

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Vox Motus	
Application Reference number:	G201001101	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£150000	£150000
Officer's recommendation		
<p>Summarise the key points of your assessment and draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the application taken together with any comments you have received from source evidence (portfolio of evidence/ internal / external consultation). Highlight any specific risks</p> <p><i>Note: The amount of information you provide here should be sufficient for the decision maker to reach a decision. As with all previous commentary boxes please do not exceed 250 words</i></p>		
Comments:		
<p>In its relatively short lifetime Vox Motus has demonstrated that it creates work which is of high artistic quality (eg demonstrated through SAC artistic evaluations).</p> <p>Vox Motus meets our priorities for Flexible Funding 2009-2011 well in terms of Artistic Vision in that its practice provides artists with space and time to develop imaginative work and opportunities to test out ideas. It demonstrates strong Public Engagement and a commitment to Widening Access in terms of involving the public in the development of work, in its well thought through marketing plans and touring plans. Vox Motus aims to encourage attendance amongst 18-35 year olds who can be under-represented in theatre audiences. Vox Motus productions incorporate other artforms and digital technologies.</p> <p>Vox Motus' evaluation plans are an integral part of its work development and engage venues, collaborating artists and audiences to enable work to be refined over time. The company works with a number of well established venues and artists (see Business Plan Section 5.4).</p> <p>The business plan is realistic and the staff and board of Vox Motus have relevant experience to enable plans to be achieved in my view.</p> <p>Flexible funding would enable the organisation to realise its ambitions, as would the acquisition of studio space and appointment of a full time artistic team of three. Equalities are not particularly clearly argued and I would recommend that this be addressed as a condition of grant. Not that I have serious concerns but it would be helpful to have confirmation that studio space would be fully accessible.</p> <p>The development of one of the productions (<i>Forces</i>) is conditional on SAC and Scottish Screen funding for 2008/09 and if these funds are not awarded any flexible funding amount may need to be revised with a similar revision's to the final programme</p>		
Officer's overall priority recommendation		HIGH
Lead Officer signature:		Date:31 January 2008 Revised: 20 March 2008
Print name:	Gillian Shaw	

Stage 2: Heads of Departments prioritise applications with advice from Specialist Advisors

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the application identified by the Specialist Advisors? Please summarise their comments below. What were their ratings of the importance of the application in being supported?

Comments:

Attendees:

David Taylor, Co-Director of Arts

Specialist Advisors: Stewart Ennis, Tim Licata, David Leddy, Alex Patience, Sandy Maxwell, Stephen Slater, Stephen Stenning and Laura Tyrrell

The Panel identified the following strengths and weaknesses of Vox Motus

This is an upcoming company but it was felt that it was a low priority in terms of flexible funding. The application was felt to be slightly deceptive in saying that the company had created 4 pieces, as this formed part of a series of work in progress.

The SAs were sceptical about the value of a dedicated workshop space and thought that the company should be working with existing venues rather than trying to establish a space of their own. This was a talented company, with a passionate voice but its inexperience and limited production record did not recommend it for flexible funding. The company produced high quality work but due to its relatively short track record it was a low priority for this form of funding.

Specialist Advisors overall rating: Low

2. Summarise the role of the organisation within the infrastructure of the sector. Assess to what extent the organisation's vision will contribute to the department's and to Scottish Arts Council's aims: (to fulfil artists' potential, to increase participation, to place creativity at the heart of learning)

Comments:

1. *Fit with FXO criteria:*

Vox Motus was set up in 2004 and is a theatre company which creates devised narrative theatre. It aims to collaborate with artists across a range of artforms. It tours throughout Scotland and since 2005 has given 26 performances in 11 venues with 4 productions. The company has initiated a corporate workshop called MOTIVATE: INNOVATE: CREATE which it will continue to develop in the future. The company has benefited from the directors taking part in the SAC\Vanishing Point Shared Resources programme. Vox Motus has quite a unique phased approach to devising work.

1.1 *Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists*

The company has a limited track record in terms of the volume of completed work it has produced. While it is innovative it has a limited claim to providing leadership. The company itself works with a range of artists and thereby provides support.

1.2 *Improving your engagement with the public*

The applicant plans to engage with the public through presenting work in progress and viral marketing. However, the public engagement is not numerically high with a low attendance figure target at 4,150

1.3 *Good practice in the governance and management*

The business planning appears to be sound, as is the governance.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access

Information on equalities is generalised and has little information on practical implementation. The company is likely to widen access through attracting young people due to the nature of the work.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%

Met

2. Fit with Departmental priorities

No particular fit with Drama priorities.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims

The applicant provides opportunities for artists to stage, and for audiences to see, works in progress. This gives artists opportunities to test out new ideas in a relatively risk free environment before committing to fully developed productions and gives audiences an insight into the creative process. To this extent the applicant would support the aim of fulfilling the artists' potential well. The application fits with increasing participation to some extent.

3. Based on the lead officer's assessment and the subsequent meeting with Specialist advisors, please rate the application (High, medium, low) summarise your reasons for assessing the application as you have (drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and highlighting any specific risks)

Comments

1.1 Application rating 1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating

The SAs were not supportive of this application, rating it low, largely due to the inexperience of the company. However the assessing officer has rated it as a High priority overall. I rate it as medium in recognition of the innovation of the company and its interesting proposals.

1.3 Strengths of application

Innovative ideas and fresh approach to creating and marketing work. A recent company that has potential.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications

The inexperience of the company. There is also the issue of the stand-alone studio which the SAs felt was unnecessary.

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application

That the company's inexperience will prevent it realising it's potential and lead it into financial difficulties by setting ambitions too high.

1.6 Development areas identified

Approach to practical actions relating to priorities could be developed.

1.7 Recommended level of support £150,000 pa.

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

Geographical spread is limited to 6 local authorities - this includes Highland, and it is likely this would be Inverness, so the pattern is city-based. This is not unreasonable for a new-ish company who wish to experiment with their work.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation

MEDIUM

Head of Department's signature:

Print name:

David Taylor

Date: 15 Feb 2008

Revised: 26 March 2008

Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
Comments: Some fit with FXO criteria but relatively weak in comparison to others, in the context of a highly competitive funding round. Not recommended for support.		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		Low Medium
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: Agree with Stage 3 recommendation.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		Low Medium
Acting Chief Executive signature:	Jim Tough	Date: 10 April 2008

Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation.		
Joint Board Final Decision		REFUSE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	

End of Assessment