



Jens Frimann Hansen

Nationality: Danish

Age: 61

Gender: male

Highest finished education:

University degree level between
Masters and Phd (from old school
system)

Background:

How long have you done theatre?

Since 1993.

What type of theatre do you work in?

Theatre in public space or theatre that is questioning public space. As well as indoor theatre, childrens theatre, international theatre, and theatre in the concept of a street festival.

Are you currently working in the theatre industry?

Full-time employment.

Main Interview:

What role do you play in theatre and why did you start doing theatre?

Um, I I have been studying literature and I wasn't that interested in in theater when I started, but I kind of accidentally ended up in the theater business, but I was in a very nice place that made me travel a lot, so I had the opportunity to do a lot of international work and then co-making what's cultural capital in 1996 and they I made all the great artists and stuff. And after that, it's been, it's actually getting better and better with me in theater and and today I enjoy it very much, but my background is a little different than many other theater peoples, as I come from literature, and that still plays a huge role in what I'm doing. Well, I'm a director, and it's, and I'm also, I have, um, but we are a little bit, um, actually, we are grown out of a voluntary voluntary organization and association. So it's, it's, it's, and it still plays a part in what we're doing on the OPR run completely professionally. We have a staff of 6 people. And our main purpose is to do stuff in the public space. And this means that we have quite a big role, quite a significant role in our local community, who also acknowledges that we are working internationally. I'm also the director of the festival in the UK. A festival called Soul Festival, taking place in Skateness. You can show and I'm also in many boards in Denmark and also I'm also appointed to some boards by the cultural ministry, ministers. So I am quite about, uh, and I have quite a lot of knowledge about the whole business in in the, uh, how theatre is working in Denmark, but my specific uh, role is very much about a festival called

Passage Festival, uh, and that's place in the local landscape, in the national landscape, and in the European landscape, you could say.

Do you feel that the theater and, like, how production of business in theater is done, Denmark is different from, like, the UK or other international places?

I think so. I think so. I think that's a lot of differences, how it works around Europe. Um, and I think that especially Danish theater is very well defined, meaning that it's very difficult to develop. And this is what we are struggling with as a festival because festivals are not recognized in the Danish funding system. So we kind of have exceptions and our stuff, but we also have a lot of administration because we basically have to apply for everything we're doing. In short, they see festivals as a lot of single performances happening. They don't see it as an entity in itself. And that makes it partly very difficult. But we are very good in European projects, creative Europe. We have been part of several projects, and the way they approach festivals really something that resonates with what we are actually doing. So we have more connected, you can say, to an international environment as to a Danish national funding environment, although we are recognized and we do get money from Danish Arts Council. But it's, the focus is much more on the institutionalized. Denmark is a very institutionalized society, and especially also when we're talking about theater. And that makes it partly very difficult for us.

Is there a part of the creative process you prefer?

Ah, that's a good question. I like to develop things. I like to, to, I'm, I'm, I'm, There are two things. The first one is a link to democracy- that I think theaters should really be linked to democracy. And this is a question that we are working with in all aspects of it, and I think that is really interesting, and I like that kind of work. But theaters should also be linked to changes in society. Society is changing all the time, and we have to address that as a festival. I'm talking now very much, as a festival for performing arts. And when the society changes, the artist also changes their approach to how they are doing their art, and as a festival, we should take, we should host the artist and make good possibility for the artist, and this means that we always have to be aware of what is happening around us. A good example is corona, the COVID crisis, where we actually managed to do a lot of stuff also during shutdown, lockdown, when everything was locked down, we actually still did performances because we kind of recognized that this is also something happening in our common society, and we also have to work with artists that have projects that can actually do stuff under these conditions. For us, it was a new opportunity. Roughly speaking. It was definitely was.

What are the main difficulties you have had to face in theatre and what do you think you've learned from it?

The main difficulty for us is by far the lack of recognition of festivals, meaning that we are very well recognized as an artistic, interesting, innovative kind of festival. And we get a lot of positive response everywhere for being a festival like this. Everybody can see the purpose of the festival and everybody likes it. The problem is, when it comes to the

administration of the festival, that it doesn't fit into the Danish funding system. And this is really the hard part for us. We have a lot of work. We just wrote 55 applications because we have to basically write an application for each performance. We are presenting at the festival. And at the same time, the Arts council doesn't recognize that we do too much time on administration. So it's kind of a catch 22. But the thing is that we are really in, in, in, um, we are, we are connecting a lot to Europe, and we are taking in a lot of Europe, European project, knowledge produced by European festivals and all that. But it doesn't really fit into the Danish system. So we have a lot of things around the festival that could be potentially interesting for a lot of other people to know, but we don't really have the infrastructure to make it to distribute it to the rest of the theater sector, unfortunately. That's a reform on the way and we are also trying to get this knowledge to the minister, but it's not so easy.

Has theatre helped you develop social connections? How and how much?

Absolutely. Um, Some of the, one of the, I would say the profile of the festival, one of the main parts of the profile of our festival is that we are doing a lot of stuff in housing estates where there's a lot of immigrants. Living and a lot of those haven't been to see it at all. This is one of our main performing spaces. And when we're doing stuff there, sometimes everybody is part of a project and basically see it. We have a lot of ambitions out there. We did a big scale show, and nobody could avoid it. Not everybody liked it, but everybody was kind of part of it. And it also brings people from outside to get into this housing estate. Uh, where they normally don't come uh, because of they might have a lot of ideas about what is going on there. And this is some of the really important things that we are doing, but also in terms in terms of the climate change, we also do a lot of stuff around that. And as a festival, you have a lot of flexibility, that we can actually, we don't have a theater in our house where we have to always put stuff into, uh, we cannot, we could go out where the problems are and basically do our stuff there. And we try to take as much advantage of that as possible.

Do you think theatre has been inclusive in your experience? If not, what barriers exist?

I think theater has a lot of potential to be inclusive, especially if you link it to democracy. If you say that in theater was linked to democracy. The catastrophe and the crisis, they are terms that are defined by the theater, by Apostle, and many, many, many, many, many years ago, and now they are taken over by the media, and we meet them all the time, but they're actually coming from, from, from the theatre, and uh, Um, That's a lot of potential of getting everybody, for me, it's about a conversation, about a dialogue, and uh, it is about, it is, it's democracy. Theater, for me, is democracy, and that's the most important part of it, basically, that it's a conversation. We have.. we've also been doing stuff in...we're having philosophical discussions in hair dresses salons and with some artists. Because hairdressers salons are doing somewhere where you, some of the places where everybody actually talks freely, everybody feels free to speak. If we had done it in an auditorium, uh, a lot of people wouldn't come and everybody goes to a hairdresser saloon. So we're playing with these things being a festival, working in topics,

space with theatre We're also trying to see what the potential does public space actually have to to develop not only the theater, but also our democracy.

What do you think holds people back from participate in theater or feeling like they can be a part of it?

I think they think it's boring, and that's one thing that it's boring, it's out of time. It's something from the old days. This one side of it, the other side is that some people are not familiar with the tradition. So they don't feel that they are welcome there. When we are talking about the indoor theater, I think that's a factor that everybody recognizes. And I think that's a shame and I also feel that I am partially responsible for that and also have to work on issues to bringing more people into the conventional theatre space. But I'm also trying to make up for it when we're doing stuff in public spaces.

We are sure that the theater can socially grow people whether we are spectators or they decide to participate actively in the creation of live shows: what do you think? What skills do you think of?

I agree. I think this is my ambition. This is also my ambition, but it's not easy and a lot of theater doesn't live up to that for sure. But this is my ambition that everybody should be part of it and it can potentially reach out to everyone and we have to work on that because it's, it's like democracy. It's not interesting if it's only a few people taking part. everybody should be involved in it and theatre is part of democracy and we need to to have more focused on that and develop that. It's hard for me to be too specific or too concrete about that because there can be many ways into how you want to be involved and how you want to be part of theatre. I think what is most important is that you are, uh, unconditionally working, uh, with, um, uh, that you are not compromising on the artistic side of it. This is where we have the best experiences. Actually, sometimes you bring something that is really abstract. And that people were used to go to the theater might even think it's too far out or something. Some of these projects, we have actually been working with in the housing states and they've been very successful because artists, if they're working right, they really want to do that project and there's no condition. There's no compromise. They have to get out with it. And it's something that we are lacking a lot in society today when you're doom scrolling on your mobile phone. There's no application in that. You can do it, and you cannot do it, and it does really make a difference. But when you're working with an artist, it's an unconditional contract between an artist and a participant, an audience or what it is... it's a very, very strong way of communicating and we need that. We need more of that because democracy is a serious thing. And so is the theater.

Do you have any advice also to engage more people?

The thing is that, as I said, I, to me, theater is about a conversation and it's a dialogue, and it means that if you want some people to, to, uh, come into the city, then you have to address them in a way where they can also respond to your, uh, to, uh, you, you're trying to involve them. And that is, um, That's normally we see theater as a more, uh, how do

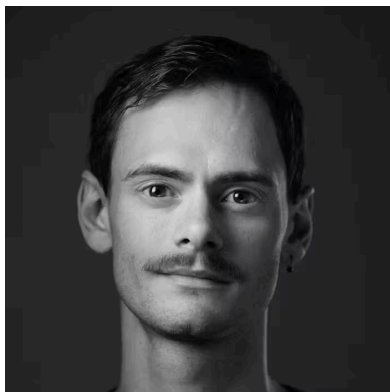
you say, uh, and more authority and uh, more. Yeah, that is an authority somehow. and that you should you have to be quiet, you should not. This is the artist, they have the independency, which they certainly should have. But maybe we should, I would like to discuss that concept as well. And maybe it shouldn't always be like that.

Are you worried about technology and AI impact on the entertainment industry?

I don't know. Uh, I, I, I, yeah, the way that it's, it's taking control over people's lives. in a way. And, uh, and it's, I see it's certainly as a threat because it's also linked to power, that it's some really powerful people. I was writing a lot about the internet in the 90s, and I was a very positive person because I really saw it as a free space to communicate, and I think that's what's really a good thing about the internet. But of course, uh, when it was free, uh, people with money occupied it and and, and, uh, today it's not free anymore. You can get whatever you want, but you get it on a condition that someone is actually in control of what you are doing and that makes it very powerful and it's a threat to democracy in that sense, I think. Yeah, and AI is a little bit the same thing, I think, I think, but it's, uh, I think it can be very useful. That you can ask different things, but you should also be very critical like about everything else. Google's actually defining what they can do and what they cannot do, you know, Elon Musk has these, uh, has his own Wikipedia where he is, uh, mentioned in a very nice way and all that kind of stuff. But it becomes too obvious at times, and I once saw and recently I saw an AI drawing a map over Denmark, with someone had asked, please draw a map over Denmark, and plot in the cities of Denmark, and it got completely wrong. Some of the towns were in Germany and Copenhagen was not accurate. It was 200 kilometers south of where it actually is. So it's not very precise. I think that was one of the best examples.

Do you have a fun fact about theatre that you would like to share or Anything you would like to add about your experience with theatre?

I think it's an opportunity. We don't have to do it, but if we do it, it can do amazing stuff. I can agree. And that's basically it. That's my experience.



Christian Iversen

Nationality: Danish

Age: 32

Gender: male

Highest finished education: Bachelor in Fine Arts Acting - The Danish National School of Performing Arts 2019-2022

Background:

How long have you done theatre?

I think so, so my theater experience as an amateur began in 20.... uh.... 18? No, no, no, no. 2020, 2011. Yeah. That was my amateur startup, and then I had my 1st professional job in 2017. Yeah.

Can I ask what distinguishes between amateur and professional for you?

For me, it's if you get paid for what you do. Because a lot of the amateur productions, as they sort of, as the ambitions grew, and I got involved with a different company, it just became way more professional, and then there was a whole professional artistic cast that sort of produced. The, the, the performance and the production, but then everyone was on a volunteer basis. So that was sort of, even though there was a lot of great talent in there, then Yeah. I think that's where I sort of distinguish it.

What type of theatre do you work in?

I'm doing everything. So what I'm doing right now is very commercial. What I did uh, 4 months ago was um, for school children, so fourth, 3rd grade, and it was touring, showing up to the school. Yeah. What I did a year before that was extremely experimental- it was in Sweden. What I'm doing in January is somewhere in between experimental, but also engaging and evolving, but with young kids around the age of- so it's like 7th to ninth grade, which is the target group. Um, but yeah, that doesn't really answer your question, but. Yeah, and I'm also so early in my career because I finished, I graduated in 22. In the fall of 22. And so now it's 3 years since I graduated. I'm still trying to figure out what my interest is, what my interests are, and also what am I good at? And thirdly, what does people want to buy from me? Yeah, and also the industry here in Denmark is the way that it's put together also makes it difficult to just live off of one thing. So the funding and the way you, I don't know, if we talked about it or if you know about the way that we do it here. So it distinguishes from other areas where you might get a big funding and a collaboration with a big institution or a private fund where you just know it's ongoing. Here you kind of, if you're, um, your own producer, it goes from projects, projects, so you never know what you have in the future. If you have, even if you have a small theater, that's on the bigger fund, you only have it for 4 years, after 4 years, it's up for review again, and you don't know if you're going to get the same amount of funding again. Yeah, sort of, sort of the only theaters that know for sure that they'll get funding is the Royal Theater. And then you have the, uh, Landstils scene, which is in Odense, in Aarhus and in Aalborg. But they don't know necessarily how big their budget is. And then every other sort of theater is based off of the collaboration with the Comuna. And if they get additional funding through private funds or through the artistic fund, which is from, yeah, the government.

Are you currently working in the theatre industry?

Right now, I'm full-time employed. Until mid-November. So almost 4 months, which is really great.

Main Interview:

What role do you play in theatre and why did you start doing theatre?

So that also varies from project to project. Most often it's more of a conventional role where you show up and then there's a director and there's a whole production team that sort of has already made all of the decisions. That's the typical role that I've played. Thinking back on the productions that I've done. The job that I'm doing in January, we have a lot more involvement. We're part of creating a workshop where we interviewed a bunch of the kids and the young people. And we've also had some workshops where we're a bit more devising, what sort of material goes into the production, but still there is playwright and composure connected to the project and a director that is hands on and taking a lot of the decisions. We still have a little bit more of an artistic say in what goes into and in which direction we're going. Yeah, so I started doing theater in, like I said, I would never trace it back to 11, 2011. So it started with being in school, but if you really want to go far back, I did something in kindergarten, but I don't think that really, if my parents had been a lot more aware, then sure that would have been... that tried to go on, but yeah, so in 2011 and that was equivalent to like high school college, organization year. I just wanted to play music and in order to play music and sing, you had to do the theater production. That's all I got into it.

Is there a part of the creative process you prefer?

I like the collective creative process. Um, we were introduced to a method called artistic response, which is basically a way of..... It's a, it's an umbrella term for devising, where you open up a text via questions and then you answer them not intellectually, but you answer them with a devising method. That's a process that I really like, because it involves, it can involve everyone within the production. It doesn't have to be actors. It doesn't have to be performers. It could be the light designer, it can be the set designer. Everyone is able to sort of pitch in with ideas of what is the concept, what kind of blocks do we put into our production? So this works typically well when you don't have a finished script. Um, and it just really opens up the creativeness and the playfulness and the space for everyone to contribute.

What are the main difficulties you have had to face in theatre and what do you think you've learned from it?

What keeps, which is also something that I'm working on within the union, um, just, uh, a side note, I'm currently in discussions with the board of opening up, um, part of the union where we can sit down and have a newly educated and young group within the union to sort of bridge the gap between being a student and becoming a professional. And one of the biggest issues that I'm seeing for me, my point of view, is understanding how to actually get a job and understanding the whole structure. There isn't enough knowledge taught on how to approach your, um, the people to employ you. How do you even go down the road of producing your own production? There's a huge amount of things that you need to learn in order to make it successfully, and it's just all the knowledge is there, but it's not really shared, and you have to do a lot of work and a lot of research in order

to....It's a steep curve. It's a steep curve. So the biggest problem right now is even though I have a steady job right now and I have another production for another 3 months. I know that there will be, um, a big gap in my calendar, of then what? So, how do you phrase it in a more simple? Answer it is... I'm spending so much time on things that I wasn't educated in instead of using the abilities that I learned in school and that prepared me for a specific type of job that there isn't a lot of in the industry. So, yeah, okay. We're taught to be part of a conventional theater that is just hiring people for an example. That is basically how I see the education is. We also get a lot of tools for working in different ways, but we're not really prepared if what if there isn't a position to be filled in a conventional theater where you just hire an example, you have to go get your own job. All of that is not really taught. And you have to figure out how to require those skills yourself. Yeah, and I know a lot of other courses and educations out there also focus a lot on how to manage yourself as a business. And that part is there, but it's so minute. It's so small on the, on the, yeah, so you don't really, at least I wasn't... I didn't feel prepared at all. And then when you go through the next year and the next year, still not having landed a job, you start really questioning and you start really losing momentum. And of course it is difficult. I knew that there wasn't a lot of jobs available out there. I just thought that I would have been a bit more prepared for, okay, what do I do? What is the list that I go through of things that I can actually do myself? And we see a lot of people, talented people that lose the momentum, things, the interest, because it's so difficult to get that 1st few gigs. Like, now I've had a few successes, um, I'm still learning. I'm still, the most important thing is that you speak up about it and you try to fight like minded people and you try to find that community. It is difficult finding the community because then someone is having a job somewhere. And you're, I've tried to establish a community and then I show up and then I realize these are not really my people, like the great people, but we don't really bond on that level. So I need to go find someone else. It takes a lot of energy to keep establishing communities and to see if, okay, we're actually more or less in the same spot, we can help each other and we can benefit off of each other. Um, hopefully in time, I'll be able to help make those types of communities within the union. That's at least my my goal. Um, I have a bit more knowledge now. But there is a general lack of transparency on, yeah, this is also one of my big hurdles and one of my big pet peeves within the industry. You have, I would say 90% of the industry, both within the stage and within film, that is funded by the government. It's public money. But the transparency within who gets what job, when do we have an available opening? Uh, why is someone rejected and why is someone hired? That transparency is just non-existent. It's still so much word of mouth or being in the right place at the right time. And sure, I understand it's part of the process and it's also part of how the industry works. Sometimes you just get, I need this person and then you're sitting next to, 'Hey, can you do this?' - 'Yeah' - And then, okay, end of, end of the stress. But when you're working with basically tax money, I do believe that it's also fair that you're having a bit more of an open process, a bit more transparency between, into what decisions are put in place. And who do we actually need to fill this oncoming seasons program? Uh, So there's still a lot of gatekeeping and a lot of power put... centralized power that's given to certain individuals, but even who those certain individuals are is also a struggle getting to know.

Because it's not necessarily open who is making the 1st decision of what is the initial cast, who are we getting in for an addition? Who are we trying to fill the positions? Um, and I understand that there is in practice a principle of keeping the politicians away from the art to create a space for artistic, free artistic expression. And we definitely should meddle with it, it's a great principle, but when you're having a system now put in place where it can be very difficult to just obtain the knowledge. It's... maybe time that from a political point, you start putting in a little bit of guidance on how, what requirements do we have would give you this amount of money. And also to open it up to to have it accessible for all kinds of people. Because when it's so word of mouth based, and it's so based off of having the right network, it keeps it within its own circle and it becomes structural. It becomes a structural issue of the same types of people getting the job just because they know the right types of people and because they're invited to the party where the whatever and whoever is just looking for someone because next year we're still looking for these types of people and then. Yeah, and it's, yeah, it's a shame.

Has theatre helped you develop social connections? How and how much?

It's a, it's a tricky one for me. Because everytime you're in a production, there is a huge level of social connection. But in the nature of a freelancer, once the production ends, it's extremely difficult to keep that connection. At least that's my experience. Um, I'm sure someone else, if you ask them, they find it in a different way. But for me, whenever I'm in a production, the feeling of social connection, the feeling of belonging, and the feeling of having somewhat of a family within that production is just expanding and it grows every day. Um, I do feel like within the union, everytime I show up for a union event, and when we have our general assembly every year, and I'm reconnecting with some old colleagues, there's still this feeling of social connection. And we just got a newsletter also from a chair person yesterday, I think, and he really put his finger on something that I agree with a lot, is that we keep referring to each other as colleagues, even though we've never worked together. So there is a big social idea of being within the same industry and actually being colleagues, even though I can never work with you or I've never shared work experience. It still feels like we belong together. We're in the same boat, essentially. Yeah, but sure, there's a lot of loneliness connected to being a freelancer. Um, you're spending a lot of time and mental energy in securing the next job. And when you do get the job, it also completely throws off your social calendar. You have to downprioritize family and friends. You have to, there is this notion of availability and whenever there's a big casting or a big audition coming up, it sort of prioritizes above any vacation or any plans that you've had. And it's extremely difficult to balance those in a healthy way and a sustainable way also for relationships and important relations in general. And I just wish that it could be different, and it's also structural, and whenever someone is organizing an audition or casting, you can't expect them to, hey, can you just, what about a separate date just for me? Of course, you can't, it's also expensive to do it. And I also need to have a vacation, I also need to prioritize my partner, I need to prioritize my friends and family, but I also see a lot of friends sort of distancing and not engaging because over and over, I'm also the unavailable one because, well, I have to prep for this thing or I'm working in the evenings. And it's, it is

difficult to have social, social life sometimes. And then you end up having the social life within the production that you're in currently. Then if you don't have a production and you don't have a job, do you then have a social life? Complex, it is complex, and then it's so easy to just have the social life within just those people that you surround and work yourself, surround yourself with the work with, and to just stay for that one extra drink and like turns into the other. It's easy, but I've also talked to colleagues and friends who have tried to do that and completely burned out because of it, because it is, it's not sustainable. Yeah, but you hang on to it because now you have it and it's there and it's so easy and it's usually quite outgoing people and people that want to connect and want to talk. Yeah. It is temporary, yeah, very much.

Do you think theatre has been inclusive in your experience? If not, what barriers exist?

The barrier is within the lack of transparency, in my opinion. And I'm not, of course, I'm a young person and I'm not famous, so and I'm not getting a lot of jobs. So like, hey, I am not like give me jobs - I understand that I don't always get the job and that's perfectly fine. But if, in my ideal world, I would know within, for instance, the stage, this year, we are missing 10 people to fill whatever within the established theaters. I can see that is a profile. I don't match. Maybe there's one part that matches my profile. At least I'll know, and I will not get so frustrated about why is this person getting that job over me and why is this person getting the opportunity? All I am asking is that there's equal opportunity for the people that needs to be hired. So, having some sort of system in place where there is, where the theaters who get the most money has the biggest obligation to making it available and accessible. So when you're having a stage like the Royal Theater, and there has been a lot of cases of them trying to do an open audition where in fact, it was a performer, edition, and they had already cast a lot of the members, and then you have 100-200 people showing up professionals that has spent weeks, even months of rehearsing and preparing, and not getting a fair shot because the whole thing is just a facade. And they're having a real addition in a different place. Or they're making, because they have been asked to have more open auditions, but the way that they're doing it, I just don't understand how can they be so bad at making an addition and it keeps being backlash from the industry, but there is no sanctions in place, and they can just keep going with what they're doing. Yeah, and I, of course, it happens and even though you make it a requirement to have an open audition or an open hiring process, then still there will be someone who's hired internally, right?

We are sure that the theater can socially grow people whether we are spectators or they decide to participate actively in the creation of live shows: what do you think? What skills do you think of?

Uh, I 100% agree. And that's also my experience. Typically, if you're an audience member, uh, it sort of requires you to be active in a different way than the conventional setting of having a stage, having gripped and then you're just there as an audience member. I don't necessarily find that from being an audience member myself as something that grows what you just stated- or, uh, yeah. There has to be some sort of after talk or a more interactive experience for that to happen. And in my opinion,

because the beauty of a conventional setup is you can go there, you can enjoy it, and then you can go home, and then if it's really good as something that really touched you, you talk to whoever you came there with, or if you were alone, you have a lot of those thoughts within yourself. Um, I don't see the culture here in Denmark as a space where you actually sit down and discuss whatever your experience was. And I hope that that could change in the future, but I don't necessarily see it as it is very ingrained into the Scandinavian culture of keeping to yourself or just keeping to the small group that you came with. Yeah, so an audience member, I did an immersive piece back in [20]18, [20]19, I think, where the distinction between the Danish and the Swedish audience was so palpable. Where all the Danish people with sort of wallpaper, and the an immersive experience in this setting is where the audience member has an active role to play, and without their involvement, the story will not go on. So they needed to participate. So they got a, they got tasks that they had to fulfill in order for the storyline to progress. And all the Danes were wallpaper, and barely did what they were asked to do. Of course, there was a....they could they could act within a parameter, so they didn't have to do something that they were uncomfortable with doing, but you had to notch them so much more. All the Swedish people, because they're a bit more used to this type of experience -they were full on. They were so great and they were almost to the point where it was too much and you had to bring them down. So, in order to grow, like, social uh, awareness or yeah... I think there has at least what I'm experiencing here in Denmark, you need to have a way of engaging the audience in different ways. Either before the performance, during the performance or after the performance. And it doesn't have to be big, and of course it can vary.

Do you have any advice also to engage more people?

So, one could be that the foyer and the pre-experience is thought into the whole of the experience. That was very poorly worded. But making the entering the stage and the room before the room to also design that to be part of the experience. and to somehow nudge the audience to engage with one another. That is what I would do depending on the production and depending on the performance, if it sort of makes sense that they engage and start the talk before. I have done, there are companies out there that the dust is, that do this. Um, but it's just not a given, that it, that it'll happen. And of course, it's not true for every performance. Sometimes you just need to come in and just enjoy it like in the cinema, and then you go home and you had a great experience and it was funny. And... I think, yeah, I think that's also, given the current climate of how technology and how the stage prep in general is being met, I think that is where also we draw a huge benefit from the being in person. And that is something that we can give, that the other art forms can't give. It is that actual connection, is the human connection. It's a, it matters that you are here, because your contribution is slightly different from another person's contribution. Yeah, okay, so that's the audience part, right? Being involved, just being there, uh, is socially growing you, from my experience. And you don't necessarily need a huge set of skills in order to socially grow when you're all in theater productions. Um, I think that's the beauty of it because there are so many areas that you can engage yourself in, where you don't have to be a performer, for instance, but you can still be part

of the process and you can still feel like you belong and you can still be part of the group. And so depending on what you want, who you are as a person, what your goals are, if you have any, of socially growing or just, you know, be part of something, theater is one of the best places to be, in my opinion, because it's all about teamwork. And it's all about you matter, uh, without you, we are missing that call in the machine, in the machinery. Um, It is important that the technicians show up because otherwise the production is not gonna run smoothly. Um, Of course, not everyone is able to engage. in that type of community as well. It is also not inclusive, in of itself. And it also requires, if you really, truly want everyone to be able to and be part of the space, it needs a lot of attention to what type of people do we have in this type of production? What do they need? What can we anticipate and what sort of conversations can we engage? In order to actually make inclusive for everyone and not just within our own idea of what theater is, because we all have different biases that makes it- this is how we do it and this is how it is. Um, so every time it's slightly different depending on what type of group is there, what kind of experience, how much experience, um, so it's not just a given set ideal of, this is how our production is. But that also sets a lot of, um, you need a lot of, as a, yeah, as a, this is the person's, and I think it has to be plural, that are responsible of, producing whatever time period that the people are in, uh, they need a lot of skills in order to know how to facilitate a room, basically. It's not easy. And you do your best and then you fail and then you try to do it very next time.

Are you worried about technology and AI impact on the entertainment industry?

Yeah. A lot. And on one hand, the whole idea of... of course, it can become a tool that is very, uh, great, just like the computer and just like whatever technology has helped to make processes faster and more efficient. One of the biggest issues that's also discussed right now with AI is the way that they teach the algorithm and what kind of material they teach the algorithm off of. And all of that material are, or is, artistic material that is mine or some of my colleagues, colleagues, uh, artistic expression. And if you end up with a lot of AI artists, like they now have that AI actor in Hollywood that you can hire, um, is now based off of a sum of products that other actors have contributed, and now isn't getting paid off. paid for. So, In Denmark, for instance, we have a very, very unique royalty system where we keep all of our royalties on, for instance, film. And we don't get a huge payout. We don't get a huge salary once we get on set. That means if the film is doing great, then we all share the success. Everyone, the team. And that makes it so that even though we're a small country, we can produce a lot of movies. Because it's fairly cheap to make a movie. Um, that becomes an issue when you have something like AI that then takes some of our material to teach, to be taught, to produce either voice or something else that needs to be a system in place if it becomes a thing within speaks or video production, where at least the people are getting paid, because we're not, if it's, if it's, if it's using some of my material to be taught in order to speak or to act, I need to be paid for that part. But honestly, I would rather that that doesn't become a thing. Because you then end up with, let's say, 10,000 actors that is basically becoming obsolete and only getting maybe 10% of the fee that isn't barely enough to sustain a living, and you have AI generated voices or AI generated avatars that then do the job that you were

supposed to do. And it is it is an issue. But we can't, I mean, you can't backtrack evolution and uh, Yeah. At least there has to be a system in place that ensures that the artists aren't screwed over, basically. And we're still getting a fair, fair pay for if, if, if they're using our work, our artistic creation to then create autistic creation. You know, it's, um, it's a dilemma and it's, it's important to discuss it. I have a lot of musicians who is also just looking at all the playlists at major streaming services, where there's a lot of AI generated music that is just in the loop because some people they just put on a playlist and it's in the background. Yeah, but the whole streaming, uh, thing that happened. Um, the musicians were too late within acting to preserve and protect their royalties. And now they're, they're getting the backlash of it, and we're a little bit ahead of it, but we also got a lot of backlash for sticking to and trying to keep our royalty system in. Um, there were a lot of issues with Netflix and Viaplay and a lot of the big broadcasters that just stopped producing in Denmark due to the fact that they thought it was unfair pay. And now we're slowly getting back into getting a good deal with them so we can still keep producing it. It's still beneficial for them to produce here in Denmark. and produce Danish content for the big streaming services, but there was, well, there was a time of two-three years where it was a huge issue. Right now, we're also having an ongoing issue with Is it Viaplay? Yeah. No, YouSee, because it was bought by an Australian fund. That is basically saying, yeah, we're not going to pay you any royalties and we're going to take it to court. They're just gonna use the Danish system to drag it, but still broadcasting all of the content, of course. They're just not paying us. Yeah, I know that has nothing to do with AI and technology, but still, yeah. It's sort of, it sort of plays into the development of how we're not, um, We're streaming content now and how these multinational companies are trying to not pay us for our contribution. And within the, you know, um, stage art, I forgot the name of, proper name in English, I'm not so scared of AI, taking over. I also find it as a, as a fluke of people trying to introduce technology and AI generated responses into the production. I think that's just an interesting experiment to see how far can we take it and how can we benefit from it? When you have people producing for the stage, you can't have no person there. So it might make some people obsolete, but I don't think completely because she's still going to need a playwright to or a gramature to get into the material that then is generated. If you use some sort of chat service to generate text for you, you still need to work it. It can't just be a standalone thing. Um, I hope that it's gonna make the, stagecrafts more essential because there you actually know that you have a human being being present with you in the moment as opposed to what a lot of us are experiencing being to engage with our phones and devices. where we're actually missing the interpersonal connection.

Do you have a fun fact about theatre that you would like to share or Anything you would like to add about your experience with theatre?

It's the second oldest job in the world. And... And it will never be, in fact, it would never not be in fashion. It will never be something that we want me and won't have. We just don't know which shape or form it'll take in the future. But it's an integral part of the human existence. And it's an intrical part of well functioning democracy, in my opinion. Without the stage and without artistic expression, you don't have a society. I'm just also

realizing how important it is to have this type of conversation from different points of view within the industry in order to figure out, because at the end of the day, we just want to create and we want the best people available to us to help create whatever vision we're having. But if there are obstacles that hinder us from doing so, we just need to talk about it and be like, ah, 'well, that can be fixed this way or the other way'? And yeah, it just didn't, it comes back to what I also mean about transparency. We just need to be open about this is the struggles that we're having or this is what we're trying to achieve. And it's saying, that's half of the journey into solving it. Yeah, and the process, like... but now, right now, I'm at the production company called The One and Only Musicals, which is one of the biggest producers within musicals here in Denmark, and they have to sell around 31 tickets per show in order to have a sustainable economy. I asked, um, the director, uh, off the company, so like what exactly how do you plan your season and the oncoming years? And basically, they can afford to experiment with one production, and then the next production has to be a commercial hit. And that's just a matter of fact, because they're completely private. They don't get any government funding, so that's how they have to run their company. And because they do big productions and in huge halls, they have to be way more set on, this is the amount of tickets that we have to sell, and then the next production just has to be something that we know will get, asses is in the seat. So, and it's just interesting to also hear their point of view of what does experimenting and what does being brave within the industry and how do you develop the format? Because they are doing it, but they also keep use, taking titles or already known productions, and morphing those into musicals because as they're saying, the general public, they want to know what they're buying a ticket for. They don't want to just do it, do it on a whim. They don't want to just, um, take a chance. They need to know when they're getting. That makes it a good, makes it a bit tricky to evolve and to also within hiring a diverse cast as well. If they also need to know what they're getting that also bleeds into the choice of performers and people you put on stage because then you can choose too many unknown faces. You need someone to sell tickets and you need a huge group of people that people saw that the audience saw of already knows because, yeah, they're good. I can trust this production. Um, and it's the same with, um, Gaswerk, which is a government funded theater, I also asked the director there at that theater and he also said, we have to sell, we need to know that production that we're bringing in, it has to be able to sell 32,000 tickets. If it's not able, then you can produce with us. And that's just the fact, and, like, they did 'The Last Ship' based off of Sting's album, and they did 'The Wall' based off of Pink Floyd's. Um, et cetera. So huge productions, right? But it's not really original. Like they're trying to do original, but they still have to base it off of something that the general public, the general Danish public, has a reference to. And I think that's a fun fact, that is not very encouraging, to be honest. You know, well, a bit of a shame, because then how do we? How do we... How do we evolve? Yeah. If we have to repeat a story that's already there and people have a relation to? And how do we then serve what I think is our democratic duty as artists is to engage in the public debate and to debate in current themes. When we are so focused on the commercial success of a production, and when we can't really afford to experiment so much or to just do something, this is completely original. I think now there's also so many production

companies out there, there's so much to choose from, and we're also, um, we're also in competition with all the streaming services. And with people finding out, maybe they found out during Corona (covid-19), hey, it's also nice to just stay at home Friday evening. Don't do... don't do nothing. That's also kind of nice to just get home and chill. And not be so, so out and about. Yeah, I don't know. It is an issue, and the majority of people who buy tickets are what we call the great gold. Which are people that are close to the retirement age and they have gray hair. That's who was buying the majority of the tickets, um, for every production. And, and if we can't sort of educate early on the new generation, then we will completely lose that part of the industry. And then that's going to be a very steep curve down of, of, of, of theater. And, yeah, performance art. Yeah, yeah, and we need, we need these types of theaters locally around to engage within the community and to help bridge that gap and to help educate and to present different types of art to kids, from an early, that's so important. If you're real about creativity and innovation, just in general, that's the perfect place to expose kids to.



Eva Præstiin

Nationality: Danish

Age: 49

Gender: female

Highest finished education:

Master of Management

Development 2015 - 2016 from

Copenhagen Business School

Background:

How long have you done theatre?

Since 2002 professionally.

What type of theatre do you work in?

Commercial theatre.

Are you currently working in the theatre industry?

Full-time employed, byt working part-time at several theaters.

Main Interview:

What role do you play in theatre and why did you start doing theatre?

Um, I was actually trained as a stage manager back in 2001. But then I sort of, yeah, I moved very quickly into producing instead. So I've been working as a producer since, I

don't know, like 20 years, something like that. Yeah. Um, and now I'm also a manager. So it's, but I'm still producing, even though I'm also a manager.

Uh, I think I started as an audience, just looking at it and Um, Yeah, why did I start doing theater? That's a good question. I think I've always wanted to do theater. Nobody in my family does theater, but it's always sort of been like the thing I wanted to do. I think it's very, it's art, but it, it's also like a very social kind of art because you have to be a very strong community to do it, like a, uh, collective somehow, it's, it's not something you can do alone. And I come from a very large family, so I think that I was drawn to this, um, theater family somehow that there's a lot of, uh, collected work in theater, even even though it's fine arts, it's still like feels very collective to do it. So I think it was like the crossover between the art and then the social feeling of doing theater.

Is there a part of the creative process you prefer?

Um, I prefer, I have two places that I love the most. I have the very beginning when you sort of meet the artists for the first time and you start like, condensing, what are we going to do? What do you like doing? What are you occupied with? And then we slowly sort of, yeah, talk about what, what, what is the piece going to be like? That's, that's my favorite part and then I also have the first um, run we do on stage, which is normally quite chaotic and, yeah, um, when the work is not at all done, but still sort of very everybody's trying their best, but it's also very chaotic. And that's also a beautiful moment, I think, because it's so filled with flaws and people trying, but, but it never really looks good at that point. It's just, um, it's a mess, but it's, uh, it's, it's beautiful that we do it even though it's a mess.

What are the main difficulties you have had to face in theatre and what do you think you've learned from it?

I think one of the things I've been preoccupied with is changing, um, I think we have a lot of sort of traditional hierarchies in theater. Um, maybe we're a bit behind, uh, like, I feel sometimes that we're a bit behind some of the rest of society because we still sort of use these very old hierarchies, and I think it's because they're tied to our rituals and traditions, which are beautiful, but but then we sort of get caught in these, um, like we decide that there has to be one artistic genius, genius, for instance, that the directors still have this uh, uh, role that we sort of push the person into, which I personally don't believe in. So, I think I've been preoccupied with doing theater much more collectively than, you know, just looking at the one actor, star, or the one director star. Um, Yeah, that's that's been a challenge, I think, because everything is sort of, um, built to to emphasize this one person, uh, and also the media and everything around us. Also, if it gets a bit commercial because even though we're state funded, we still have to earn a lot of money ourselves. So everybody wants to meet like, who is, is, do you have someone on stage who's famous and it's like, no, not necessarily, but we have a group of very talented people, but it's like everybody wants this one famous person. I think that's a shame in theater. And then also I think I've been, um, I've been trying to change the hierarchy between body and um, words because we tend to sort of have a tradition also in Denmark, I think it's the same in UK, where we sort of put the word first. Um, which I

think can be good sometimes, but sometimes it's also nice that theater is so, It's so here and now and we are in our bodies and we have bodies watching and bodies on stage. So if you sort of cut the body off, then theater gets uh, really- that's a shame, so I've also been doing a lot of dance and physical theater. Um, and trying to get dance and physical theater into stages that normally do not produce uh, these genres.

Has theatre helped you develop social connections? How and how much?

Yeah, I think I have a lot of social connections through theater, but um, but I'm not really, some of our my colleagues have a lot of like almost everybody of their personal friends is in the industry. And I've personally never done that because I have a lot of old friends that I like to see. So, so I think, um, my, sort of my close friends are still my old friends, but I have a lot of very good colleagues that some of them I consider my friends, but a lot of them, I just consider my colleagues, but they're very sort of dear colleagues that I love to spend time with professionally. Yeah.

Do you think theatre has been inclusive in your experience? If not, what barriers exist?

I think we have a challenge with inclusiveness, at least in Denmark. I think we're working on it. But, uh, but it has been for, for a lot of years, um, people who were sort of born into the industry or somehow, um, yeah. I think we, we've had a challenge there, but I think it's, it's, it's, uh, people are noticing it now, and that's the first step. So a lot of people are working with it. Um, also attracting young people from other environments to to, to come and both experience theater, but also try it out themselves to see if that, if that's something they would like. But, um, but I'm also connected to the art school here in Denmark, and that's really sort of a challenge for us that we need to, to get a lot more diversified, um, group of young people to look at the art school as a possible future. Um, when we we don't, we haven't really succeeded in that yet, but we're working on it.

What do you think are their experience barriers that are holding young people from going into theater here in Denmark?

I think some of them doesn't really know it's an option. It's like they've never been to the theater and they don't know that it's possible. Um, actually, it's quite cheap to go to theater if you're a young person in Copenhagen or, yeah, in Denmark. So it's, I don't think it's the money. I think it's more like a cultural thing that maybe you go to football games or you do like sports with your friends so you don't, you're not really thinking, oh, what are we doing Thursday night? Maybe we should go and see a show. Um, so there's a, there's a task for the industry to, to get that, um, sort of connection to make that connection to young people. Um, which we're really working on, but it's difficult. the easiest ways to go through the, um, uh, like the A-Kasse, like the institutions for it, for education. Then it's possible. If you sort of get the schools and the teachers to come, they will bring the students, but to get a young person to buy a ticket, um, that's quite difficult.

We are sure that the theater can socially grow people whether we are spectators or they decide to participate actively in the creation of live shows: what do you think? What skills do you think of?

Um, we've been working a lot here at the theater where I'm, um, manager with the processes of different kind of co-creation. Um, I, we feel that theater is like, uh, a very strong advocate for uh, the collective spirit in people. Um, and we see a society today where a lot of people are getting more lonely and also um, caught in like their own groups. Um, not really seeing people that they don't agree with or, um, and theater is this platform where you can meet a stranger that you've never met before and then some night you can sit very close and have a very big experience, maybe you cry or maybe you laugh together or, um, that's really sort of a, yeah, that's that's something that not so many rooms do today. So, so, so in that way, we're working with theater, but also actually working to change organizations because, um, we experience that if you start, um, doing more collective work in sort of in the rehearsal room, but also in the organization, if you break down this hierarchy, and do a lot more collectively, then you can actually change, um, an entire organization. And that's a lot of people's everyday life, if you make that change. So right now we're reaching out to other industries. We're also working with this, um, and I think it's particularly in health that we see this also, the health industry in Denmark. Um, but also um, education, uh, like institutions for education. Um, who are trying to do things in a different way because they also have this very, um, strict hierarchy based on your job title. But sometimes get in the way for us to evolve ourselves also as institutions. And that's also very present in, uh, in the academics and also in health, because there's like doctor, uh, professor, uh, and then nurse, and then, like, it's a very strict hierarchy, and it's not that we don't, uh, agree that people have different, um, professional skills. But the hierarchy in itself is um, is sometimes a problem if we want to develop organizations uh, in new ways.

Do you have any advice also to engage more people?

Uh, we are trying to reach out to, um, to people who wouldn't come to the theater, uh, but maybe we can move the theater out there somewhere, somehow. So, so right now we are working with uh, different projects, um, we just did one with the people who used to live on the street. Um, now they uh, have made this organization where these, um, people are guiding, um, like citizens in in tours of the street telling people, so this is where I used to live when you're on the street and homeless than you like these benches because it's actually possible to live here and you don't have to sleep on the ground and, and we did a project with them, um, sort of a soundscape that, that played in the public space because they're so good at public spaces, it's like they've lived there, so they know so much about public spaces. So we sort of took the knowledge that they have and then they met with this artistic group working with sound and then we made a common sort of co-creative, um, piece with them. So that's a way to sort of make connections and now the piece is played in the public space, so it's, playing for everybody, really. Um, and it's for free, of course, because it's, it's in the public space. Um, so that's a way to sort of move the theater out, but you normally I feel we need some help when we have to do that because you can't really move the theater like we do

it in the houses to out of the house. So you have to get some help when you do that. Uh, to, to, to secure that the things you're doing is relevant for the people that you want to meet out of the house.

What kind of help do you typically need to be able to do that?

Normally we go to the people that we want to have as an audience, like if we want to have the public, like do something in the public space, we go to the people who knows more about the public space than we do. The next project we're doing, it's for young people with mental issues. Um, so we have a workshop with uh, patients, um, who help us to what would be a nice, um, theater experience if you're locked up in a, because some of them are not able to leave their, the hospital. So we're trying to get the theater out to them, but how do you do that? So we need to sort of co-create these experiences with the people who live at these, um, hospitals, uh, as patients, but also like the professionals, um, who are who are working there. So we normally sort of engage with someone who knows the audience much better than we do.

Are you worried about technology and AI impact on the entertainment industry?

Um... It's hard to say, um, I'm worried for the actors, because I think some of their work are disappearing. Um, a lot of them do theater, but they also do movies and TV series and um, like um, reading uh, audiobooks and stuff like that. And some of these areas might be, um, cheaper to do with um, with AI in the future. Um, so, it might be more difficult to, to sort of, yeah, to obtain a living as an actor. I think theater in itself is... it's so physical somehow that it's, it's, even though, of course, we've seen the big musicals that we have all these screens, working as sets and, but I find it hard to believe that, because theater is just people, really. It's like the audience of people, the actors of people, the dancers of people. It's, it's not really possible to do it with an, with an AI solution, then it wouldn't be theater, then it would be like a movie or yeah, so I'm not really, I'm not worried for the theater itself, but for some of the, um, people working in theater, um, yeah, I would, I worry a bit about them, actually, because they are also, I don't know how it is, uh, in the UK, but, but in Denmark, it's, um, it, they're so um, they're all freelance people, all the axes um, and and they don't really get paid a lot, uh, for doing theater. Um, so, it's it's not really a great, uh, way of living, I would say, um, as it is now. So if these alternative, uh, job options also, uh, fall away, then yeah. That's a problem for the industry.

Do you have a fun fact about theatre that you would like to share or Anything you would like to add about your experience with theatre?

Uh, yeah. no, I think if there's a fun fact, it is that in Denmark, it's we actually sell more tickets to theater than we do to football games. And not many people know that because they think theater is for the elite and that's that's sort of the the narrative around theater that's, oh, it's the higher arts and it's so, yeah, it's just a small bunch of people who go to the theater, but actually it's it's quite many people who go to the theater because theater

are so many things- it's cabarets, it's big musicals, it's very artsy things, it's classical ballet. It's so many things.



Henrik Irgens

Nationality: Danish

Age: 50

Gender: male

Highest finished education: Open

Younge Education, a mid-90's

Danish initiative that is equililant to further education

Background:

How long have you done theatre?

Five years with a local festival in Helsingor called Passage Festival, and then different local/community theatres across Denmark.

What type of theatre do you work in?

All of it

Are you currently working in the theatre industry?

Freelance, aka self-employed, also working within music

Main Interview:

What role do you play in theatre and why did you start doing theatre?

So, I guess, um, I just, I like the theater. My parents grew up in Copenhagen in the 40s and 50s, 60s, and went to a lot of theater, and I guess it was a natural thing to be sort of get into local, I don't know, musical sort of theater stuff in theatre in general. But now, I don't know, I, right now, if you're asking, my my route in is, is, um, it was a good thing to do to sort of reconnect with where we are now, which is where we grew up in North Zealand, um, hadn't been here for 25 years years. Um, It's a good way of reconnecting, a good way to get out of the house. But I enjoy, I enjoy, I just enjoy it. I like the creativity around it. And um, I think it's quite an important tool um, in terms of um, because mainly because of the Passage Festival, which is an international festival. I think that strengthens the union, the European Union, and so my take on it, the more I think about it now is to do with democracy. It sounds maybe a little bit spread out, but I think that is a

really good way of connecting people theater. Yeah. That was that was long, so I don't know. democracy connecting people, liking the arts, I guess, is the boil down.

Is there a part of the creative process you prefer?

Um, I like, I like the connecting aspect of it. So my job for the festival would be in like that week where we have the festival. I would, I would be in the yard and I would be liaising between sort of French troupe that comes in and there's some English people, there'll be some German or Dutch or other people, maybe not German, actually. But maybe, maybe, well, there's a couple of, been a couple of Germans, but, but like, people from Belgium, and you have to sort of like age between them, and you have to sort of say, well, you go on there and then we need this cleared out. I like the, I like the connect, sort of the um, the building of um, the, the, the communication, the communication between um, people from different countries and sort of making, making that smooth and making that work. What's the term for that? I don't know what the term is. Facilitating, I guess, uh, we have a good name in Danish, the word called 'afvikling' is that you sort of, uh, you make it make it happen, I guess. I don't know what the term, facility facilitator, I guess it is. But that aspect I like a lot. I like I like the... um, yeah, the facilitating of of a stage, I guess, running a stage, running the the yard where everyone meets. I like that aspect of it. I guess it's an organizer role, yeah. So that would be would be my responsibility is to to have that stage in that pocket, which has been the heart of the festival. Um, to run that, make that run smoothly between between different troops from different countries. Yep.

What are the main difficulties you have had to face in theatre and what do you think you've learned from it?

Probably, probably that, actually the fact that you need, you need people from different cultures that could be um, in sort of different mindsets. I guess they're in theater and they are sort of in that creative thing, but it's, but it can be challenging to sort of agree. Between the French and the Italians or, you know what I mean? It's like, it's huge that you got a, you got a sort of... I guess people also have history, you know, this is probably more attitude actually in Denmark, actually, but if you have very established people that are very set within their role, within a troop, so it could be high-end producers, you could be high-end, light people or directors or talent. Um, I think theater, I have I have worked um, as a screen double and and and different sort of um, I guess extra or background roles in in England, for Hollywood, for big films, Harry Potter, all sorts of stuff through the years. And having been on set with very established and very famous people, there's still more attitude within the Danish theater world than there is within Hollywood. That's what I found. But the arrogance is through the roof sometimes. So that aspect of it, and I think it ties down back to the other thing is that you're sort of um, making things run smoothly, and even if people come with a lot of history and a lot of sort of importance within themselves, you can still sort of speak to them and you can still sort of get shit moving. Without their arrogance getting in the way. To make stuff run smooth, but you know what I mean? Like, it's famous people, you see people flipping out on various small minor details. And sometimes they're justified. But as a, as someone who meets a troop from

a, from a, on behalf of a theater, um, like not a company, but an actual theater that is putting on a show, um, or having a, a talent come to us. Then that needs to, you need that, you need sort of that solid nest or whatever you need that to be smooth and run smoothly.

How do you manage all those different cultures and get them to work and communicate well with each other and run smoothly?

I guess having done being on stage with music and having done a lot of touring and a lot of sort of um, being in the stage sort of concert environment and um, and I, maybe in the music world, people take themselves somewhat less seriously. Um, I think that's probably the reason why I know the mechanics of putting on a show, I know about equipment, I've learned a lot about lights, doing the thing. I'm not an expert in any way, but I know more now and I know, and maybe just diplomacy, I think it's all inbuilt diplomacy that I've inherited from my dad, I reckon. Yeah. So, yeah, mellowness chilled. I don't know. Not taking it too seriously, try not to.

Has theatre helped you develop social connections? How and how much?

Um, yeah, I, I, yeah, I think so. Absolutely. Yeah, it's, it's definitely broadened, um, what I probably intuitively already knew that it, Yeah, I think I think so. I don't know, all the women that are sort of instructors in something or they and that are kind of close, a little bit closed or very set. That's always a challenge. This is not, this is not a sexist thing in any way whatsoever. But the harder, the harder people, the harder person is. I find that that is there's always interesting to meet someone like that. It's just how can we... How can we? How can we, um, How can we? How can we achieve that they shine a little bit a little bit of light through the through the armor? But yes, it has.

How would you say, how so?

Um. Probably just that, like the, the, how do you, how do you? How do you make? How do I con- how do I um, how do I build a build a rapport between my hands, the people that are actually doing the work, the hard work? How do I communicate with, say, a director or a dance instructor and make, build, how do I build those bridges through, through meeting them, like in a, I guess what I would call a professional manner, but also in a, in a calm manner, you know, I'm not there to fight them, I'm not there to challenge their their ego because it's of no interest to me. I just, I just want to, for it to become the best it can be. Does that make sense? So, um, how have I? Yeah, I mean, I guess your patience is stretching. I mean, but it's also widening. So I guess in that sense, yeah. You also, I guess you learn something about yourself as well in that in that process, again, yeah.

Do you think theatre has been inclusive in your experience? If not, what barriers exist?

I think... it's to do with personality is at the end of the day. So I would say... I tend to be, I don't know, is there, I don't know if there's a, if there's a correct answer to this. I would

say more, the more experimental, and probably the more talented people are. So, so I think there might be a correlation there. I think there is an openness that comes with, for instance, the festival that I know a lot about is the passage Passage Festival. Is there are some people there that are like, especially some French troops that are just through the roof good, like they're really good. Like, it's like it's like they were built, they were born, like what they're doing like slapstick theater and sort of street fest, like street festival, theater type things. It's incredible what they can do and how they convey a story through very little um, cooking, but just theater. And, and, and, I don't know, if people really have a very strong, strong, I guess personality or talent within what they're doing. I find sometimes they're a bit more mellow and just don't care. Do you know what I mean? don't I think I don't know. And sometimes people can have be very good, but also they can maybe be a little bit stuck in their part, maybe they've been doing it for 40 years and it's just a thing they do. It's a job. I think maybe that comes with with all gigs or anything is that if you're only there for the money or if you're only there because of prestige or you know what I mean? It's like, I don't know, but that ties down to personality. Why are you doing things? Why are we doing what we're doing? Uh, so what was the question?

Do you think theater has been inclusive and if not, what barriers exist?

Well, the, the, that's definitely the old guard. There is a barrier, I can only really speak of Denmark. There seems to be an old guard so that the more established a troop is, the more established the theatres there can definitely you have a sense of closed doors. So, I think I think that exists and people from a French troop who's worldwide recognized for what they're doing, but they've still got sort of a root, an artistic root level where they probably would still be doing it in the village, even though they'd never gone out aside of the village - they would still be doing it as a way of life. Does that make sense then, then, then, that seems to, um, I don't know, I don't know, I think I think there are barriers, but they're probably set in tradition and and um, uh, ultimately, um, oh, fuck, it's so hard, so wide, I am so sorry, I don't know, set in tradition. I guess it's set in tradition and it can be, you can meet very conservative traditions and that can be a barrier, yeah, that can be hard to, to, to, um, to the extent that people not recognizing or even people talking back, not, uh, no one's ever talked back to me, but we've definitely with our hands, people have been rude to them. And then that's my, then that's my job to, to get rid of that quick and and get back on track where everyone speaks, um, in a nice and calm way to each other.

We are sure that the theater can socially grow people whether we are spectators or they decide to participate actively in the creation of live shows: what do you think? What skills do you think of?

Yeah. Absolutely. Um, I think, I think, um, well, I guess speaking from Denmark, uh, funding in general, in general for many years, many decades, have definitely been, as far as I know, uh, good, you know, or or definitely famous worldwide for being a country that supports the arts. There's a lot of grants you can seek out if you want to put on a play or experiment. They have that in England as well, but I would argue less so. Um, I

think, I think obviously the quality of, of, of, of, the fact that theatre is, I can see from the audience that it's quite an old audience we have in Denmark at the moment. I don't know if that's worldwide, but so that's a bit sad, but I think it is important and I think it is, it is, it does build communities, um, we can see it locally here with that, I go back to that festival again, the Passage Festival, I don't know what the stats are, but there's definitely 10s of 1000s of people that come to Elsinore just for that week to visit, I think it's five days that we run it. So, um, a good example would be uh, on the outskirts of town, there are a couple of areas, I wouldn't call them high rises, but there's definitely a lot of people living there and quite a few people of other ethnic background, um, and uh, I know a big, a big thing for the theater here with that festival is to, to go out into those areas and put on plays and shows, sometimes sort of broader spectacle stuff. So we had a lady that walked on a line from one like a massive a tower block to another tower block you know, with a, with a, with a big um, balance stick and stuff to a piece of music that lasted like an hour, you know, stuff like that and it was just people were down like underneath and just, you know what I mean? It's just, it was quite, it's quite a spectacle. So, so, so those things are important, yeah. And there are other small pockets out on the where, where there is kids theater, um, and and it does build community and it helps, it does help people connect. I think we can still be better, maybe at communicating that to people living there maybe, but I do think I do think it's important. I mean, I think the art is just such a big instrument for for the preservation of democracy. Seems very, very obvious. The less music, the less art and the less sort of reading that goes on within a household or a country, the more likely it is that it goes tits up, let's be honest. Excuse my ax, my language.

Do you have any advice also to engage more people?

Back to tradition, I think it's something that starts at school, I guess, as a main thing. Um, So you're already in this, in the early classes, you do make it a habit of going to see shows or go to see something or invite people to the school to, to have some theater in a, in a gym, a setting in a, in a, in a, in the gym hall or, you know, just sort of those community things. And and I guess all the, you know, the different things you can do as a class in school. I think those plays that you did weren't like nativity plays and, you know, did sort of things when you were really young. I think I think that's all... I think that's good and music in general. I think there's a lot less music now in school at least in this country that there used to be. I think that's a real shame. I think that's part of it as well. This idea that if you, if you, even if it's just one or two people in a class that maybe take up an instrument and it becomes part of who they are and stuff, I think that's super important. And and from home as well, I guess your parents are kind of instrumental in introducing you to to the arts, I guess. So that will be my, my advice would just be to, to have more of that. Um, is it what what are the what's the science say now? The better the more music you play, the better you are at maths. I think that's a good... That's, you can probably, I mean, I guess there's a specific thing with music in terms of counting and bars and sort of mapping stuff, but I'm sure, I'm sure you do become a better person at whatever it is that you want to do if you have a sort of a background as well, an art, an art, or at least a knowledge of the art industry, I guess. So, yeah, I don't know. We all

have a responsibility introducing young kids to music or theater. But I guess it starts at home and it starts at school and as early as possible. I think that's that will be just do all that.

Are you worried about technology and AI impact on the entertainment industry?

That's a very, that's a very good question. Uh, It's hard to know what, what, how AI, what, what, well, there's not, not going to be sort of an end station, is there? It's probably just going to continue and continue. But, um, It's a very good question. Do you know what? The obvious thing is that, yeah, I mean, AI, I mean, Spotify just deleted 75000000 AI tracks from their roster or from their catalog. So that gives you an idea. Um, Yeah, I am. I guess I am. I think there's, I think there's, there's more serious consequences that will come from AI than necessarily on the music industry or even on the arts. Um, I think I think, uh, I think, uh, but it's hard to know, it's almost philosophy, I've been reading a lot, I mean, I've been listening to Sam Harris and the interviews that he does with some very clever people, like super clever that knows a lot about AI and a lot about history and a lot about, um, I mean, AI was going to become, I mean, I don't know, it can become anything and yes, it will, it will probably will destroy most of the arts. But I guess it's, but there's also be a reaction to that, I guess, there will be a reaction to it. Um, I think I think the, um, the, I think the reaction will be at least for pockets of the art will be to to, incorporate it in a way that that can be useful. Um, but also regulate it in the sense that that we choose not to maybe let it do certain things that we still want to in sort of consciously decide that these things, these elements should still be human. Um, I don't know. I probably think that AI will, if we will, I mean, this is also the transfer that people are talking about, how we will transfer. I mean, in terms of keeping people alive. Soon as you got all the data of a person, which is going to happen in the future, you will be able to transfer people into like an avatar, whatever, and people will live forever. It's going to happen. And then the sort of broader questions about what, what, what life, if every one at the end of the day will or night, when, when 90% of us are living as avatars in a day, in a, in a, in a computer or in a, I don't know, some hologram or whatever, then is, is conscious still, is it still around? Oh, is it just these people? Are they experiencing the world as we are experiencing that? I don't know. It's quite a broad um, topic, but specifically to the eyes. I guess you can, you can use it now for, for anything to write anything, to do anything, most things, I mean, you, I don't think it's that good still. I think there's still a lot still very faulty and still buggy and come up with all sorts of random crap shit. Um, but, but, um, I don't know. Yes, I think we have to guard it and I do think I do think we really have to to be aware of where it's going and my initial reaction in terms of my music personally, very personally, would be to, to, just record my music even more lo-fi, make it even more human, and and make mistakes. And do you know what I mean? Like make it even more raw? That will be my pull back on it. And and not, and not, um, make a record that is. I mean, I can make a record in a day, probably just with beats and different core progressions and it would just sound really good conventionally. It would sound good. But I think you probably lose along the way if you let it do lyrics, if you let it sing, if you, you know, you'd probably lose a human element until it's, it's, it's super intelligent and then you probably won't know the difference. But the people that

will be around at that time may not care. I don't know. I think I think I think street theatre coming back to the, this is a very, very long answer, but coming back to the street theatre festival thing, that is outdoor, it is human, humans. Um, and it can't, I can't see that being replaced by AI. So it's very specifically street theatre is will probably be one of the last things that will be replaced. Do you know what I mean? It's just, because people like the story, people like the experience. Oh, no, and that's... or, it'll be something else. I mean, they still, they're already doing it now, and ABBA, ABBA's, the Swedish band ABBA's got a show in London in, at the, in Docklands, uh, What's it called? Is it ABBA, whatever it's called? The ABBA Experience, and that's holograms. I mean, that's AI. That's, I mean, I'm sure it's really good. Um, I don't know if it's AI specifically, but those shows will become more AI like, I guess. I think I think we'll, I think we will instructively or actively choose the experience. The human, even, even when we can't tell the difference, I think we, or maybe we want. I don't know. Where do you stand on lab meat? Do you know what I mean? It the same, isn't it? Lab meat, like, which, if, if, if you have a steak that's made in a lap or a steak that's been where animals have been tortured, but they are identical. They're actually identical. There is no difference. I'll be happy to try the lab meat. Maybe I would need it every day, but I'll try it. I don't know. knows?

Do you have a fun fact about theatre that you would like to share or Anything you would like to add about your experience with theatre?

I don't know if it's a fun fact, but, um, what I, I, there was, there was a Belgium, oh, they, but Dutch, maybe they were Dutch, God, one was Belgium, one was Dutch. Anyway, there was two they're called B Flat. It was it's the two guys, that it's not, it's not necessarily fun, but, but, but I was very impressed and and loved their energy. Uh, they, they, I looked after them on one of the first festivals of where I was involved and I sort of facilitated their play and sort of mapped it with them because they were outdoor, and it's sort of is a, um, what they did is like a, like a very active street, so they're going to lampposts and sort of hang on the side, straight out, you know, stuff like that. Um, very active, very strong, like really too really strong, very lean guys. And they were just crazy. They were crazy in terms of how they were using, oh, let's do this, let's roll this bin into play here, into the site, and then we have people were walking around with them. Obviously, we spent quite a few days mapping and arranging their thing. And I was sort of phoning, they wanted to go through a church, come out of the window on the side, on the, on the side of the church and come out and walk onto a little bit and then jump on into a tree, you know, whatever, stuff like that, mints and stuff, and I had to get a key and, you know, I had to help them sort of uh, facilitate their ideas, basically. And one day, maybe not the not the premiere, but they ran for three or four days. They did a few shows a day. One of the days it started chucking it down. And suddenly what they were doing became really quite dangerous. Like being on roofs and jumping off lampposts and, you know, where it's just where they're just, it's just soaked and everything's just wet and they carried on. And I don't know, that's not necessarily fun, but it, but I was so, I was really impressed and maybe it was kind of stupid to carry on, but they, but they did

so. And I just thought, I thought, that's really, um, that's really quite tough and and you could say, yes, health and safety, you know. But they they decided that, I mean, it was in within their thing of just saying, let's just carry on and do it. And I thought that was quite um... I don't know. What I took from that was that even if things get difficult, carry on doing what you're doing and carry on sort of, if you, I guess if you don't have a choice, I guess they had a choice, but but if, if, if I looked at it sort of in a little bit of a broader, um, attitude towards life. Like, if things get difficult, then crack on. I don't know. I just thought it was quite a beautiful moment. However simple or um, I mean, guess that happens all the time in, in, in, in the arts or in, in, if you have a gig and a sudden get windy or you, you can't because whatever, there's all sorts of reasons why things get cancelled or blown out or delayed, but they just carried on and I thought it's quite symbolic because they were, sort of uh, they were in the elements of nature as well, in a way. So I quite like that, I quite, I thought that was really um, quite brave. The show must go on, you know I mean? And it was some people would have said that was that was a bit stupid, but but they did it and it was... they, I don't know. I just, I liked, I liked, I liked that attitude. And also, if I assume if they perceive that it would be actually dangerous, probably they would also have said, let's, let's delay this for two hours, you know what I mean? But, but it was, it was beautiful in in the rain and stuff. I like that a lot. I thought it was cool. I don't know if how fun that was, but it was a, it was a, it's a real moment that happened and um, inspiring. So, yeah. I mean, I, yeah, um, I just, I, as music is my main thing, um, for me, being being able to sort of, be part of of the small pocket up here in terms of theater in terms of communicating that, but you've got to help other people to sort of get set and do it. I think that's it's just a great this. Yeah, I like it. Yeah. And I like, for me, it also has a, has a, yeah, it's it has a novel, it's sort of still a novelty thing to it, which I think is quite important to keep certain elements of life, sort of fresh and and um, yeah, and also it's a challenge sometimes, you know, like the technical side of it for me is still a challenge and I kind of, I kind of, I like that. I like, I like, this is sort of more of a personal thing, but it's, but it's, um, it keeps you sort of, keeps you on your toes and, and, and, theater is very multi-sort of faceted and, and, does, I don't, I think music maybe, I guess that you've got the music, the making music, recording music can be anything you want it to be, but it's, but for me, theater is a good sort of other area to, for our brain to be in and and, yeah, it's cool. I enjoy, I like it a lot. And, and, and there is a, there is a community around it, like definitely up here and there's a lot of good, good, good people and you, the rapport back from, from people, the report back from people is, is, um, yeah, it's very cool. You know, it's very good.



Kristian Husted

Nationality: Philippino/ Danish

Age: 39

Gender: male

Highest finished education: Master
Healthcare

Background:

How long have you done theatre?

Oh, I mean, I'd say since I was in school, and it's so, it's like way back because, I mean, in school, you always have these like school, school productions, or classroom productions. No, it starts it started there. Yeah. And then little by little, you progress into like going to like different groups or trying stuff out for yourself and everything, right?

What type of theatre do you work in?

I would say it's more of the conventional stuff. I mean, and I'm not, yeah, I'd have to say it's conventional here and if that makes sense, like stage stuff. I'm not too much into everything else. And that's just a preference of mine.

Are you currently working in the theatre industry?

I mean, I'm only with CTC. I mean, it's not really an employment because, I mean, it is voluntary.

Main Interview:

What role do you play in theatre and why did you start doing theatre?

Well, at the moment, I mean, it's more directing and production managing. But I mean, I started, of course, as an actor. And it, you know, it's fun, you know, to be in the spotlight and to try stuff out, to be someone else on stage, and everything. But then as you get older, then and your priorities change and your energy level drops, also because you have a full-time job, it's not as fun as it is anymore. Then I started moving on to to directing now. The reason why I also went into directing, especially with CTC, is because, I mean, I have directed before, but it is because I wanted to, like, try to set a certain standard for productions because I know we are community theater and we're amateur theater, but we also don't have to be amateur theater with a big A. We can also set a, bring standards up because it, when you bring standards up, then it's also a marketing thing, and it also attracts people to come and be a part of the, of the group. Yeah, and and, and, and, I don't know, I mean, as my, my sister would say that I want, I like directing because I like telling people what to do, which is partially true, but I really

like how I get people to, of course, take on the role, but at the same time, like get them from A to B. And when I get the standing ovation on stage and everything, that's where I like staying at the back and going, yes, I'm happy. Yeah, but that's also the reason why I never take vows with my caste because I cannot, I'm become, 'oh', I cannot do that. It's different when you're playing a role because that is the role that I play that you're uploading material, oh, then it's like me, I cannot do that, I hate it. I'd rather just stay in the background.

Is there a part of the creative process you prefer?

Uh... Well, I mean, I like all parts of it, but I, especially like, how, how you play with lights and sound, bringing that into the creative process because for me when I like stage stuff and I block it, it's always like I've already like drawn everything practically so that they even draw, draw the set design and everything because I need to know how I want things stayed and you, as you probably figured out with the CTC that not everything is prepared, but I'm usually the type of person I prepare a year in the balance. Like CUCKOO'S NEST, I prepare prepared the year before. Like already assembling my team and already deciding stuff, and that's because I like to give myself time, I don't wanna rush things. And it's that's also the reason why I have a longer rehearsal process and because number one, we're not professionals. And number two, I would rather that people feel comfortable with what they're doing and also that I can get them to do what I want them to do. Um, but at the same time, it's also because we are an amateur theater not getting paid for it and people have cannot come or they have sick days and this and that, then it gives me like extra time to like put things together. And that's when I did the Mousetrap, that was, it was absolutely fantastic that, that we had all this time and that they all agreed with me because, I mean, I got, I had knee surgery during that time and I had to cancel a couple of rehearsals because of infection and this and that. But they were all safe because we knew where we were, so we knew where we were together as the whole group, so, and that helps a lot. Like, I remember when we did... back in 2019, it was, we did that in Reffen, no, the one that signed right in the theater and as they call it, and I opted to turn it around, so we had the two that we had the upstairs and the downstairs. So I played with that a lot with the stairs, but the, their, um, how do you say in English now? It's like their layout, like the measurements and how their stairs were formed did not really fit with what they presented to me. So like I always told the cast, as long as you know where you're supposed to stand, look for your marks, leave everything to us - just go on. There was like one evening where I think we had like, yeah, it was the night before the opening night where the lights didn't work. It was terrifying, but they just pushed on because they knew that they knew where to go, they knew where to stand. They knew they knew everything and as long as they're fine, I mean, the show still has to go on even though stuff like that happens. And I'd rather have that, then, then, yes, the lights are perfect, this and that, but people are crap on stage don't know what they're doing. And, I mean, I'm also, I mean, I know I'm biased in that area because I like to work with the people I've already worked with, and that's because it's the familiarity. Also actors, because I also know who they are and and it just, I just know which buttons to push. I usually like to like mix them up, like I like to have a combination of all the new

people because to bring new blood into the group as well and have another perspective on things. But, and the good thing is, is like the older actors, because my methods for some people may find, oh, he's very strict and that's because I go a lot into details. I like details, like, even like I remember when you were doing Mousetrap, you were rehearsing. 'So when you're putting your hand there, what does it mean?' It's stuff like that because I would sit there in the audience and say, why are they doing that? What is, is there like a hidden meaning or so that so everything has to be like, as I say, planned and tight. Like, don't do it if you don't, if there's no point in it.

What are the main difficulties you have had to face in theatre and what do you think you've learned from it?

Um, I have learned, one of the biggest difficulties is that I, people's level of commitment that sometimes I just have to swallow it, that people are different and levels of commitment are not, are not always there and like, like, I'm sure you figured it out as well, that when people come to addition, oh, they're so dedicated and everything, like, oh. But then when we're there, it's like, oh, I cannot do any of these days for rehearsal. Just like then, why the hell do you even come when you know that we rehearsed Tuesday, Thursdays, and Saturdays? It's it's stuff like that and then I just swallow it because it's community theater.

Has theatre helped you develop social connections? How and how much?

Um, I wouldn't, yes and no. And when if we focus on the note, it's because when I'm in theater, I see it as a job - I don't see it as anything else. And I think it is also because if we base it on the CTC, It is a group of for expats, and since I'm Danish myself, then I don't feel like I need that extra thing that people want from it, like getting new friends and everything - I don't need that. I have a job which I need where I need to deal with people. I don't need to have everything else. But, yes, in a way, because, I mean, sometimes it's always the thing that coming out of your shell, coming out of your comfort zone, getting to learn, to know about new people is one thing, because, I mean, like, typical human nature is that you always go with a flock, and I've always done that, and I mean, I get it. It's in a way also, it also like trains me to like to be more, more open about different things and be more patient with different things.

Do you think theatre has been inclusive in your experience? If not, what barriers exist?

I would say that... Well. It depends really, because, I mean, if we're just basing it on what I like to do. Um, because I'm very specific, like, with, like, let's just take CUCKOO'S NEST as the example- you have to be able to do an American accent or even close to an American accent, and then we can play with the rest. Because, I mean, if I had, like, this, just say, if I had a McMurphy that was, for lack of a better choice, and from India. That I don't really think would have the same impact. So I would say it's inclusive, but then again, it's also not inclusive because it always depends on the pieces. It depends how much you want to, how much you want to bend stuff. And I mean, inclusivity is also very good because it's, it's national, but I also don't want inclusivity to mean that it's woke because that is, I mean, I'm not saying that I'm woke or anything, but let's face it, I

mean, there are some things where I would say no, because I can give you an example with, let's say Les Misérables, the musical, right? I remember the first time they put a black actor as Inspector Javert. I was just like, why? I know I can sing, I know I can act, but why? That's not how it was back then. And I think that's me, how I'm, how I'm schooled, that I, because I look so much into details. But I think it's fantastic if people can make it work. I mean, but then again, it can also go the other way around where when they did Kinky Boots here in Denmark, where the one who played the, the, uh, the drag queen role was white. And our sister, Awkward Dolores, Clay, Laurel Orsman Carde, was also white [reference to White Noise by Suzan-Lori Parks]. So that it can also go have a negative effect. So I think inclusivity is definitely very important. Yeah, I mean, if, I would say like the CTC is very inclusive of, of, of, anybody, by principle, and because, I mean, I've been in a Danish theater group before, and they were very close off. And I think that's the good thing with the CTC is also because they have different production, so it gives other people such other people a chance because compared to like maybe some of the Danish amateur theater groups, they maybe have just one show a year, so it's always like a competition and usually it's always the same people who get discussed. And that's when I start, like, I, I, that, that's, I mean, I get it, but because, but I mean, it's also not totally fair. I mean, we're all paying the same amount of membership fee and this and that, right? So in that aspect, I mean, inclusivity, I didn't say that, that, that, CTC is inclusive and it's also a good way to see it. And I mean, for me, I mean, it's also interesting to like understand other people's cultures, how they work and this and that, especially because I'm in healthcare. So it makes me understand also what happens there. So it goes the other way as well.

We are sure that the theater can socially grow people whether we are spectators or they decide to participate actively in the creation of live shows: what do you think? What skills do you think of?

Well, spectators in the audience, I would say, yes, because I mean, depending always on the piece, I mean, it makes you think. It makes you think about life and makes you think about different things. I mean, that's the great thing about theater. You can be transported away for at least two hours into another world where you don't have, where you can, as they say in camera, you can leave everything outside, and but being on stage, I would say that, that, that, it creates a different kind of social interaction. It creates different kinds of social skills because you have to learn how to work with other people. I mean, if we're taking amateur theater or community theater, then you have to realize that you have to learn how to work with other people who also are not getting paid, so it's always a different level of patience. I mean, maybe in the professional world, I mean, you can be all divas and this and that because of your fame and stature, but at the end of the day, you still have to perform because that puts money in the bread on the table, but you don't have to do that with community theater. So, so I think there's, there's, it's two aspects in my opinion. I don't know if that makes sense to you.

Do you have any advice also to engage more people?

I'd say that, I think it brings me back to my, to my initials, uh, one of my initial statements about, if we're talking about community theater, then, then, then I think it is, it is like setting a certain standard, but at the same time, like CTC does, that they also offer workshops and this and that because that gets people involved. Open stages have been very good because it gives maybe people a chance to like show something that they would probably be not be comfortable doing for a whole show. But if we're talking about audience members, then I would say it depends on, it always depends on the, on the piece that you choose. And especially, I mean, here in Denmark, if with English as a second language, I mean, you have to, in my opinion, you always have to choose something that has a name, like attracts like Agatha Christie, that will always attract people. CUCKOO'S NEST because it's been a movie that will always attract people. But if you choose something that's maybe lesser known, and I agree there should also be space for that. Then, of course, you shouldn't expect some something huge from that, but I would say that, that theater is a part of, of, of many things because it's already existent in schools. I mean, just like classroom productions, role-playing and and so on. I mean, it is already a part of it, but I guess that when people hear theater, it's like, oh, prancing around in tutu and maybe ballet shoes. I mean, and that's, that's always like a fine line of what, what, how, how people maybe think about what, what theater is, right? And I'm not sure if you're thinking from an audience perspective or from an actor's or productions perspective. But I would say that, that, I mean, it is always like, we, I remember when I started with the CTC, we had one who auditioned, uh, for the, uh, theater concert and, I mean, ishe was crap. And because she was so afraid to sing. But what we did was we took her under, but she was a little bit, she was interested, but she felt like she was also forced by her mom. But then we took her under a wing and then we let her be help, we let her be a stage hand and everything, and then she saw like the whole process, and then that gave her like more confidence like to audition for an upcoming role, actually got one a big role. So that was, that, that's like a good, a good story to tell if you're thinking about like, like, like, um, like what, what, what we want, how to get people more involved in theater. But then again, people are, it's also depends on upbringings in the family, right? Because, I mean, if you think about like, I mean, I come from a family who's always been interested in musicals and stuff like that, so, the, it would, it would, of course, it would, I would, of course, also be interested in them. And I mean, if you think about other, maybe other people who are more interested in sports than maybe theater is of a lesser choice. I can give an example when in at work, I, I mean, because I saw Chess musical last Friday, and then I said it at work, yeah, because they asked, what are you going to do this weekend? I'm going to go in and see Chess. I'd say half could relate, and the other half couldn't. And that's because again, it depends on what priorities you have and how you're also your upbringing, what your interests are and they're just some people who are not into the, the, the artistic sides, some are more most, maybe into the physical side of like with sports. Stuff like that.. I, for one, I don't come, I mean, I can swim, but then it stops there, but I mean, if there's like a football match on TV and just like, talk about, I'm going to watch something on Netflix. I mean, that's how I would react and I'd rather watch maybe something else. Yeah. It goes the other way as well.

Are you worried about technology and AI impact on the entertainment industry?

Uh, I would, I mean, AI, it depends how it's used. I mean, depending on what rules or laws or how it governs, how you can use it. And I'd say, yes, no, sorry. I would say no. Um, and I can give a prime example is where as well, many years ago, there was a revival of War of the Worlds, crappy musical, by the way, but ut then they used, um, I think it was, I'm not, I don't remember if it was Marlon Brown or it was, anyway, it's one of the famous, famous actor who narrated it back then. And then, of course, since he's dead and they needed that as part of the staging, so they did something AI with that, and I thought that was fantastic. But then again, I can also see the implications it can have because of what it does to the rest of the entertainment industry. Um, with like, how you write songs or how how you like, um, do, um, how do you call it now? Like, how you do, like, photos or this and that, then it, then it can be done. I'd say theater, I don't know how, how devastating that could be for the, for, for theater. I can't see it just yet. I would say, yes, with television and films, then yes, I can see that as well as with audio. But theater, that's a bit difficult because people go to the theater for for live experience. But then again, you look at the ABBA thingy that's going on in the UK, which is AI, in principle. So, so I guess it depends on what rules govern it.

Do you have a fun fact about theatre that you would like to share or Anything you would like to add about your experience with theatre?

Um, yeah, I mean, it's, it's, it's always, I mean, I think it's fun listening to like the different nationalities in CTC, for example. Like their experience, how community theater is for how it is in the US, that you always have a set design or this and that, or hear you, whereas here you have to figure it out for yourself. So I think that the support for amateur theater in Denmark is big. But if you do not use the national language, then it is practically not there. So I think that is a very fun thing that has to be considered when you're, when you're doing this project that, that if we want theory to be bigger, then it, it also needs more funding. But if you're thinking that it's, then I don't think Europe is the is maybe the best place for it because we each have our own national languages. Because, I mean, the times I have, like, applied for funding, I've always gotten, um, the same answer that, well, it's not in Danish, so we kind of give any funding for that. So it just helps us to be like that, right?



Lasse Mouritsen

Nationality: Danish

Age: 37

Gender: male

Highest finished education: Masters
in Performance Design and
Urbanism at RoskildeUniversity.

Background:

How long have you done theatre?

I have been doing art since 2010, I think, and more performance, I mean, I've done performance arts since I started my own artistic practice since 2010. And I've been working professionally within theater institutions from 2020. So, I got my 1st job in a theater in 20- was it, no, it was 2019 actually. And then I've been working in three different theaters ever since. I was the director there [Teaterhuset] for one year and then I worked in Sydhavn Theatre where I had been working mainly with community art practices, especially in terms of like a city practice, um, working with the community around in the city and organizing programs around the, the context, um, and then now I'm in SortHvid, which is more like an experimental avantgard stage. And we are in chats to also have development projects, but not that much engaging with community and social practice, but more with development of the specific style of the theater, which is like music and performativity. So it's a little bit more artistically engaged where the others have had more of the community aspect in it. Doesn't mean that there's not community in this one, but it's still, it's it's a community for the very science makers and the, like, it's not the very broad community.

What type of theatre do you work in?

Program directing.

Are you currently working in the theatre industry?

Full-time employed.

Mian Interview:

What role do you play in theatre and why did you start doing theatre?

Mm, okay, so now I'm a development producer in SortHvid, uh, which is to, I'm quite new, so the description of my job might be different in 4 months, so it's also very like explorative, but in general, to build up partnerships and programs that can enhance the

development of music, performativity, or music theater, it's called in Danish, you say, like 'musikdramatic'. Um, so that's my current position. Um, Why did I start theater? Um, so in Sydhavn Theater, they had this um, aspiring ads as platform that work with site specific uh, projects. And they were asking for volunteers, and as I had my own artistic practice and worked a lot in public space, since I came from urbanism and had a very huge interest in exploring the artistic potential in public space and in urban space. I decided to become a volunteer in the theater and slowly got into the theater world in that way. Then they hired me for a project, like just for a month or 2 months and then they continued to to hire me on a project base. So I was basically freelancer then the beginning and then I started working full time, one and a half year after, I think. But it wasn't generally not the aspect of theater as an isolated silo or as a discipline, but it was more my interest was how does it evolve? How does it get out? How does it get disturbed or weaved into the everyday life of Sydhavn? I found that process really interesting and it's basically those are the purses that I've been working on as a theater professional. It more like a professional or I'm more engaged within the context of the theater more than the core of the theater.

Do you feel like since you've changed from kind of like that more social urban aspect of theater to more of a musical experimental? Do you feel like there's been a change in like what you kind of do?

Um, yeah, there's less um, the relations that I build on is different. So I think I will be more engaging with the artists and the funds and the more -that that kind of aspects of relational building, while in Sydhavn, it was very much coming to all the local meetings, participating in the arguments and interest groups of the demonstrations and the resistance fight against the urban planning projects on their protected nature area. So it's two very different kind of groups that I work with. I mean, but it's still the same rules that count on how to build relations is a very important aspect of the work. It's with the people that gives you money or permission, so if it's the people that participate in as an artist or as volunteers and relational building, it's probably the things that is the same in the two jobs.

Is there a part of the creative process you prefer?

I think, I think what I prefer is to turn research or findings into programs. So the development from having an experience in that same Sydhavn, you would experience a certain fear or frustration or discussions that would go on about the city. and involve citizens and take those things or worries and somehow elaborate on them, to build them into the program of the theater, so that the theater would always represent the concerns and the dreams of the city that we are in. The process of finding the ties or the stairs between the very artistic world and then the daily life, I think, was kind of a very inspiring and creative process.

What are the main difficulties you have had to face in theatre and what do you think you've learned from it?

Um, yeah, I think when you involved people in the participation of projects where, in where there are statements or in whether existence identity will be exposed, then you also put them, or the things they say in a fragile position. So there's a lot of care connected to it and a lot of understanding of how the involvement process can both be can... also have a lot of potential triggers and things that can go wrong. Um, so I try to be aware of understanding when I involve somebody like how this continue... doing the project, if the project gets difficult, and after the project as well, what are the, what are the, the continuation of the things that is initiated? But I think it's also very challenging. So you cannot keep being in constant relation with anybody. You also have to...yeah, change as well.

Has theatre helped you develop social connections? How and how much?

Yeah, but it depends on how we look at theater because it has been more as the the programmer more than the participator in this the artistic projects. If that makes sense. So it's just, um, but but in my role as the one for making the programs and doing the, the artistic curatorial actors, it has been... Yeah, I think it has the development in many ways, but I'm not sure if it's the same, like if it connects with the actual being in a stage and performing with people, if it's the same you're looking for or... So, you mean, like, my personal experience, like, from my own or what I observe? Yeah, I mean, basically I've I've got a lot of friends and a lot of colleagues and um, people that comes from being informants or ambassadors can also, the more you work with people, the closer you are able to um, to connect and to become friendly to each other. So I think that that's that might be the 1st and biggest aspect of the social life. I think I'm I'm not good at, keep the my professional and social life, um, distinguished. I think a lot from my experience of the theater world it has a very easy transaction between the professional agreements and the social benefits and fun that lies in the work. From my experience, there's a lot of breaking down boundaries that we are good at keeping up in other fields of society, of social society. So I think the aspect of coming closer to an aesthetics and social, visual experience can, can help people open up to each other and maybe, hmm, take a step closer to, yeah, I mean, you kind of just lose the barriers or the the grounds between you a little bit when you experience theater together. Oh, when you're part of a theater production as well, you kind of see people that produces works in a lot of different states of emotional and physical states of making this huge work. And it helps you to create stronger, tie, both putting extra care and attention into the work that they're making. And when you follow the process, then you get more. You get more out of the final result when you, like, for example, when you go to see a play, you will see the final one and a half hour of maybe a one or two or three years, process from fundraising to crying and laughter to be able to follow some of those stages before. Um, I think makes the connection to the person, but also to the piece enlarged in a way or more valuable.

Do you think theatre has been inclusive in your experience? If not, what barriers exist?

Hmm. Yes. Um... Like, from, I mean, it can, of course, take many different directions, but for me in Sydhavn, there has been a really, um, a focus on, uh, what we show and how to plan the artistic programs in reference to what is what is the hot topic in the local

neighborhood. So for me, I think we have gained a lot of interest in some of our programs because we have tried to say like to look at the statistic and to speak with people about what are your main concerns, what is your everyday dreams and frustrations? Just basically get to know the life stories, uh, or through live interviews and group conversations and stuff like that. And by understanding some of the very important takes and directions that are always very representative in these discussions. It has been easier to say like, okay, then we are creating a program which can be extremely avangadan experimental, but as long as it involves some of the local neighborhood struggles or that it can mirror those things, then it can actually be very inclusive. And I can think about aspects of the price and the communication afterwards, but you wouldn't be, you wouldn't be finding it difficult to bring people in to see it because they will come just by themselves. Yeah. Because they feel represented in the topic or the direction of the specific work. But I think that will still change a lot if it's if you work with another group that is maybe not particularly local, for example, it could be that you want to bring in, I don't know, other groups.

We are sure that the theater can socially grow people whether we are spectators or they decide to participate actively in the creation of live shows: what do you think? What skills do you think of?

Hmm. I agree with that. You don't need necessarily specific skills, but you need necessarily like a good facilitation, whether it's a workshop for people that have never done anything before or if it's a performance. But it doesn't necessarily require a certain skill to benefit from theater. I mean, uh, no, I don't think so.

Do you have any advice also to engage more people?

Are you worried about technology and AI impact on the entertainment industry?

Um, no, I don't think so much about it. Um... I think it's more about um... kind of awareness and attentiveness to to AI in general and to... to... I mean, there's already theaters of ways that involves, like, for example, artificial actors or artificial intelligence at stage. I think I think those ways are good and interesting in order to to try out what does it mean with AI today and also investigate the potentials and the negativity that follows with that stream. But, uh, I think the best is to be aware and attentive to those processes and involved it in the degree where it would help the artistic factors to grow. Um, more than if it's like directly negative or positive.

How do you think that technology and AI can help and like grow the creative process?

Mm, I think there's many ways that it can, that it can become a generative force or helping creative involvement in some processes. And I also think there's a lot of ways where it would, where it would do the opposite. And I think it's good for theater people and all other people too- to get to know where it's helpful and where it's not, which requires the involvement of that. But, uh, yeah, to understand it more in that sense of involving it to find out about the consequences and the way it's benefiting and distractive

to the creative process. But there's so many things within, I think, for me, I think it can also help to grow the awareness of what makes the artistic process of creation very unique. By understanding all the things that AI will not be able to do now and maybe not neither in 5 years or 10. Um, which is also a good benefit to get from from involving it to some degree. I don't think you should involve it too much, but I think involve it enough to be able to see what still makes the human assistant crisis unique.

Do you have a fun fact about theatre that you would like to share or Anything you would like to add about your experience with theatre?

My experience or fun facts. Oh. Um, oh, not on top of my head unless you have a direction that you feel is is interesting for you.



Susanne Danig

Nationality: Danish

Age: 64

Gender: female

Highest finished education: Masters degree in Comparative Literature and Modern Cultural Studies

Background:

How long have you done theatre?

Oh, since that time, 40 years. Um, no, maybe not 40 years, uh, 35, sorry. Most of my career has been into performing arts.

What type of theatre do you work in?

Uh, I'm definitely working. I mean, I'm working in the independent field. That has always been kind of my target to stay and work with the younger upcoming independent field of, and especially the ones working internationally. So this is kind of like what I'm known from and Denmark is that I have international expertise. On how to tour Danish productions, but also on how to build up international networks.

Are you currently working in the theatre industry?

I am self-employed. I have my own company. Which is a coaching strategy device, but actually my main focus is running this residency place that I run as my main focus. For work.

Main Interview:

What role do you play in theatre and why did you start doing theatre?

Oh, that's not an easy question. Um, I started working with theater because I, this is my education was bleeding up to working in culture, and then it just happened to be theater people in theater was most interested in what I had to offer when I started out. We actually did a company together back in the days. Uh, which was focused on on PR and communication. Um, but then I stayed with theater because for me, it, the theater encompasses all the different art forms and then I find interesting. Um, yeah, so this is basically why I started. A lot of states and what I'm interested in in my role. Yeah, well, I already said, no, some of it, my role in Danish theater has been to make, um, Yeah, well, I actually call myself sometimes a connector. I'm the one who connects people. So my role has been to what I'm known for is that I'm working internationally, like what I said. that I have the expertise of how to work international within the performing arts. So that's my interest and also my role. But I am, you know, well, formally speaking, I'm a producer. That's probably what you're looking for, right?

What kind of expertise do you kind of need to have to work internationally within Denmark?

Uh, yeah, well, you need to know people. Um, Of course, you need to know, um, you need to know the production frames of, of, um, of the, or how to produce theater, how to develop performances. I'm not artistic in that sense. I'm supporting artists that I want to work internationally. Um, and then you need to have competences around communication, branding strategies, stuff like that. That's why I came from communication working into production, not production, but producing. Um, I would say I'm a creative producer, uh, more than a, a technical producer. I also actually did organized festivals, helped organize festivals back in the days, and I was also director of the International Theater Institute here in Denmark at some point. And I also was very active in this European network called ITM. Um, and went to a lot of those meetings. I was in I ended up I was an advisory board of ITM also for some years. Um, and through that interest of working internationally, um, I have developed a lot of context, especially in Europe. So it's a curiosity towards what is going on in other countries. It a knowledge about who are presenting what, where in Europe and in the world, what festivals are interested in international work, stuff like that. And what are they interested in? And then, of course, knowledge of um, what theater groups are doing, what in Denmark. So it's profiling the right companies, uh, who has the potential and then that means the quality level of actually being able to, to, to work internationally. And then making the connections to the right festival and people who might be interested in their work. So it's a lot, I think maybe my biggest competence is being a really good networker. And being able to connect people and see potential stuff like that. Now I'm actually supporting, artists with the residency place that I run. I'm supporting artistic development. So I'm actually moved into creating platforms and supporting artists to do new artistic work and how to develop art, actually. Which is even more cool, actually. With still an international perspective, because I find that it's really interesting that we are not staying within our own circle of people, so this international space group has been really important for me. I also happen to start out by chance working with some of the very best people here in

this country around this. So, which was also, you know, you also need people to train you and give you the right, the right, you know, to open the doors for you and get, you know, to get to know who are the people to talk to and how to develop your own network. Yeah, but that's also why I mentioned this thing about starting out with the right people who can open doors because it's like you need to have somewhere to start. You can not up to it online. There's too many choices to make online.

Is there a part of the creative process you prefer?

Yeah, well, you, you, in my own work or in that city, I already answered that, you could say, I, I really like the artistic development. Mm-hmm. So, so this, and for me, it, it is, in my job, it's, it's supporting young talent, um, and when I say young talent, it's not the very young, it's the people who have really just started in the business to support them in how to develop a more sustainable organization, structure, work life, for themselves because it's really, really difficult. Unless, you know, if you are in the main big theaters, if you're an actor working in the big theater, then it might be a little bit easier, but even there it's difficult. But if you want to produce your own stuff and you want to work internationally, it's, it's really difficult to do. So, so, um, helping people to trust in their own artistic talent and and helping them to develop them artistic or the framework for developing that artistic talent - that is something like very much.

What are the main difficulties you have had to face in theatre and what do you think you've learned from it?

It's so easy to say money, but it is actually money, you know, it's really difficult, but it is more than money just saying, uh, uh, sustainability, like, like, like you get started, uh, or what is it? You know, that it's not a the lack of continuity, that you actually, you have somebody who's really talented and they get a lot of money to produce the first performances, but then the difficulties of them moving to the next steps are really hard. And, and, and I see so many people getting frustrated and and leaving the business and and, and, talent wasted. Yeah, that's hard to see. Yeah, but it is, yeah, so money is a part of that, but instead of just seeing more money, it's actually the continuity of it. Uh, that, that, that, that we don't create sustainable uh, work, working careers for people. And working, trying to work in experimental and develop new art forms and doing community work. Yeah, well, people who try to develop and and new the art form are getting stopped all the time because there's a lack of continuity.

Do you think there's any way to combat that? Like, anything regulatory to put supports in or to make it where it does have community?

Uh, some people do come back and then, you know, I'm also, there's two perspectives on this. One is the personal that you're looking at the individual artist and and it feels saddening the choices they have to make sometimes. But maybe they find a different role somewhere else and lead a happy life after that and good for them. But I think the most problematic thing is the sector, the business, that we don't have a support system that actually maintained the talent that developed the talent in the best possible way.

Has theatre helped you develop social connections? How and how much?

Oh, definitely. That's defining for my life. It's, it's, uh, you know, I have, I have, I have an international people, a crew of people. I know people everywhere, no matter where I travel, I can go and visit some people that I know. So yeah, definitely. It's, it's, a lot of, of course, I have friends who are not from this theater, uh, uh, am I actually maintained that very precociously because I think it's important not to, oh yeah, but a lot of my very best contacts and friends are from people I have been working with.

Do you feel that like your social connections within theater are different than your social connections you have outside theater?

Of course they are, um, I think it's generally for everybody that your work connections are different from your private, but because in theater, we live so much whether they become very, you know, some of the connections become very close because it's such a, you know, when you're working towards opening a show or you're going to, you're running a festival or you're even traveling internationally, you really get to know each other because you're close to each other in a completely different way. So, yes, it becomes, and you have a joint interest for, for, for what you're doing, it becomes about something more than just the friendship. So yeah, in many ways, I, in many ways, I actually feel it easier to maintain the friendship that I have from people working in the business.

Do you think theatre has been inclusive in your experience? If not, what barriers exist?

Uh, oh, yeah, yeah, that's a, that's an interesting question. Um, yes, I think theater, the theater business as such is quite inclusive in the way that that it doesn't maintain one picture of who other people. It's a good, it's a good place to to, to come to, especially in the independent field. Really good for the weirdos to be a part of. Um, so in that way, it's inclusive, but, it's been hard, just, I can just say for me, personal, because remember I had a, I have an almost 40 years career here, especially in the beginning, it was hard to get into the business as a woman. And we had only mainly in Denmark, there was only a male, the leaders of the CSS were all male when I was younger. So, so it has been taking a lot and that has been part of my journey also to me push for the, for the, for the women to get into the leadership positions. And we have managed to do that. So I'm really proud of that. And then comes the lack of the openness because, you know, we are, um, of course, we are not open to what different kind of disabilities. It's difficult if you have any kind of disability in a way, physically, but also mentally to get into the theater space because they're probably norms about how to do it. It's a stressful working environment that you're working in, which can be hard for, for, for some, and and there's also the seats and not all the seats are built for wheelchairs and stuff like that. So there's a lot of various actually, uh, when you start looking at it. And we have not been very good in Denmark looking at that. Um, and we are also, we have also not been very inclusive toward the ethnic minorities and also people, internationals, um, I'm looking at, it's a question for me at the moment because I realize that 20% of the people living in

Copenhagen are non-Danish... doesn't have a Danish passport, I was, it was only up to this, the selection we had like next week that I realized that. But I, but I, um, so it's a problem in terms of elections that people are not voting because we don't, there's no materials in, in anything else than Danish when you, if you want to look into what is the, the, the election process anyway. Um, but it's also a question in the, we have very little percentage of theater, which is actually non-Danish, of course, dance, but it's also just a minor thing. So this is why I think that, that the H2O and what we do and what Jeremy is doing is really important because it's one of the only places where there's, uh, International, where there's a community, for international, where you know, there is, um, some smaller theaters that I do productions in, in, in, in English, and which you can also be. A part, there's this thing, there's actually something called, called, Copenhagen Theater Circle, which is an important, um, network for people, amateurs who want to English speaking, amateurs who wants to work in theater. So they are, yeah, so they are lacks. There's lacks towards disabilities, there's like, there has been lack towards giving females space, and we definitely have a lack in terms of inclusion of non-Danish because, yeah, I can, um.

We are sure that the theater can socially grow people whether we are spectators or they decide to participate actively in the creation of live shows: what do you think? What skills do you think of?

It's definitely, right. I definitely support it, and what I like is that you're only that you're including, because this is something that not that many in the Danish communities understand that it's not only just about being a spectator, it's also about being being actively included. I love to do more immersive shows. I love to do more community-based work and stuff like that. And and we are kind of like missing out on that a little bit secretive what is going on in that area here. So I like that those two aspects are part of it and then somehow, There was something that I felt that it was maybe not strong enough. It's just... I would would probably... it's this, 'we are sure', which is a little bit lack, just to say 'we are sure', and then 'to grow people' is also maybe a little bit, you know, maybe expand it a little bit to do more. I actually talk about my work being unleashing the visionary power of the performing arts. So, so this is, because I actually think that it's more than that. It's not just about growing people, it's also to create vision about what is the society that we are actually living in. And I think we have the potential to do that. Yeah, I think at least say, we know that that theater can grow, grow and expand people and create a vision, creative visionary society, but but you also have to be careful to not lose out on because I also like that it's concrete....a few words and some statements about the visionary power, but it can also be too fluffy if you are. Yeah, so it's so in a way I like it, but it's not too fluffy. This is something that you should, everybody should be able to say, yes, to, of course we, we know that.

Do you have any advice also to engage more people?

Oh yeah, that's, that's a big, good question to have because this is, this is some of the questions that, that, I work in that, when we are meeting in the performing arts, are also talking about some of these things. First of all, you have to start talking to people instead

of just seeing that you have the right, you know, we have a tendency to just think that we have the right stones and that we just do a production and then we present it to people and then you have spectators coming in. I actually try to not use the word spectator or audience for that sake. Um, I try to use participants instead. Which there's a way of stressing that, that, that's actually even a theater done on a normal black stage, is also an exchange of energy. So, so, so it's always the audience is always participants in a way, but we got them at somebody who comes in and just that we have the power on stage to actually address them. And there's something basically wrong for me with this kind of putting out this the forth curtain that you are the audience out there and we are the ones who know the truth. So, so there's something about how we talk about theater and how we um, deal with the relationship with uh, the participants that we have to change these communication. What how we communicate around it and how we, and this is actually some of the stuff that I admire about Jeremy, that he works much more participatory with some of this, even though it's a, it can be a traditional play, you still have this because he knows that his thoughts were working with Copenhagen Theater Circle, for example, and or working with the students at the school and then put, you know, asking them to be part of it and be volunteers. Uh, we also have a lot of volunteer work going on at H2O, it creates a community around the platform, which I think is important to develop it. So, yeah, so there's there's a lot of work to be done around this and and I think all team institutions are struggling about getting their heads around how to do this.

Do you feel it's a challenge to get, to break that 4th wall and to bring people from one side to the other and vice versa?

It definitely is a challenge, especially if you look at the Royal or the big theaters in Copenhagen. It's much easier to do when you're a smaller organization. Um, because then you don't have the big marketing budget or big communication, the strategy, um, so you need to find other ways to do it and you do that by actually being in contact with with your audience of spectators. And I think this is essential to survive, basically, that you, you know, none of us really wants to be talked to like that, we want to be talked with. And that has changed. That has actually changed dramatically in the 30 years that I have been working in the business. It's our whole, the whole, I guess because of social media and the whole, we want to dialogue instead of just being shown to something. Um, and that has changed, and I think we will see a changed landscape of the theater. You know, so, um, but exactly how to do it. Yeah, that's you have to go out there and talk to. I was in a presentation with somebody who wanted an organization in Helsingor. She wanted to do something with young people and she also said this, she said you have to ask them, you cannot decide, now I want to present something for a young audience. You have to start a dialogue with the young audience that you want to be in contact with and then what do you want to hear? What do you want to see? How do you want to do it? And then, and then I invite them in to be co-creators of the things that you are doing. So this thing about asking, I think, is quite quite interesting.

Are you worried about technology and AI impact on the entertainment industry?

Yes. I am, and... I was in a, in a, oh, did I forget to get? No, I get that one. I was in a, in a conference last Monday and he comes, friends because we have the leadership of the EU. And it was called this, this is the program for it, 'Lost in Distraction', and I've been telling everybody and showing them this front page since Monday. Because I think this is the key that we have lost distraction, because of social media. We are disturbed all the time, so it's not only in our terms of doing theater, but it's, it's, it's generally a problem that we get lost in distraction. So we don't have the time and possibility to go deep into receiving what we are seeing, getting new ideas or whatever, there's a lot of problems for what that. But this is the main thing that the social media media does for with us is that they distract us. Yeah, you can have your sit through a performance without having a surge to start your phone and look at your phone and stuff, you know, it's like, and I feel it myself, you know, it's not that I'm better than young people, definitely not. I think, some, I have two sons, also, and I think actually sometimes they are better at it because they grew up with this technology, a different way, so they also are better at getting in a way, but some people are not. It's like, it's like it's like the phone is burning and you're perfectly, oh, I just have to see if there's a message. Sometimes you see on the phone, you have your launch and like, oh, company. It's like, like, yeah, it's ruining our experiences of seeing, and experiencing us.

Do you have a fun fact about theatre that you would like to share or Anything you would like to add about your experience with theatre?

Fun facts about theater. That was, I was kind of like a fun, fun thing, fun fact about theater. No, I just want to say that, that, that if you're not lost in distraction, and you really see a good performative work, then it's really magic. And and I have seen so many performances in my life and it doesn't happen that often. That that you see something which is like staying with you for where you can. Yeah, I've been sitting seven hours for performance and I was not distracted at any and and I was, I was just like seven. 'Oh, what? They left.' It was gone. So the answer can do this and you completely lose yourself in, in, in, in, in it and live with something in a way that I don't see any other art form does. A really good film could maybe also do it, but seldom because you're not physically engaged in the same way. This is what I like about theater - it's the physical engagement and I think this is what we need very much exactly because we have all the social media and we are so apart from each other, uh, theater is a community space. You were actually physically there with your body experiencing and you can only experience it if you're physically there. And that, I think, is a, I don't know if it's a fun fact, but it's an important, um, fact.



Vida Seraphina

Nationality: Danish

Age: 26

Gender: female

Highest finished education: Bachelor of Arts, Communication Design

Background:

How long have you done theatre?

Honestly, only since summer 2023. But I did go to, like, a theater themed private grade school. But we, it wasn't really good. It was an actual theater education. It was just like, ooh, this is fun because I'm from the countryside, so the school was like a bunch of hippies.... So it was like the whole school would make a production together so everyone would like write and create everything, which was pretty cool, but like the whole acting thing not happening at all.

What type of theatre do you work in?

Social.

Are you currently working in the theatre industry?

Part-time, I guess, slash slash volunteer. It depends, like, do you define drag also theater because I kind of do, but I don't know.

Main Interview:

What role do you play in theatre and why did you start doing theatre?

Okay, so, again, it depends on the definition, I think. But I did start doing improv in 2023, which is like improv comedy and improv theater. Um, And I started doing that because I wanted to improve my drag performance skills. And then because I was doing improv regularly, I was doing it every week, I heard of CTC, Copenhagen Theater Circle, and was interested in volunteering for them, and then I did so months after that and became more involved in the theater theater part. And that's also around the same time I debuted with my drag. So everything was kind of like starting a little bit and then everything just aligned and now both volunteering theater and doing drag and I stopped doing improv a little bit, but maybe it will come back.

Is there a part of the creative process you prefer?

I really prefer the social part, and the collaborative part. I think it's super fun doing, uh, the concepting together like we did on 'Take Me to Church' [CTC show], where it was

kind of like co-writing the dialogues a little bit and practicing together and then making it come together both visually, conceptually, and like script wise, story wise. So, of course, you guys had already made like the main framework, but there was still so much, um, availability for input and availability for ideas. And I think that whole part of like building something or like shaping something together is super fun. And then just, yeah, creating something that feels really cool. So I think concept the most and then like social collaboration.

What are the main difficulties you have had to face in theatre and what do you think you've learned from it?

I will say I was really privileged on my last production because our director was really good at the administration part. Um, I think sometimes there is uh, chaos on the availability part. Being in productions where you are many people and you're depending on each other and not everyone necessarily putting the same amount of effort or prioritization into it. So it becomes a little screwed in terms of are we all here and are we able to move on to progress without everyone here? I think that is one of the main difficulties. And then, sometimes, if the director is not necessarily a good director, that can be difficult if you're not being directed. That was not the case for on 'Take Me to Church' - I felt very directed. That was good.

Do you think you've learned from these kind of challenges, like, what have you learned specifically from them?

I think, um, now that I'm doing the collaborative drag thing where you said it was amazing, I need to be very consistent with being like, we're meeting here, you need to prioritize it. This is like what you need to do in terms of being in the production. So that's from like a initiative part of standing from a participant point of standing, there is some, I think learning patience. Sometimes just being like, okay, what can we redirect now that we're missing someone, like what can we focus on? So I definitely think I have learned something or at least just gained experience from it.

Has theatre helped you develop social connections? How and how much?

100%. um, I would say, theater is, in my opinion, a practice of humanity, because you kind of practice storytelling and emotions and connections, which are all is so fundamental for the human experience. So, I would definitely say like after I started doing both improv and theater, I could feel my social skills progress and, uh, kind of my comfort within being in spaces that I was not used to or my comfort in being in the unknown or the comfort in being, uh, in a place where we don't know what's happening, but we can make it happen. That totally grows. So you can, I would recommend to anyone to do like the improv or theater or anything like that because it is just such a perfect way to practice your empathy and collaboration and human skills in general.

Do you think theatre has been inclusive in your experience? If not, what barriers exist?

Yes, I think it 100% depends on the space. And I think 'Take Me to Church' was super inclusive because there was taking both measures of who are we casting, what is the language we're casting in, like what is the inclusive language we are speaking when we're talking about gender, disabilities, stuff like that, so I think that was a very high level of inclusion. And I think other times, in the theater or in the drag scene, it can be more normative, or even conforming in a way, where it's kind of, we want it to be for everyone, but when it is for everyone, it is automatically not for everyone, you know what I mean? Because when you make it for like the largest mass, there's always minorities that get excluded. So, for instance, in drag spaces, sometimes drag is for everyone, which I think is important and cool, but if it was only so, we would be oppressing or like excluding transgender people from doing their kind of very queer drag in expressing who they are in that agenda identity and stuff because we are politically not on a level where everyone can just be as equal as we want them to, so because we still politically are not completely aligned, I think there is still issues with stuff being for everyone. So you need to also be very focused and we want these kind of people because this is this kind of space, like the intention of safe space is, I think, could gain more effort from different places.

We are sure that the theater can socially grow people whether we are spectators or they decide to participate actively in the creation of live shows: what do you think? What skills do you think of?

I am also sure. I think it's a great statement. Yes. I agree. And I get reminded of, um, interactive theater also, a little bit. I know I keep mentioning 'Take Me to Church', but it is just such a good example, because we had a little bit of audience participation of like standing up and praying and sitting down and looking to places and stuff, and I think that plays a very important role in the immersiveness...uh, because when you are immersive, you also psychologically channel the, now pay enough, nerves, nerve systems in your brain to, like be in that place and it requires your brain to understand the world in a different way because you did that, like, in your body and mind and emotions. So I think, yes, and that is cool.

Do you have any advice also to engage more people?

I think it's, um, there's a kind of confidence gap and there is also a privilege gap, I would say, or like a skill gap, maybe, because I think so many people know about people who have been procuring acting in theater for a long, long time, or like if you know someone who has done ballet since they were like 6 years old or something, and you're like, 'I cannot just start doing ballet now', and I think people have, because I would not be good at it, and so because we have kind of a society where people are so used to, you have to be super skilled in different ways. A lot of people feel they cannot just start at 0 at any point in their life because they have missed all of the part before. So that both goes into like skill and confidence, I think. But I think still, if you can make it so, that, we can, like, make the gap smaller in terms of this is a space where we learned XYZ, there's no pressure in improv, we often talk about like, you will not be put on a stage instantly.

There will be so many exercises and practices and community gathering before you, we even talk about going on a stage. So, just removing pressure of like, we don't want you to perform like, like with numbers and excellency and stuff like that we want you to do all of these softer, nice things around it, and that is maybe also what people are valuing when they want to or like wish to participate is like the community, the communication, the empathy practice, stuff like that. Um, so if the focus removes from being performing on a stage to like the human centered things, I think that is maybe one of the ways to go.

Are you worried about technology and AI impact on the entertainment industry?

Oh, yes, I fucking hate AI. AI needs to fuck off. Um, literally. Literally, I shit talk AI daily, but one of the things is like, it's so unethical using uh, like generative AI because one, it steals from content that is already existing, so it's like intellectual property theft. That's one thing, then there's the whole data thing. about how we are just being like, well, don't know where these data are coming from we're just gonna take them anyway and reproduce, so it's also like a consumption thing because you're mass producing things way more quickly than we are used to. So we also like, um, putting more energy into the harm we already have in the world of like a massive social media world. And just giving everyone stress and anxiety from overprotection and also the whole environmental part of overprotection and mass production and overconsumption. So, that's a whole thing. And then there's also the whole like security thing of AI and need needing to be secure because of course it needs to be secure so people cannot just create all sorts of disturbing images and what is this, deep fakes and stuff like that. But who needs to make sure it's safe? Of course, the less privileged people in the global South who needs to go through all of the scary, scary things. So, and if our people in prisons even get tasked with these things. So there's also like politically and so unethical part of this. And then there's the art side of things of we're removing something that is so deeply human. And just going into fascism, basically, because when you look at like buildings and stuff, it used to have all of these beautifully crafted ornaments, like, we put so much humanity into it, but because of like capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, everything, everything needs to be so fucking stripped of identity and that's the opposite of art and that's also what AI is doing. And I hate it. Thank you.

Do you have a fun fact about theatre that you would like to share or Anything you would like to add about your experience with theatre?

Oh, theater is so gay. Yeah. That's perfect, I think. Um, I think another fun fact is, like, in improv specifically, you eat so many different people. Like, it's, it's really, uh, kind of, it's a very level spot of, uh, not knowing who people are, not knowing what their like outside lives necessarily are, but you have this very, um, common ground and common understanding of what is it we are trying to pursue in this space, which I think is what creates very magical connections, so that is also pretty cool.



Mary Tesfay

Nationality: Eritrean/ Danish

Age: 41

Gender: Female

Highest finished education: Master of Education in Educational Anthropology, Bachelors in Pedagogist (Social Work)

Background:

How long have you done theatre?

It's funny because when I'm asked this question, I always refer to, uh, for how long I've been at C:NTACT, and that is 8 years in a few days, um, but when I think back, uh, when I was younger, I used to dance. I was a part of a hip hop breaker group and Aarhus where I grew up. And I was, uh, a teaching, um, other youngsters, I was quite young myself, but, and so the first time I was, uh, a part of a, a theater play, that is, that was in 2003. So when I, if I count that, it's been fairly long, but you know, I, um... so it depends on how, how, how you see that, I guess. But also, if they are a professional, it's been eight years. And that was actually also a major, I can speak about that a little later, but that was also a big part of, um, getting to know this type of theater that I'm a part of today. It sparks it's part something back then, which I think is what we're doing with the people we work with today. More full circle moments in this experience, yes, yeah.

What type of theatre do you work in?

Mm-hmm. Uh, C:NTACT, C:NTACT is, uh, what do we call it, uh, a reality theater? Uh, and we work, um, with, uh, like, uh, documentary theater. We work with personal storytellers. So there are a non-professional people that we work with, but and everything we do is centered on the personal storytelling. So, and then a big part of what we do is, one thing is, it's a platform for self-expression, but it's also a platform where we facilitate meeting between the audience and the storytellers. And we always facilitate a dialogue, no matter what type of activities we do. That's, uh, that's, um, one part we don't, um, uh, what do it, like, is, like, on... you get what I mean. If we are asked to, uh, come out maybe at a conference or whatever, and they tell us they only have space for the personal storyteller, but not the dialogue - we always turn it down because it's a big part of what we do.

Are you currently working in the theatre industry?

Full-time. Yeah, we are three people working full-time. Uh, and then we have uh, a director, um, I see or whatever it's called, um, 'lære' [teacher]. Um, and then we have, uh, two uh, part-time employees... uh, one young one who also is a personal storyteller,

snd, um, snd then we have a colleague who does communication. And then, that's the, the, um, the crew that is working here, like daily, but then we have a huge, like freelance group that is attached to C:NTACT, that consists of, um, instructions and different type of dances, different type of, uh, like, you know, rappers and singers and producers, stuff like that that we bring in depending on what kind of projects we do.

Main Interview:

What role do you play in theatre and why did you start doing theatre?

Um, the the role I do is, uh, oh, there's so many different. As part of being like a small, like, um, I'm both like a project and a stage manager, and I always, uh, I will also do fundraising, and, um, a lot of the, okay, uh, what is this... organizational, like, development work that we do... uh, I think actually all of us is very in and out of different roles. I do, um, for a lot of our projects, we also have like learning materials for the schools and I create that too. And I facilitate, uh, like, uh, the, I facilitate when, um, we have, like, performances and the dialogue between the storytels and the audience. We have every project that we do, it consists of a project leader, oh, project manager, and then a group of, like, artistic teens. So a big part of my role is also to, you know, uh, keep everybody on the same path and lead that artistic team while leading the storyteller group and bridging, um, between the two, yeah, so that's a lot of different... It is a lot of fun. It's also a lot of work. We are constantly very busy all the time.

And then why did you start doing theater?

Mm, I think, um, first off, my own experience was with theater, like, uh, back in 2003 where I was a part of this hip hop dance group. And then there was some students at that time who was studying, uh, drama, um, a PhD student in Aarhus, where I grew up. And they were a part of their studies, they wanted to create a play that centered like ethnic minorities lived experiences, and I was a part of this group and some of them were like, oh, maybe because one of the, uh, the ones who were doing the audition were some of my, um, in some of the ones I knew from dance. So, I went to the audition, became a part of this, a play, this show, and it was based on my personal experience and five other young people, for about five of us were students, and I think that was the first time I thought, hmm, maybe this theater is something, could be a thing. I never I never imagined myself, I never really imagined that theater would be relevant to me. And since that experience, because before that, I've been doing a lot of dance shows, um, but that crossover to that theater was quite interesting and I, ever since been looking for a place where the same type of theater, where I could be a part of that, but never found it in Aarhus. But then a few years later, I moved to Copenhagen, and I was still, like, seeking, and I knew of people who was then a part of C:NTACT. So I decided when I was finished with my studies, I knew exactly that this is where I wanted to work. So I was very, um, what do you call it? Like, I know this is where, so I made a CV and went knocking on the door and asked, 'I have the CV. I want to be here. How can we figure that out?' And um, I think for me, and it's still a part of what, uh, uh, uh, my motivation still is that this feels like, I still don't consider myself a the other person. And I

think that is because this type of theater that we're doing, because it's based on, you know, people, uh, real life experiences, and just like, um, opening the theater space for someone who's, like, non-fictional people. I think that is, it's a part of what I've always been interested in, like, uh, it's, it's very, um, activistic. I have a big activistic heart. And I've always been interested in, um, you know, between minorities, majority, be, especially ethnic minorities in Denmark, um, doing a lot of like advocacy and stuff like that. Um, activistic work for many, many years. So this is where everything is centered around art. But, um, so even if even if it's a theater, there is a lot of theater spaces that I don't, that I don't connect to at all. But this one does, yeah.

Is there a part of the creative process you prefer?

I think... mm, maybe mainly two parts. I think the early stages of the development phase is, it's both challenging, but also very like interesting and sad and motivational because that is the moment where the different storytellers, first of all, we have to recruit, you know, every time we have a project, we need to find people that are willing and have a, like, a motivated tell, and we always do, we have, we have a very strong ethical code for who we work with and how we work people. So it's a, like a safe and good experience all the way through. Um, but I think, so when we first have them, recruited, the participants. I think this, the early stages where they begin like telling their, like, the, we did, um, like, where they begin telling the stories and we, uh, it's a mutual process trying to discover what, what, you know, what is important for them to tell, and how can we transform that into like a, like collective peace, collective art. I think that is a very interesting process. It requires a lot from us as like project managers, but also the artistic team. But everyone is so, because it's a very, it's, it's equally artistic and social work, and it's like a, like a very pedagogical, 'is that how I say it?', or, um, I think those phases is interesting, and then I think when they get to meet the audience, because that's such a big part of what we do, um, and then, um, that meeting between the audience and the participants, how it also transforms the participants. Both, both the audience and the participants is like, um, in Danish, we call it like it's a, uh, 'så det bliver en serveringspraksisence', like a process of becoming a subject instead of an object. I think that that process is also very exciting. So I have like the beginning, the development, also because I think with my, not when I say me and I, really, all of us, because we have the very, of course, we work in different ways, but are, the when we think about the projects and when we see us important projects, we are very tight-knit aligned staff here. Um, I think, uh, also because it requires, um, uh, we have it's a very, uh, what do you call it, we have, it's in our, like, core value to be, like, anti-racist, anti-discrimination. It's a very humanistic approach also. Um, we are very aware of power dynamics and like just the different intersections and we are constantly being like, oh, just aware of everything that plays in relations to people, and they're, like, individual, as a group, socially, economically, you know, all the different things that either, yeah, can be... you know what I mean. Like, um, um, so it's, so a huge part of it is also like, um, mm, what do you say, uh, they have the stories and we always listen to, is there anything that, mm, it has to be like an empowering experience, but also, uh, we are very aware of what we put out, because it has to be, like, constructed and very nuanced. And so when we do the early recruitment, we also

look at what different perspectives, is there, um, in this show, because every, every, um, project has like a, a, um, a main theme. The last one I did is about Inuit experience. So, but also very aware that the, the participants, um, have, like, different, that they are not becoming a, like, uh, uh, stereotypical, we try to nuance that, different, different backgrounds to show how nuanced people, uh, uh, uh, Inuit people also is. And that's, for instance, now I am, I am in the earliest... and right now, I'm in the early stages of, uh, doing a project that focuses on ethnic minority fathers and sons. And so even within that, it's, I've already like mapped out, like different ethnicities, different socioeconomical backgrounds, that is what we also have to look for, so we don't tap into some like, uh, predators that already exist because our work is to be that nuanced, yeah, voice... Everything we have here, like, a part of what we do is you can book and then it's, of course, you pay. But when we fundraise, we always make sure that, um, uh, maybe ten or twenty or sometimes forty um, shows are already paid for, so we can give that to the schools. Uh, schools are a big part of our uh, target uh, audience but also like professionals and yeah. But simply because we wanted to be accessible for anyone.

What are the main difficulties you have had to face in theatre and what do you think you've learned from it?

Uh. I think... I think the, I think, in theater, like generally speaking, I think the challenges is very much linked to the structures for creating here. Because we as a like a reality theater, always dumbs down in between two different chairs of, is it art, or is it like social work? And we insist on calling it like a Danish, um, but yeah, 'social kunstpraksis', like a socially artistic practice, where it's not either or, but it's both at the same time. But the funding structure of uh, that is, I mean, some funds are now becoming aware of art and it's like the social responsibility, um, but, but for many years and still to this, till this day, it's like it's different. It's difficult, um, to fundraise, so most of our funding comes from um, social funds that are not, that doesn't have anything to do with art. So, and of course, when we do that, it comes with different criteria. How many people have learned this and this and how much can we check off? You know, it becomes like a learning tool and it is also, but it also, because if it's like, uh, like only artistic, like the, I don't know, what is it in Danish, 'kunstfonde', like art funds, you do not have to check on, like, how many of the audience have gained this and this knowledge, la la, and stuff like that. And you have more time and more res- resources to stay in their artistic phase and development phase and, you know, stuff like that. Uh, I think that is a big challenge because if we want, like, the art and theater, specifically to be for the wider, like, audience for all people. We have to, like, lower the entry point. And we have to create, like, you know, connect with people where they are. And there's something in that like financial structures that doesn't always add up. We always have to think like, be creative, but how we do things, to be able to, yeah. And I think, because if we look at context history, C:NTACT is, one of the few, and maybe also, the only one in theater in Denmark that have made it, like, uh, that have made it, like, uh, the, the sole purpose is the personal stories from, you know, um, uh, non-educated people, like real people. And that have, you know, um, how do you say, I think, I think we are just, because a lot of people may, uh, uh, maybe other theaters do that, but it's, then it's a project. Then maybe you bring in some, or you, uh, do their

artistic, uh, like research based on some people, but then you have actual actors on stage. This is the only theater that has real people on stage and in every project that we do. And I think when we look at C:NTACT history, we are, this year, it's our 20th anniversary. Some of their early projects was, um, if we count them, it's, what is it, 20, 23, 24 years old. But when we look at, like, in theater and on TV, in Danish here on TV, most of the, uh, especially ethnic minority actors, males, they came from C:NTACT. They were here as young teenagers. When they didn't know that theater or acting or film or TV, instruction, whatever, was, when they didn't know that could be something they could be a part of. They were here as like storytellers, it sparked something, and a lot of them went on and became professionals. And they are, like, you see them in every big shows now, in every big theater stages. They are there, so it speaks something, I think, that is very important on, um, how, uh, what are the actual effects of of doing the type of work that we do and how it keeps on giving to the, you know, to the Danish society, to the art, to the, yeah. And yeah, so, so, and I think that is, um, I think just to say that C:NTACT has, we have proven that this type of work is really important. And some of them have went on to become like professional art people in one way or another, like big, uh, uh, film instructors and actresses and stuff like that. A lot of them have become also big, just not within art. You know? And went on to take an education, went on to, you know, um, gain more confidence, uh, yeah, take education when they thought they couldn't do that, different, just create their own businesses and stuff like that. And I think the work from here, that they were a part of was, is a big part of their personal development.

Has theatre helped you develop social connections? How and how much?

Well, but absolutely. Um, I think, um, the way that, uh, for instance, here, a C:NTACT, a lot of us that have been a part of, uh, like the second theater here, like project managers, instructors, in soemwhat, we're just, it feels like sometimes a big family. We're always connected in some ways and even like last week I met someone who was a part of C:NTACT in the very early stages, one of the first like project managers. And the way she still speaks about C:NTACT, I think it says something about the impact that it does both on us, that work here, but also the impact it has on just everyone who's a part of different projects and whether you are an instructor or a dancer, the participants, the storytellers, you know? It has like it's, it's, It's like a very meaningful way of connecting with people and being able to connect and impact other people. And I think that is, no matter where in the, like, ecosystem of C:NTACT, you are a part of. And so yeah, absolutely.

Do you think theatre has been inclusive in your experience? If not, what barriers exist?

I think I'm happy I found this place because I don't think theater in general, at least in Denmark, I can't speak of other [places], it's not very inclusive. Um, I think, uh, I think there is a lot of barriers. There is, for many years, for instance, if we take like, like, um, uh, children and youth theater, for many years, and I think still, just, just, to some degree, uh, maybe a lot of, so, it's, we have this idea that, um, we need to, like, there's this big us in them, it's just, that's also how this society just in general work. We all say we're all

equal, but we're not. There's a lot of systemic and structural institutional like barriers and discrimination. And that, like, hmm, that also impacts on the way we look at art, I think, and theater. So for many years, it's, and it still is, to this day, like, we create something and then we bring it to them, like the, the ones who doesn't, who are not a, who are not like normal theater goers. And we think that by bringing some I don't know, some play into a school for one hour, you know, that would make people interested when they grow up in theater. That's just not how it works. Um, so I think there's, there's a big barrier that is both, um, it comes to how how we think, how we engage with people. Uh, that are not like normal theater goers. Uh, I think we lack knowledge on, um, what it actually requires to give people the opportunity to become theater goers and not only goers, but also creators of art. And I think it has to be, like, meaningful, um, connections you do. But, uh, but I, but that requires like strong, like, ethical methods and strong um, knowledge of, like, you know, the power dynamics and stuff like that. And a lot of people do not have that, so often, I remember that growing up, people are calling, yeah, I'll just do this, man, and that, but I always feel like it's their project more than it becomes the ones they're trying to do something with. Um, so I think there is, it's both like, uh, it's like a cultural barriers, there are, for some, it's a language barrier, but not necessarily, for other people, it can be, um, also economical barriers. And I feel we often have, when we speak on how to gain, I don't know, for many years now, it has been, ooh, we need to have a more diverse audience. And you try to figure out how to get more diverse people into, like, um, uh, to become audiences. And we think that they are not out there, but we, they are out there, we just don't come to something that is, that doesn't, um, are meaningful to us, you know? So, and I've tried it a few times that whenever there has been, like, a large, for instance, here, we have, like, on Friday, we had different three shows with ninth graders from a multicultural school that we working with for two weeks. And of course, they do the shows for their parents and their friends and for the rest of the school, but we also have like a show that was open to the public and it's very diverse. People's school that seek it because what we have on stage is a diverse people. So I think you attract what you, not only what you show, but also the values you, um, yeah, you show. Um, I, yeah. So I think there's a lot of barriers, and mostly because the, the, the diversity, um, work at theaters are so very low. So even, and sometimes even when you try to do, I have seen some place where I thought, okay, this is, this speaks to me, and then I come and it's like, oh my god, that is extremely um problematic what they're showing or what they're saying. And so, I think, yeah, there are a lot of barriers.

We are sure that the theater can socially grow people whether we are spectators or they decide to participate actively in the creation of live shows: what do you think? What skills do you think of?

I agree completely. Completely because I believe that, theaters are, um, the work that we do here, at C:NTACT, it builds, it builds, like relations, it builds confidence, empathy, mm, it helps the participants develop like both like emotional awareness, communication skills. Um, also for the audience, I think it, it, it, because we insist on the dialogue, uh, with the storytellers, I also, it, it, it does straighten their, like, um, reflections, and it, uh, what do you say? Like it, it, it, I'm going for the word, expands like their perspectives,

they gain new knowledge, they, they become, in Danish, we say, um, they gain a, what is it, in English? In Danish we say, 'følelsesmæssigt forståelse', which means you gain like an emotional, um, not perspective, like understanding of other people. So you might not have experienced or lived through whatever they're telling, but you gain like an emotional um understanding of who they are and how they became who they are. Which expands your own, like, look on yourself and the, uh, us as a society and yeah. So absolutely. Yeah, both yourself and other people.

Do you have any advice also to engage more people?

Mm hmm. I think, um... I think it's... uh, it's important how we, how we think of our projects and it's very important that we reflect on who are the people carrying it out and what is the purpose? And also, you have to think, like, uh, outside the box, I do have to go out and connect with people, for instance, we know that, um, now with this project, with fathers and sons. And I know that I can't just put up a, a, um, like a, like a, what is it, like an open call on social media, because, most likely, the ones I'm looking for will not, like, see that and and, uh, and take contact. So I, so, what I have to do is, I have, like, partners that work with the, uh, persons, the, the participants I'm looking for, they become our partners. And it's just because I know that what we do here is not relevant to them yet. So we have to have someone who connect, who can bridge the distance. And also, I know that, uh, we have to start where they are, so, for instance, I have uh, one of the partners in this project, uh, is a organization called um, Baba, 'Fordi far er vigtig', which means Baba, because uh, 'fathers are important', an organization that works with ethnic minority fathers. And I know that for the first two or three weeks, we have to be where they are because the fathers, they have a huge connection to this group. And do a lot of like workshops and different like projects with them, so we have to start there. Build up relations and relations take time. And then we're, they know us, get to know us and met us, and it feels comfortable and safe. Then we can say, hey, let's go see our theater and, you know, and introduce it little by little. But I think relations take time. And also, I think, uh, yeah, and I really mean it when we say that when I say that, um, you have to think of, who are the ones carrying out the project? Onward. And, um, do you reflect, uh, society? Are you a diverse group of like staff? Um, because if you're not, then the chances are, uh, of, you know, reproducing barriers for the way you think or speak or are becomes bigger. The really thing it's important to, yeah, look inwards first.

Are you worried about technology and AI impact on the entertainment industry?

Hmm. Um, good question. I'm not, I don't think I'm... yet worried, worried, but I think it's because I think there is... What do you say, it? I think I see it as tools, but we have to be very aware of how we use it as tools. I don't think like the technology or AI can ever replace like people, relations and stuff like that, but if we are aware and can use it as tools to, you know, um, in in the work that we do and also know that what is what can it be helpful for and what can it absolutely not? Because it can replace people. Then I think it's, it could be like, just another tool. But if not, and if we use it thinking it can replace people, then I think we're screwed. Sorry. I think for also for us, because many years ago, I did a project that was targeted parents. Uh, there was about, um, how to become

more like, uh, aware of what their children do and connect with. So me and, you know, internet and stuff like that. And it was a part of a project that was, um, like early, huh, what is it? Early, um... uh, the early work you do to... oh my god, the word, mm, prevention. That's the word. Yes. It was a like a early provincial work, uh, uh, a provincial of eradication. And like early prevention in the way we were part of the project was helping parents understand how they can, um, uh, you know, understand what their kids are doing online and what they're will meet online. Um, so we have like a forum, uh, theater, play connected to that, and some different like, like theater based, um, oh, Jesus, sorry, like different tools to make them reflect, you know, the parents. Um, so I think, I'm more curious on how we as people interact, when this, and the technology and AI, and, and more interest in creating space to, you know, learn and understand. What it is rather than just be like worried and don't want to who's that or anything? And I'm more like, hmm, we can use like theater to help us understand how it could be used so it's beneficial. Yeah, explore that I think we can use theater for that also.

Do you have a fun fact about theatre that you would like to share or Anything you would like to add about your experience with theatre?

I don't know, I don't know if it's a fun fact, but uh, already touching that, but I think like, um, it's not, I think, um... especially when I look at C:NTACT and also my own experience, instead when when that theatre became less theatre like, yeah, it became like relevant for more people. Um... I don't know if you can call that a fun fact, but I think that's what that's what the C:NTACT history tells us. And that's a lot of the people we work with here, um, from the artistic crew, also find a way into theater, but, uh, other ways than we usually create for people to become a part of it. So, mm, I just think that's a good thing to reflect on. Both, it's just when the arts get in general, and there's something when it becomes more like eye to eye connecting with people. It becomes something much more meaningful than we have that few selected people that are doing art for the people, you know? I think it's much more fun to create with people than for people.



Jeremy M. Thomas-Bøgsted

Nationality: American (Lived in Denmark for 15 years)

Age: 44

Gender: male

Highest finished education: MFA in Directing

Background:

How long have you done theatre?

Um, uh, since I was... since I was 15. I think, yeah. So it's been quite quite a many years.

What type of theatre do you work in?

*Um... I would say that I work mostly in text-based theater, but I actually have moved away from that a lot. I mean, I'm direct, I'm solely a director. I only direct. Um, but I also do stenography and I also do um, a little bit of dramaturgy. Um, yeah, it's very much the American system is with the director should also be able to do a lot of other things as well. Uh, and... so... I would say it's text-based theater. I would also say that I, my specific style is very immersive. I try to create a new experience every time people come in to see something, so it may also be being creative about the room and the visuals and how things work and where people sit, um, to what kind of experience are they coming into? I've done, um, I did a queer burlesque show, uh, that was called *The Disappeared*, where people were, um, basically coming into a nightclub and uh, experiencing the nightclub and the atmosphere of a nightclub. I've done a rave play on roller skates where there was a live DJ and the audience stood in the middle and danced to the music of the DJ while the actors roller skated around them. Um, I've done, uh, in, to Danish theater, um, this idea of food theater experience. It's not really dinner theater, but you have like a six course meal served normally by like a Michelin star chef in an immersive experience. So you're moving around to space with actors and performers, you're being told a story. I did a show called *Juliet's Birthday Bash*, which was basically, um, we were throwing a birthday party for Juliet from *Romeo and Juliet*, and it was Juliet's birthday. That's where in the original Shakespeare story, she meets Romeo for the first time. Um, and the lock guy is across the room. So we did a four hour theater experience throwing her a birthday party where she meets Romeo as a part of the birthday party. So, that, and, you know, and that had like a, we basically walked around the, um, one of the castle spaces up in *Elsinor*. And then we had this Michelin star chef that was, that was creating visual and taste experiences throughout the, throughout the evening. Um... So, I say that I, I, traditionally, I'm trained as a text-based theater person, but my, my theater has changed a lot since I've come to, to Europe.*

Are you currently working in the theatre industry?

Uh, yes, but not full-time as a director, because I, having H2O as a, as a company that I run now, I'm full-time there. And then I direct one or two shows a year on the side.

Main Interview:

What role do you play in theatre and why did you start doing theatre?

Um, I am primarily a director. However, the different theater experiences I create also mean that I'm often writing my own scripts and or what devising a script, putting pieces together based off about them stories. Um, and I'm often the set designer because the physical movement through the space becomes so important to the way in which I tell story. Um, so I'm trying to, so I usually incorporate set design myself into, into the story making. Um, I also, I, a lot of the theater that I do in Denmark is also based on bringing

because I work both in the English language, but also in the Danish language side. On the Danish language side, I work a lot with, um, Danish poets and getting their work presented on stage. So, um, working with the poetry of rhythm and language and how Danish language is very different than English, um, especially American English. Um, and how we um, can find poetic moments through language. Uh, but it's it's just a very different style technique because, as you know, there's not as many words in the Danish language or not as flowery with the language, there's just a very different structure to how, um, language works, and I'm very excited by that. So I have a very strong focus on also creating poetry for stage, um, the, which we call spoken word, theater, if we need a, uh, system for it. Um, I started when I was fifteen, I started by being a part of the theater in the US, you have sort of a tradition of community-based theater where every theater, every small little city has its own theater. Um, and you have communities, uh, very similar, I'd like to Copenhagen Theater Circle [CTC], where you, um, it's people who have day jobs, it's usually amateur, but there's like, it's a way for people to explore the funness of building community and building, um, and do it by working on a show together. Um, and I did, I think, 30 shows between the ages of fifteen and eighteen as an actor. Um, I started out as an actor in the community theater. And then I fell in love with directing. Um, and then I've never turned back. So since I was eighteen, I've only stood on stage once or twice, but most of the time I've been a director since I was since I was eighteen. And we have it in the school, which is very different than in Denmark. We have, uh, in the US, the system is built so that you have, um, most of your extracurricular activities are a part of your pro- of your daily school life. Um, so, you know, we take acting classes as, as a part of our, you know, curriculum, and then you join the acting club, and then you, you know, you put on three or four big shows a year as part of the school, but then if you're in the acting club, you're also using the same theater that the community theaters using- so you're part of that. And the theaters there, I mean, my, the theater that I grew up in was like 600 seat house, um, So, so it was a huge theater, uh, compared to like that's, you know, that's the size of some of the major theaters in Denmark are 600 seats, uh, not much bigger than that. So I was doing my early training in theaters that are just gigantic compared to what we have out of Denmark. Um, and then I, uh, was offered an opportunity to direct through the school. Oh, because one they had a little bit like the CTC does this fringe festival, um, the school would do a one act festival where then the students would get to direct and do the set design, do light design, and stuff themselves. Um, and so then I started directing through that. And then I got a scholarship to go to an acting training school, and then I got another scholarship to go to a director training school. And then I got a master's program, so I haven't had to pay for any education because it's all been paid for through scholarships and stuff. Um, But yeah, but I've been I've been directing since I was eighteen, so almost 30 years now. That's incredible. Yeah, almost 20 years.

Is there a part of the creative process you prefer?

I love the the creating part of the process. I stopped acting because I really don't like the recreating part, like the standing on stage and having to relive the same moment every night is not interesting for me. Um, I have a puzzle brain, so I, I see theater as one giant

3D puzzle. Um, and I, I enjoy looking at the stage and putting the pieces together and seeing, okay, if the light hits like that, then it creates this image and if people move this way through the space, it creates this image and um, and then, you know, you're adding food on top of that or you're adding roller skates on top of that or like then you're just developing this puzzle that's just larger and larger and larger. So for me, the creating part of building that puzzle is really, really interesting. Um, the doing it again and again every night is less interesting. So I like to I like to get to premiere and then be like, okay, now it's no longer mine. It's somebody else's- can take it over from here.

What are the main difficulties you have had to face in theatre and what do you think you've learned from it?

Yeah, um, I mean, in my personal life, uh, it gave me a lot of community and it gave me a lot of strength to be who I am and be what I want to be uh, outside of, you know, my family and the life that I grew up in. Um, I... I think the hard part of coming to Denmark was that it, that, because the theater industry is so network-based, that coming to a new country, I didn't have a network. I didn't have a history. I didn't grow up in a community theater with these people. Um, nobody knew who I was or what I had done, and nobody was, uh, interested in finding out what my CV had to say or, um, you know, what prestigious schools I went to in the US or things like that. Um, so it was really, really hard to break into the Danish theater scene. Um, I was lucky that the Danish society at that point in time when I first moved here had a, uh, a job placement program where for the first two years, because I was married to a Dane, that they would, um, they would hire the theater to hire me. It's a concept of like a 'luntaskole', but it's actually that you could do the 'luntaskole' for a full year, so you could, um, so that I cost nothing to the theater. So the theater could hire me for a year. I started out, you know, I have an MFA, I have a seven years of education from the US. I've been working in theaters since I was fifteen. Um, and I thought I could just walk into any theater and show them my CV and get a job. And that just did not happen. So, um, so I started working in, as like a painter carpenter for, uh, for Huselstaten, huh, um, and then, and I also, at the same point in time, I was very much, it was expressed to me that if I ever wanted to work professionally in a Danish theater, I had to speak Danish. And I had to speak Danish better than most Danes or else they would, why would they not just go with the Danish person that they knew could speak the language? Um, so I spent those first two years also doing nothing but learning the language, and I very quickly stopped speaking English and only spoke Danish. Um, because that was a necessity to learn the language. I just felt I'm working in a dangerous system. I want people to know that I speak Danish, I need need to speak Danish. Um, and I went quickly from being the painter carpenter to being the assistant, dramaturg for the theater. So then I moved to another theater because you could only be at one space for one full year at a time. So then I moved to a another theater and I became the assistant artistic director, um, slash assistant to the producer. And, um, and that then from there, then I created a large network of people. Still, nobody wanted to hire me as a director. Because if you weren't trained from the Danish theater school and they weren't interested in hiring you, um, for the work. So, I then, uh, um, went back to my roots and found Copenhagen Theater Circle, and then I did three shows for them

where I was just like, I just need to get my name out there. I just need some reviews. I need some people to know who I am and what I'm doing. Um, and so I was lucky to be able to do some shows where I got, you know, some five and five and six star reviews, which was really great. Um, and then from there, I was like, okay, now I'm gonna, I still though wasn't getting any interest from from other people. Um, so then I started my own theater company, and that's when I started Down The Rabbit Hole Theater in 2016. Um, and I have a Danish theater called Tablegrundlægning, and then I have Down The Rabbit Hole Theate, and then I just started producing as much work as I possibly could myself and getting it out there and really developing is what I could, I still, to this day, don't get calls from people or like, hey, I've got a show I like you to direct it. It's still very much a network-based theater, and if you're not in the Danish network, then they don't know who you are and they're not likely to call you. Um, so even though I've done some work in the Danish theater, I it's still mostly stuff that I've self-produced or stuff that I've created co-production with a product professional company or things like that. Um, I think the other big hard thing in the Danish theater that I did not realize coming from the American system is that to be an artist in Denmark, you also have to be really good at administration. You have to be really fundgood at fundraising. You have to be um, you have to be able to do it all. You have to be a sociable person who everybody wants to hang out with. Everybody wants to be around to parties, but you also need to spend 60, 80 hours a week writing grant applications. And then when you get the money from a grant application, you also then have a huge administration because they want you to do a bunch of reports and want you to, you know, do follow-ups on it. And then the Danish system has a lot of bureaucracy built into it, so there's always these status tique things that you have to constantly do all the time. And so there's a lot of, there's a lot of things outside of being an artist that's required for you to even just get the money to do what you want to do. And that ends up taking up a lot more time and filling up a lot more space than just being an artist. So I think if you're unfortunately in the Danish system, if you're not good at doing everything, then you have a really hard time. Because there's you either then need to collaborate with other people who can do those things for you. Um, but then that's just more mouths to feed. It's more salaries you have to find somewhere, it's a larger budget that you have because now I have to pay for five people and myself. Um, you know, so it's, it's just sort of, it's sort of incremental, like grows, the more that, the more you have to have funding, the more funding you need to pay for the people, to apply for the funding, to, you know, it becomes a bureaucratic nightmare. But So I think network and then what's expected for me as an artist are sort of the do biggest challenges in the Danish system.

Has theatre helped you develop social connections? How and how much?

Yeah, I mean, I would say the majority of my friend base in Denmark are people that I know from the theater. Um, I know some from like some meetup groups and things like that that I've also partaken in. But I would say the community that's built in going to an organization like Copenhagen Theater Circle, or, um, or, because I'm actually, I am now actually a part of the Danish theater community. I go to, you know, the yearly meetings and things like that I've sat on the board of the Danish Directors Union, as the vice chair,

so I built a network around the theater artist community but I don't think I would have elsewhere. I mean, I'm married and I have some friends that I know through my spouse, but, um, but most most of the people that I have a community with other people that I've, I know from the theater. It's also a tough relationship to have, though, because it's a working relationship and it's, you know, it's I'm also, because I'm the director, because I'm an artistic director, because I'm the one that gets the funding and can hire people. I'm also in position quite often to to either hire or fire people. And I think then that creates a sort of loneliness circle, which we talk a lot about in the theater community, because you don't know if your friends are your friends because they like you or because they just want a job or an opportunity or, you know, they're looking to be hired for that next casting gig or something like that, right? Um, to you're often in this like, you know, it's kind of lonely at the top, as they say, because you never really know what that friendship is has defined us. But we're also artists, so we're also very honest with each other and we're also, you know, very, um, open, I think, in a lot of ways, that it doesn't have to be because is like, I'm the boss, you're the employee. You know, a lot of those are broken down in different ways and they would be like in a corporate job. So I think that's also, um, so there's some good parts and some bad parts to it, but yeah.

Do you think theatre has been inclusive in your experience? If not, what barriers exist?

Yeah, inclusivity. Um, I think that's a really, really tough question. Uh, it's because I am an out gay man and I, um, have found that I was much more welcome and included in the in the theater community than I've been anywhere else. I worked with a lot of trans actors and I've, um, I feel, I can't speak on their behalf, but, um, yeah, it's been a long, a lot, a lot big discussion about how do we include and how do we make sure that they have a space and going their stories. I've also been the head of Copenhagen queer theater festival where we had a huge focus on, um, what are the stories that we are not telling? Like, where's the asexual storytelling? Whereas the bisexual storytelling, whereas the where's the stories from people whose voices we don't hear other places? And I think we're really, as a community, we're really good about asking those questions. Like, how do we how do we tell more and more stories, um, how do we how do we include people in that? We, I do think we're often telling one-sided stories. I find more and less the older and older I get, I find that most of the stories are sort of, of course I have this opinion. Um, and we've become less good about bringing up debate and having sort of an intellectual conversation about something. It's, especially in Denmark, it's starting to become slowly, more and more like the American system, which is much more feelings based, uh, theater than, um, Berlin, which is, you know, very much about like, let's just explode it all and knock it down and build it back up differently. So I think there's an interesting debate I'm seeing right now happening about why are we telling the stories that we're telling? And, you know, do you have to be transgender to tell a transgender story? Do you have to be black to tell a black story? Like things like that I think are really interesting debate that we're creating. Um, but we often come from this opinion of, of course it is, because everybody believes that way, and so there's this sort of, um, uh, obviousness, which I think can also sometimes lead to pride and can lead to us closing off and not not actually hearing stories. I mean, I think you look at like what's

happening in American politics right now and it's clear that there's a huge portion of the American population that doesn't feel that their stories were being heard, um, or that they, their voices were being heard. And I think that that can lead to to sort of a conflict, right? Like, so I think that's that, in a way, tells me that we're not being as inclusive as we possibly could be. Um, kind of like we circle around and then we stop being inclusive again because we're becoming too inclusive, but I don't know how that really works, but I do think that there's, there's an interesting dilemma happening right now about like, why are we telling the stories we're telling and who's who has the right to tell stories and things like that that I think are complicated questions to have. Um, there's also a huge problem about inclusivity as far as who has access to come to theater. Um, I think that's the other debate, I hear inclusivity, because, uh, does a theater have wheelchair access is one thing. Does the theater also have stories in English? That's another thing. Right? Does a theater also have stories in Ukrainian or German or, um, or, you know, the Hindu or, like, there's so many different ways in which that question could be opened and turned and twisted. Um, And like we just tried to recently do a show in Polish. Um, and there's a huge Polish community in Copenhagen. Nobody showed up for it. Even though we did a lot of specific outreach to the Polish community. And we were, um, we were collaborating with the Polish embassy and all these things. Nobody came out for it. And I think a lot of that's also because they just don't know. Like, they don't know that it's for them or they don't know what it is or, um, if you haven't gone to the theater in 10 years, Are you missing it? Are you not missing it? Is there, do you have the access? Do you have that idea, like, I'm just gonna show up to something because it's in English or am I, am I, you know, am I at all interested in theaters? So I think there's there's also a really interesting question happening right now about, um, who has access to theater. And is theater just for rich white people or is it for everybody? And Even if you're a rich white person, do you even go to the theater anymore or not go to the theater? So I think I think there's some interesting questions there as well. Yeah. I think, I mean, as far there are a lot more theaters that have theater in English now. They're a lot more. Um, there's, uh, then when I came 15 years ago, that has changed dramatically. And the fact that, um, some of the small store, uh, the small municipality theaters in Copenhagen, are also showcasing English language work now is a big change that was not happening 5 years ago. Um, so, uh, I think a lot of that's been the pressure that a smaller theater companies have been putting on the bigger companies where we're like, see, there's a whole community out here, people who speak English and show up to English language theater. Why are you not programming for them? Then the other side is, do they actually show up when you create programming? Do they actually show up? And so I think there's a there's a challenge on both sides then.

We are sure that the theater can socially grow people whether we are spectators or they decide to participate actively in the creation of live shows: what do you think? What skills do you think of?

I would say I agree with that. Um. I mean, I've seen some pretty bad theater in my time. I've seen some shows where I'm like, hmm, did I actually get anything out of that? Was that actually something worth my time in energy? Um, I think anything that brings us

together is going to, uh, is going to create a conversation, mmm-hmm, gonna take time together. I mean, I think just being in a room with other people is valuable, instead of just sitting at home on Netflix, I think it's, you know, good to be in a space with a community of people. Um, I think any skills that are needed to make that statement true? I mean, I think we're often... we try to do an H2O -I am not sure have hit that sweet spot yet, but we definitely have an idea about focusing on it. Um, but, I don't know if it's necessarily enough just to show up, um, and participate. Um, I think there's a lot larger questions about why are people showing up? What is it they want to get out of it? Is it just an evening with some friends to see something for fun? Or is it something that, um, and that can, you know, you can go and see something for fun that can change your life and have a meaningful impact on who you are. Um, or is it that they're, they're trying to build a community? I think, um, it's all the things that happen around the theater that are actually the more...that are just as equally important. What do people see when they arrive? What do they experience in the break? What kind of conversations do they have when they leave? Um, do they, do they want to go out and tell other people about it and say, oh, that was such a great show, you really should go in and see it because I really did this for me, right? Like creating those kind of experiences for people, um, is a special talent, but I think doesn't just have, if you show up, you will then have your life change. I think there's, there's a whole part of everything around the show that makes me want to show up, makes me want to engage, um, you know, the show makes me, either the show adheres to my own ideology, it makes me feel better about myself, or it pisses me off and makes me want to go out and have a conversation about why I pisses me off. Um, and having a facilitation around that, so that I feel like, I can leave the show and understand that, I am dealing with my own internal challenges, and that it's not that the show is bad, just because I don't disagree with it, but that, the show can still be really good show, but I can have an opinion that I don't, I don't, I don't agree with the premise of the show. And those kinds of things are things that need to be well facilitated in the process of creating a piece of theater.

Do you have any advice also to engage more people?

I wish I did. Oh, I have sold out houses every night (jokingly). Um, I don't know. I think I'm being completely honest here, I think sometimes it's also quite frustrating, you know, because we have we have this build it and they will come kind of mentality around the theater really often. Um, and I also hear a lot of expats complain about, oh, there's never any culture for me. There's never any theater for me. There's nothing going on like, there's so much happening. There's so much happening all the time. Um, are you paying attention to it? Like are you out there looking for it? Is it, is it, you know, um, and even when we like write to companies and offer discount tickets and things like that so they can give them to the employees. We just, you know, you hit a wall. There's like this constants sort of wall. Um, so I don't know what that solution is. I think there's, I think, I think the city needs to be better at, um, there's a lot of talk about cultural tourism right now, and I think the city needs to be better about explaining what they have on offer. Um, I think the, uh, I think there needs to be other kinds of collaborations. I think that needs to be um, like if Wonderful Copenhagen had, you know, some sort of like, here

are all the cultural events you can go to while you're in the city. Not just Tivoli and you know, backstage with the Royal Theater. But here also the things we have in English for English programming. Um, is, you know, the International House had, um, had that every time that a foreigner comes into the city, they're offered two tickets to go see a show at the local theater or, you know, there's like different ways of building a connection. And oftentimes I find that even if we reach out as a cultural institution, those places are not, they don't see the benefit in it from their side. Um, so it's hard to create a collaboration if they don't if they don't want to partake in that collaboration. Um, so I think also companies, like, hey, you have 90% of your employees are English language. You should be creating things where they can go see that work. Um, but then there's also, you know, they, they could also be looking at it from a different perspective and saying, uh, Nov Nordisk makes a lot of money every year. It would cost them nothing to put a little bit of money into an actor cultural institution that could be of a benefit to their employees, and then they could then, you know, get free tickets for their employees or something to that cultural institution. I mean, there's ways to create a collaboration around stuff that would benefit both the organization as an external organization and the companies that are here. Um, but it's not for a lack of trying, I think. We've experienced that we have tried that and that we often don't get a positive response back from the cultural organization. So I think there's also needs to be a change in ideology about the fact that, oh, by the way, there is 70,000 foreigners living in Copenhagen. Do you want a positive city environment for those people or not? Do you want to attract international business? Do you want people to move here with their families? If so, what are their families going to do while they're at work? Those kinds of things are conversations that we keep having and keep having and keep happening. I mean, we're getting a new cultural minister I , I, I hope, I hope he's uh, he's as engaged as I believe he is, we'll see.

Are you worried about technology and AI impact on the entertainment industry?

No, no, no, no, not at all. Um, no, I mean, they've only shown that that AI produces really bad theater. So I don't think that they, that, that we are, you know, um, are going to be run out. I, I have a strong belief that, um, that theater will survive because we as people, I think Corona showed this very much as well, we as people need engagement with each other on like a regular basis. Also just giving each other hugs or physical contact, physical touch. We need to, um, our bodies crave being around other human beings, and um, that, um, when you, you know, you see how much like television is now just pumping out AI driven scripts and things like that, and it just, it makes me not want to sit at home and watch Netflix. I want to go out and see people. I want to go and be around other people. If we don't see that, then we would get lonely, right? Like we would get lonely not being around with other people. I think, um, the more AI becomes immersive into our culture, the more loneliness becomes, uh, will spike, the more people are going to need to engage in things like live theater to counteract that loneliness. But it's also why it's so important to them that we have ways for people to meet, talk, communicate, share their moment together, um, that it's not just coming into a theater space and leaving again, but coming into a theater space, seeing the show and then talking about it or getting a drink with friends or, you know, having a community engagement about it, so

it doesn't just become a new Netflix where you're just flipping through the channel. So what's the next thing that's going to come on?

Do you have a fun fact about theatre that you would like to share or Anything you would like to add about your experience with theatre?

Um, I don't know. I don't think I have any fun facts about theater. Um, no. I think I've shared everything that I want to, I have to share. If I can add something....for a while to include, um, uh, live translation, stuff in the theater, and a lot of the theaters got really frustrated about it, and they tried to contact, um, uh, people like me and say, why am I not, like, I'm offering, again, we build it and they don't come kind of a thing - I'm offering a translation of this work, it's cost me a lot of money to get this translated and now um and we have, you know, an iPad, people can come, they can see they can read the play on the iPad while they're hearing it on stage. Why are people not showing up? And um and I think again it goes back to the whole like look the community is where you're getting people from. Right? Um, I've spent 15 years going into Copenhagen Theater Circle, going into, you know, the different professional theater communities and building a network around it, so if I say, hey, I've got a show, it's a really good show, most likely 10 people are going to come see it because they're friends and the people that I've worked with and the people that trust me. Um, whereas if you just say, hey, we're gonna build this thing, and we expect people to just buy tickets, that's not gonna happen. So the community engagement is so incredibly important in that. And then I don't know if you know Applause, if you know about Applause. Um, they are hired by the Danish government to be a, um, a networking space for creating data analysis and doing, um, training on, uh, how to get more people into the theater and they do yearly sort of, um, uh, like, they send out, um, question questionnaires out to theater goers and then they sort of gather that information into what are the theater trends that are happening right now and how do we how do we move on that? Um, and then they'll do classes on, uh, like, how do you get better outreach to school groups or how do you get better outreach to internationally or things like that? Um, which sounds very much in line with what you're doing right now. So I would also just encourage you to look at them, applause.dk, and, um, you may want to check in with them or, um, say hi, hear what they think about stuff as well because they're they're a really good organization based off of doing exactly network that you're talking about.