

October 18, 2013

Dear CQT:

I've been receiving your email on succession lately. I have not been at the meetings but thought I would give my opinion to you. It's in English but maybe it can be useful to someone.

In my opinion, succession is for the British monarchy, not for our cultural milieu. When a theatre company dies, its resources and funding should be given back to the theatre community and distributed among theatre companies in the community. A theatre company is not private property or a private business – why should someone inherit it? It receives public funding and therefore the funding should go back to the public, in this case to the other publically-funded theatre organizations.

I am a great believer in cultural growth. However, in order for growth to happen, things must die – that is natural and a much more sane way to operate. Space must be created so new things can flourish. And new things will fill void quickly as nature abhors a vacuum. Even if a large company dies – its building will live on and house other companies, its money will allow others to grow. Succession is an outmoded idea from a feudal society. It has no place in a world that needs more cooperative models and less outmoded capitalistic ones. Why should 1% of the artists control all the wealth?

I want to be clear that I am talking about theatre companies and not theatre venues. I am not saying that cultural buildings should be abandoned. They need to be stable so theatre can always have a home. Venues should continue to receive yearly stable funding that is coming from a different envelope than that for artistic creation. However, instead of concentrating power in one artistic director, a venue should have four resident companies who manage the space and program the season. An artistic director should manage his/her own artistic destiny, his/her own company – not have power of over the artistic destinies of an entire community by deciding who gets the privilege of performing in the space.

Sharing a venue would mean stability for a great number of companies and a variety of voices making decisions. It would allow for a diversity of programming, instead of programming that follows the tastes of one person. Again, it is important to move towards the model of a democracy and away from that of a kingdom.

Right now, there are young artists and young companies who want a chance to express themselves. There are mid-sized companies that want to fully inhabit their art. But our present system has led to artistic stagnation. Our world has changed and, furthermore, the old models are not financially sustainable. Also, there is something unfair about power being concentrated in the hands of the few, when so many are in need. The artistic community is hungry for more opportunity, not less.

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Thanks so much for reading this. I speak fluent French but write it poorly. But maybe someone will find my proposals useful. Good luck with your meetings!

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stacey Christodoulou". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stacey Christodoulou  
Artistic Director