(s) to develop an idea, or to assist in developing or up-skilling within a particular area of their practice, or an area related to their practice
- Time developing an idea in collaboration with a potential production partner(s)
- Training by way of master classes or other professional training opportunities
- Equipment and materials to assist with the development of their practice (15%)
- Combination of the above activities

#### The Assessment Process

- adviser(s) and/or staff make written assessment
- adviser(s) and/or staff recommends as shortlisted or not shortlisted;
- peer panel receive all shortlisted applications & supporting docs and AC recommendations
- peer panel and AC meeting to discuss and makes decisions;
- decisions communicated in writing;

#### The Process (peer panel)

1. Reading applications
2. Assessing applications

#### THINGS ABOUT GRANT WRITING

- Assume they've never heard of you
- You need to spend a lot of time thinking about your work. The dance will keep you coming back to the world of ideas. Write about it.
- Refer to your last piece, where you are currently at in your practice, now where its going
- Why should they give the money to you vs someone else?
- Make a case for it your work
- Your video has to select and show the best bits, that have dynamics.
- Drafts – keep rewriting til you get it right and have someone else proof it.
- Write about your ideas as a practice
- Use grant writing as a way to reflect on your work and where it is going
- Write OUTSIDE OF DEADLINES, then when the deadline comes, there are ideas there

## 1. READING APPLICATIONS

**ABOUT YOU** – how can you present your best self?

Who are you? What have you done?

Where are you coming from? Where do you want to go?

Supporting Documentation

(spend time on this, get it right, QUALITY)

- **CV** (relevant for this app? Updated, clear, concise?)
- **Videos** (short, dynamic, best bits)
- **Weblinks** (your public face to the world, make sure links work)

*Label everything clearly so we can find material easily*

**ABOUT YOUR IDEA**

- What do you want to do and why?
- Where are you now? where do you want to go?
- What do you need? What could help?
- Dare to dream! Thing big, brainstorm, write things down
- Write about what you really want to do
- Be clear, give detail, be specific
- What supports do you have that can bolster your application? If you don't have any, that's ok, don't invent them!
- Be honest – especially around what things cost,
- What is the wider context in which you are making the proposal, where do you sit within that?
- And if there's any other info you think relevant that you feel might help, include it.

**When Finished**

- When you've written it all out, read your application out loud. It is amazing what you'll catch by doing this.
- If you can, have someone else read it.
- Do you get excited when you read it? If YOU do not, then we won't!

## 2. ASSESSING APPLICATIONS

Applications are assessed on 3 criteria:

1. Artistic Merit
2. How you meet the objectives and priorities of the award
3. Feasibility

We can only assess on these criteria, not other things

**ASSESSMENT SCALE**

- **A – Must Fund (10 points):** this means that the application has met the criteria for the award and merits funding on that basis, to the amount requested where possible.
- **B – Should Fund (8 points):** this means that the application has met the criteria to an extent sufficient to merit funding should resources allow.
- **C – Could Fund (5 points):** this means that the application has met the criteria, but to a lesser extent within the competitive context than other applications.
- **D – Not a Priority (2 points):** this means that the application is deemed to have not met the criteria to an extent sufficient to merit funding.