

Interviewee Name: Roz Hervey

Interviewer Name: Jung Yoon

Date of Interview: 19th of August 2022

Location: Restless Dance Theatre studio

Length of Interview: 7:40 minutes

Transcript

Jung: -Can you tell us a little bit about yourself, including your-name, where you're from? And you know, as experience of being as an artist and then creative director.

Roz: My name is Roz Hervey. I'm currently the creative producer of Restless Dance. In my previous artistic life, I was a dancer and I worked around Australia and in the UK working in a range of dance theatre styles and so I guess that is my passion, creating exceptional dance theatre. When I came back to Adelaide - I'm originally from Adelaide, there were no other companies here that were creating the type of dance theatre that I was interested in, except for Restless [Dance Theatre]. So Restless makes work by asking the dancers specific tasks and the tasks inform the work. So, the work is very personal. It's very reflective of the people who are performing it. That excites me. So, when I came back to Adelaide to raise my family, I started to connect with Restless. I have been an outside eye on works that were like 15 years ago, I would sit in the room and give feedback to the directors. I've been a board member during the directorships here. I have actually been an artistic manager. While they were searching for Michelle and then once Michelle took over as the artistic director, we chatted, and we really wanted to work together. Both Michelle and I had worked with choreographer Merryl Tankard, and so we have very similar aesthetics, creative ideas, and we were really excited to work together - Michelle in the role of artistic director, myself in the role as more of a creative producer. I guess that's my history through Restless. The disability arts is an interesting one because I don't.... to me the performers at Restless, I love them for their authenticity, for their rich, raw storytelling that I think makes audiences think, contemplate their own judgments. So I guess I lost track there.

Jung: How was your experience being in this disability sector?

Roz: Yeah, so yes so I don't see the artists as disabled. That's where I wanted to.....I'd like.... to me they're amazing artists on stage telling their unique stories. So, I would prefer to get rid of labels, not put people in boxes, not talk about the disability arts sector. It's an art sector and it reflects diversity. It's about all artists having their rich stories to tell.

Jung: Do you think art and disability, no just the in general art - should it be a political or should be changing peoples - how they think or how they act?

Roz: I would really hope that it changes the way people think and act. I think art has a great way of doing that whether we watch film, read books, you know TV, theatre, dance, work. Hopefully all of those experiences help us as an audience to reflect on society and think about how we might change the way we respond in society and how we might respect others.

Jung: How would you define the success in the context of disability art or in the context of Restless Dance?

Roz: The success?

Jung: How would you define?

Roz: The success for an audience?

Jung: No like when you're creating a project at Restless, how would you define what's a major moment for the success of the project?

Roz: Hmm... I think the major success has been presenting work that highlights diversity on stage, that shows these beautiful dancers and their personal stories in unique ways. So, whether we're in a theatre, a bowling alley, an art gallery, a hotel, it's placing the dancers in different environments and enables the audience to see them in a variety of different ways.

Jung: So as being a creative director - how long have you been at Restless Dance?

Roz: This will have been probably in the role of creative producer for the last four or five years. Yeah.

Jung: Was there...Did you have any challenges or what was the best moment of your experience?

Roz: Oh, that's a tough one.

Jung: One of the challenges which you overcome and then any changes?

Roz: Is sort of the challenges of being in disability arts?

Jung: Yes, and also, how did you overcome or is that something you couldn't overcome?

Roz: I think the one thing I still have a problem with is when someone says, 'what do you do?' And I say, 'I'm a creative producer of a dance company that works with artists with and without disability'. And the first thing they say is, 'Oh, that's nice' and I go, 'why does it have to have that sort of connotation?' Because for me, I just, I do say they're artists with and without disability, but it's creating exceptional artwork and when people come and see the work, they go, 'Oh yeah, they're exceptional artists'. But I do find that the judgement that most people make, if they haven't seen the work, is, 'oh...', it's slightly patronising and that's what I want to change.

Jung: And then you still experience from the beginning when you started, still do you face that similar kind of challenges?

Roz: Yeah, I think so. It's slowly changing, but you know, there'll be comments like, 'Oh, so do the dancers get paid?' and you go, 'Yes, of course they get paid. They're artists.'

Jung: Very good point. So next question. You do answer all the questions so quickly. Is there anything else I need to know? Or we need to know as a public about you or your experience or about disability art or about Restless or artists in general?

Roz: Disability sector, I guess. Yeah. I would just love for the barriers and the labels to disappear and for artists and audiences to just see all artists on stage as great human beings who are telling original stories.

Jung: Great. Thank you very much.

Roz: Thank you.