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SYMPOSIUM 2012

REMINDER: THIS TRANSCRIPT IS NOT VERBATIM

Date: 19/01/12

Venue: West Park Conference Centre, Perth Road, Dundee

Mat Fraser: So ladies and gentlemen, and those in between, take 10 seconds or 20 seconds to check your mobiles are switched to silent and you are ready for the day. Take 30 seconds. I am Matt Fraser, I am the chair for the symposium "Pathways to the Profession". I got to the stage where I use reading glasses and nothing is in font 14 so I will use these off and on.

First a bit of housekeeping, welcome and thank you for coming to the Pathways to the Profession symposium organised by SDT in partnership with Creative Scotland, Dundee Rep and the Scottish Conservatoire. If there is a fire alarm the fire exits are to the left and right. They are sequences of 3 sets of double doors on either side which will hopefully open when you approach. The collection point for being counted is on the right, stage left out of there. There are emergency numbers if you need them on the plastic laminated things, and I was asked to tell you that the whole conference is being filmed for a sequence of short films. We won't sign release forms but if you don't want to be filmed go to the film team and they will take a photo and edit you out of the footage. Honest! [LAUGHTER] if there is a problem do that. The team are in purple t-shirts and will answer your questions. If you need interpreters ask Caroline Bowditch or Abby. Turn your phones off. I am sure you have done that. There is WiFi available and I assume its

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password free. The information for everything you need is in the pack. The stalls, are in the foyer. No, they are in the foyer, and I have browsed them, Access to Work and so on, are just this morning. Do avail yourselves of that at the beginning of lunch and the morning break. The resource table is there for the whole event. Feel free to leave provocations on the wall and feedback. I am not sure where it is - in the Mansion House.

It's a delight for me to be here. I will say a few words to vibe up the space. I will toe the party line but I have opinions and they will come out! Let me start by saying theatre and dance are forms of presented art and more useful when they widen the scope of the imagination of the viewer and not narrow it. It must be expanded and challenged. Imagine my horror when I went to Richmond theatre where I used to live and imports the magic of dance. There was as how called Marie Jose of the Chinese Elvis. It was not very good and was a perfect living room play. About three quarters of the way through there was a party and the eldest impersonator was late. It was packed. Maureen Litman turned in a hackneyed portrayal of someone with mental illness. The Chinese Elvis comes in and the woman in front leans to her friend and says He is Chinese! Why was I here? We are not making shows like that.

I looked at the amazing breadth and wealth of experience of the panel of performers, the qualifications and strategies in bringing disabled artists to mainstream art. The changes, the enthusiasm, and I think to my first disability arts conference in 1996 where the Independent Theatre Council asked me to do a speech which was pretty angry. It bemoaned the power breakers singing resistance. In T.V, its namely the chain of fear from casting agent all the way down. Every one of those presents a question barrier about the inclusion of a disabled person. In stage, sorry, on stage its a refusal to the bigger budgeted mainstream houses to include disabled people in their work, having new work that concerns disability or casting disabled actors. I think probably for me that is still the big barrier to that which we aspire to achieve. At the time drama schools were one of the barriers and said that there were no good disabled people out there. We are used to that. over the years things changed and a major part of