

When the Arts Decree was first implemented it ignited a polemic about the future of the performing arts. This prompted the Vlaams Theater Instituut (VTi) to undertake a detailed field analysis. Since then practice and policy have brought us a long way. Thorny issues have been discussed in the VTi magazine *Courant* and at workshops.

Metamorphoses recapitulates statistical analyses from along this road, and, in a nutshell, shows how radically the production of performing arts in Flanders and Brussels has changed since the nineteen nineties. In 1993 the theatre company, with its relatively permanent team of contributors, was still the prototypical organisation. Today we are seeing more and more interdisciplinary production nuclei, which maintain casual relationships with freelance artists and co-producers at home and abroad.

'Everything changes, nothing perishes', Ovidius assured us. These metamorphoses are no reason to lament. But they do challenge performing artists, stage organisations and policy-makers to adjust and redefine their positions.

METAMORPHOSES * PERFORMING ARTS IN FLANDERS SINCE 1993

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PERFORMING ARTS IN FLANDERS SINCE 1993

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Preface

In 1987 *VTi* was born through the need to support and identify the ambitions of a new generation of artists in Flanders and Brussels; to document and investigate the context of this turbulent but artistically exceptional period; and to develop appropriate policy instruments for this burgeoning practice.

Twenty years on and the artistic and social context has radically changed. Initiatives that were played out on the fringes 'back then' we now see right at the centre. This must be due to a changing, intercultural society. Today the need to keep documenting, investigating and reflecting is just as relevant as it was then. For only in this way can we reach a better understanding of how the performing arts have evolved in Flanders, and where their strengths and painful areas lie.

In the spring of 2007 *VTi* presented two books as the culmination of long-term research trajectories. *Tracks. Artistieke praktijk in een diverse samenleving [Tracks. Artistic Practice in a Society of Diversity]* uses twenty intercultural stories from Flanders and Brussels to map out fascinating intercultural processes. The intercultural society is now a reality. Lots of people are seeking a new outlook, but it seems that there are no instant recipes for this. In this context it is important that valuable experience can be shared. *Tracks* sets out to make such a contribution. The book hopes to set intercultural trackers on the right path in an inspirational way.

The idea for *Metamorfose in podiumland [Metamorphosis in the Performing Arts Scene]* came about in 2005, when the Flemish Government made controversial decisions in the first round of the new Arts Decree. Our field analysis shows how radically the production of performing arts – and the policy developed by the Flemish community for this – has changed over decades

past. Its material will allow new position fixes for the sector and for the cultural policy.

We are now producing English language pocket books containing sizeable excerpts from *Tracks* and *Metamorfosen*. In the future we will open our research systematically in other languages. In December comes the English publication of the dance master plan - which *VTi* developed with help from the sector - the blueprint for an integrated dance policy for Flanders and Brussels. This is because 'metamorphoses' and interculturalisation are not confined to performing arts within the borders of Belgium. *Tracks* and *Metamorphoses* expressly confirm the internationalisation and interculturalisation of the performing arts per se. This alerts us to the possibility of protectionist reflexes and defensive responses and opens the way to dialogue.

These booklets are a tool which we are using to launch an international debate of our research results. We hope the experience we document in *Tracks* and *Metamorphoses* will prove inspirational to artists and cultural workers in other European countries. For, in all likelihood, these changes are not particular to Flanders and Brussels. In the world of the performing arts - an increasingly trans-national production domain - how do we deal with trends such as growth, individualisation, hybridisation, interculturalisation, and increasing international networking? Let us carry this talk beyond our country's borders, a subject raised expressly for discussion in both studies.

Ann Olaerts,
Director of Vlaams Theater Instituut
October 2007

When, in late July 2005, the Flemish Government announced its decisions under the first round of the Arts Decree, this started a debate over the future of the performing arts in Flanders. The Flemish minister for culture, Bert Anciaux (Spirit) spoke himself of a 'break in the trend'. Smaller structures based around a single artist were not to be funded. They were referred on to other grant regulations, and to cooperating with others. In his notes to the decision Anciaux referred to the possibilities of project grants and work bursaries, argued for affiliation to the 'larger platforms', and stressed the role of intermediary organisations such as arts centres. At the same time, the minister again called for cooperation in the sector to bring an end to what he saw as the 'wicked fragmentation of the landscape'.

Since then many voices from the Flemish and Brussels sector have raised question marks over policy choices. Not just about the role of the large houses and the room for individual artists, but also the role of the centre field, international activities, inflow and outflow, the demand for more cooperation, culture participation, and interculturalisation... It quickly became clear that there was a need for a better knowledge of the facts in the sector, a better understanding of certain mechanisms. Fuelled by this disquiet *Vlaams Theater Instituut (VTi)* started a detailed analysis of the field. With the help of interviews, debates and statistics we sought a picture of who occupies which role in the Flemish performing arts landscape, and of the opportunities and challenges for the future. The interim results were presented and discussed in *Courant*, and at colloquia and round-table conferences. In late July 2007 this two-year line of research culminated in a book,

Metamorphose in podiumland [Metamorphosis in the Performing Arts Scene]: an analysis of practical experience and performing arts policy in Flanders and Brussels in the international context. The emphasis lies on the challenges as they stand today, after the first round of the Arts Decree. What metamorphoses have taken place in the Flemish performing arts? How can policy be pitched to take advantage?

The publication you have in your hands contains a few excerpts from *Metamorphose in podiumland*. In the more quantitative analyses, we place the hot potatoes from the cultural-political debate of the performing arts in their historical perspective. Who has received structural funding for performing arts since 1975? Which way did the policy go? On the basis of the grants awarded we contemplate the policy choices of the Flemish ministries of culture between 1975 and 2007. We also look at what happened to the money in the period 1993-2005, when the Podiumkunsten-decreet [Performing Arts Decree] was in force. Thousands of productions were made, more than ten thousand artists went to work and hundreds of co-producers were sought at home and abroad... *VTi* has an extensive databank containing information on all of the above. An analysis of the production credits reveals that the way we produce performing arts has changed radically in the period from 1993 to 2005.

To start with, the performing arts scene has grown in size. There are more premières, made by many more organisations and a few more performing artists. Essentially, what the figures show in the end is that the way things are done on the performing arts scene has undergone a complete qualitative transformation in a short space of time. In 1993 the theatre company, with its relatively permanent team of contributors, was still the prototypical organisation. Today we are seeing more and more interdisciplinary production nuclei, which maintain casual relationships with freelance artists and co-producers at home and abroad.

The borders of the performing arts scene became osmotic. Today lots of international artists and organisations are involved in Flemish performing arts. Even the borders between the disciplines are blurring. Though we can still expect to see a lot in the way of real dance and theatre, fewer and fewer productions conform to the stereotype labels. Moreover, this blurring of the boundaries is not a feature of the performing arts alone, we are seeing all kinds of unexpected connections with other art forms and other sectors, such as wellness, education, media, tourism (*city marketing*)...

Fifteen years ago it was still easy to identify the inhabitants of the performing arts scene. Today it is much more of a *drive thru nation*. Half of those we see are transient passers-by, who stay for just one production. Although the core of 'permanent' stage producers is still there, it too occupies a different place in the sector than it did fifteen years ago. The house artist building a career in a single organisation is becoming more and more of an exception. Individual artists follow individual paths through a number of houses. They now seem to be emerging as the 'elementary particles' of the performing arts scene - the building blocks of production.

how many elephants can a snake swallow?

THE DECRETAL HISTORY OF THE FLEMISH PERFORMING ARTS SINCE 1975

Which stage producers received structural funding from the Flemish government in the 1975-2007 time span? There is a poster to accompany this article, entitled 'How many elephants can a snake swallow? The decretal history of the performing arts between 1975 and 2007'. The figures shown in the poster give a picture of the decretal history of the Flemish performing arts. Over a longish period we follow the individual trajectories of a number of companies in receipt of Flemish government support. One after another we have seen the Theatre Decree (1975-1993) come into effect, the Performing Arts Decree (1993-2005, including a significant review effective in the 2001-2005 period), and, finally, the Arts Decree (2006-). Our field analysis brings together all the statistics on structural funding for the first time.

AMOUNTS AND AVERAGES

A detailed table of funding history can be downloaded from our website (<http://www.vti.be/veldanalyse>). The graph in the poster shows the figures in a slightly different way. You can follow the grant stream from left to right, and changes of category and name are clearly indicated. Mergers and splits are also clearly shown. Organisations are grouped according to province and their order is based purely on aesthetic considerations.

The graph is less concerned with absolute figures and more with proportions that tell us something about the relative positions occupied by 120 or so stage organisations in the structural funding landscape of the last thirty years, and the changes that have taken place. Thus the graph does not show the grant as an actual amount, but as a proportion: how big a slice of the funding cake does each organisation get?

The width of the coloured lines is derived from the ratio of the grant amount for that year to the average. A grant of 1,000,000 Belgian francs against an average grant of 2,000,000 Belgian francs gives a ratio of 0.5. The coloured line would then be half the thickness of the annual average, which is always shown as a light grey bar. This ratio is also independent of inflation, the introduction of the euro, and the trend in the proverbial cost of living. The large graph therefore allows systematic comparison over the span of a good thirty years.

Throughout this history, relations between organisations, categories and regions have changed. Thinning and thickening lines – they look like snakes – represent not only gains and losses of economic capital (money), but also symbolic capital (prestige). It is a matter of funding and of recognition. Obviously, the size of the grant is indicative of prestige. But the amount of the grant is a hybrid value brought about by a variety of players on the basis of disparate criteria, which are prone to change over the years. All the complexity of the decision-making procedure plays a part, a combination of ministerial decisions based on *peer reviews*, against the background of artistic, business and social criteria... Furthermore, this procedure has changed over the years, and at the very least the breaking down of the barriers between artistic sub-disciplines should be recognised as an important factor.

DECRETAL HISTORY

The decretal history is not a story that applies to the whole of the performing arts scene. Commercial producers do not appear on the map, nor do the hundreds of foreign organisations shown later in this book to play a crucial role in the production of 'Flemish' performing arts. Furthermore, we get to see only a part of the 'Flemish subsidised sector'. Not just because Flemish project resources, lottery money and international credits are not counted, or because subsidies from lower authorities are not included in the graph; but because from 1975 to 2007, yearly and long-term grants were allocated to stage organisations *outside* the decrees named above. For a proper understanding of the figures it is a good idea to take this on board.

Quite a few other organisations were once given *nominatim* grants, due to their special status. This means that they were not funded under a decree or generic budget item, but they either are or were recorded under their own names in the Flemish cultural budget. Today this is the case only for Theater Stap (a professional theatre company embedded in a shelter for the disabled); in the past it was a more frequent occurrence. Troubleyn, for example, the organisation based around artistic jack-of-all-trades Jan Fabre, didn't receive funding under the Performing Arts Decree until 1997. Until 2006 the so-called 'big institutions' of the Flemish Community – such as the international arts centre deSingel (Antwerp), the Koninklijk Ballet van Vlaanderen... – received *nominatim* grants.

Alongside cases like this there are a few more 'structural exceptions'. For a number of reasons subsidy pots were sometimes created ad hoc. All in all, a clear trend emerges. Exceptional cases disappear and are brought in under the legislation. The government gathers signals from the field. But legislation is slow. This is why it is sometimes necessary to seek refuge in ad hoc regulations.

Quite early in the nineteen eighties the Theatre Decree came in for criticism because it could not adapt to the emergence of new, even internationally successful phenomena, i.e. the 'Flemish wave' in theatre, contemporary dance and multidisciplinary art that was produced and shown by arts centres, a type of organisation that developed as a means of channelling all the new tendencies and phenomena. In 1986 dance organisations became eligible to apply for project resources. In the same year a new item was included in the Flemish budget, 'receptive production centres'. In the end, but only in 1993, came the long awaited review of the law. Besides theatre, the Performing Arts Decree now funded dance, music theatre and arts centres. In addition to project funding there was now the possibility of long-term funding, which the graph makes plain. Following a review in 1999, festivals and regional centres also streamed in. In 2006 the Performing Arts Decree was replaced by the Arts Decree: a set of regulations for the various artistic disciplines and new art forms, such as social-artistic and art-education organisations.

To put it briefly: the material does not give the full picture of the histories of individual companies – starting or continuing as 'free' or non-decree funded producers, or as project groups. Most stage organisations come a very long way before they 'flow in', something which we show in the poster in a fairly sketchy way, by means of a year date and shaded line. At this level of the landscape the interesting previous history of sub-sectors and art forms [dance, music theatre, arts centres, social-artistic...] remains out of view. But the decretal history does allow us to reflect on lifecycles and tendencies on the performing arts scene.

Notes on the poster

1. continued as a musical department of KBW
2. 93-94 including funds from 'brusselse podia'
3. 75-76 merger with Leuven chamber theatre Toka and Brussels youth theatre De Kleine Komедie
4. before 93-94 productive/receptive operating funds
5. 06-07 structural funding but in the category of visual arts
6. 06-07 De Onderneming splits into Comp Marius and Lazarus, but only Comp Marius received structural funding
7. 04-05 splits into De Vieze Gasten (workshop for educational theatre) & Bij de vieze gasten (venue);
06-07 structural subsidies in the category of social-artistic work
8. 06-07 application submitted as bvba Walter Verdin
9. 06-07 Froe Froe is again an independent organisational structure after synergy with HETPALEIS
10. 08-09 merger of Victoria with Nieuwpoorttheater
11. 91-94 Collaboration with KNS without merger under the name 'Ensemble KNS - Raamtheater' [Walter Tillemans was director of both theatres]
12. 98-01 funded as different organisations
13. continued in the audiovisual arts
14. before 93-94 ad hoc funding
15. before 97-98 ad hoc funding
16. 96-97 continued as TiL2.3 and then Theater Het Klokhuis;
after 03-04 touring in the Netherlands under the name Vlaams Fruit;
04-05 Vlaams Fruit as Arts Centre
17. continued in the category of music as Off the Record
18. the dance festival existed from 1983 to 2006, but a separate organisation was set up in 1986
19. sub-project of Artforum since 1985, separate organisation since 2004
20. Kroontheater was set up in 1979 as a split off of Podium, which continued to exist as an amateur company
21. 06-07 joined workshop TOR

INTERPRETATIONS

Change of name

The graph can be read in two directions. Looking retrospectively you can see where organisations recognised today originate from. Looking forwards you can see what happened to the theatres of 1975. Many have disappeared, but a lot of snakes do manage to span the entire period in one way or another. In the end (only) three organisations complete the entire course under the same name: Theater Antigone (Kortrijk), Theater Malpertuis (Tielt) and KVS, the Brussels municipal theatre. There are also a great many mergers/splits, and there are changes of name, phenomena whose relation to each other is not coincidental. When an organisation changes its name it aims to make a new start. A break with the past calls for a new signboard.

At the same time, the significance of a change of name is relative. Sometimes a name change doesn't come until years after an internal restructuring or change of management. In terms of what they do, the KVS and Theater Antigone of 1975 are not comparable with the same organisations today. Theater Antigone has changed dramatically over the years: it evolved from a medium-sized, provincial theatre company into a multidisciplinary (co)production nucleus that works with young and experienced artists. The theatre is firmly established in the neighbourhood, district, city and province, but is less than ever a provincial company, the 'West Flanders professional theatre'. For that matter, internal renewal processes only appear insofar as the subsidiser has been willing to honour them.

It also seems that a change of name is not the only strategy for communicating a change in an organisation's identity. A theatre can be *re-branded* under the same name. In recent years, for example, given the rise of extreme right politics, KVS has debated

the importance of the 'V' in its name (Vlaams; Flemish) in its publications, discourses, and, more than ever, in the performances themselves. This led to the deliberate retention of the 'V'. In its own tradition KVS does not want to leave the discourse on Flemish identity and the Flemish movement in the hands of the extreme right, but to review it in an open and cosmopolitan manner.

Life cycle

Snakes are sometimes thin, sometimes fat. Organisations have moments of ascension and decline. Sometimes there are fickle fluctuations in the economy, and this was particularly the case at the time of the Theatre Decree, yet there is a frequently recurring pattern. It is strongly reminiscent of what the management literature has to say about the life cycle of the organisation. Differences between models aside, there is talk of a bell-shaped curve. And there are various phases within this. In broad terms: start-up, growth, maturity and decline/reorientation. It is all very much like the little prince's drawing in the tale by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry:



It looks like a hat, but it is actually – as we all know – a snake that has swallowed an elephant:



We see a similar pattern emerging in our graph, in all kinds of variants. There is a slow start-up phase, which, as we have said, is not part of the decretal history in most cases. As a general rule we note that in the initial years the Theatre and Performing

Arts Decrees were a significant catalyst for the organisations that flowed in. Most of the 'theatres of 1975' existed before the Theatre Decree. They had already been benefiting from government funding for several years, but under the new decree they saw their grants rise appreciably, sometimes more than doubling. There was talk here of collective growth, even explosive development. A few examples: KVS grew from almost ten million Belgian francs in 1970 to 27,884,814 Belgian francs in 1976. Theater Antigone grew from 395,000 Belgian francs in 1970 to almost four million Belgian francs in 1976.

After the decretal prehistory organisations usually flow in at a very modest rate. After time they acquire a bigger slice of the cake, and then see their share shrinking again. A few curves appear to embody this prototypical scenario nicely: the lines of Het Gevolg (Turnhout) for example, or the Brussels Kamertoneel or the Limburgs Projekttheater. Compare these lines and we see immediately that the process runs at different speeds. Some snakes do indeed swallow an elephant. But in other cases it looks more like a mouse (or another snake).

Where the theatres of the 1970s are concerned, we have examples of slow but sure growth, such as Victoria. Over the years there are also a few more spectacular success stories, characterised by a sudden increase in resources. In the late 1970s, early 1980s, for instance, MMT doubles its share of the cake. Striking: scenarios like this stop occurring for theatre companies that flow in after 1993. There is still a fair inflow into theatre, but Tg STAN aside, none flow through to a bigger than average size. Since then the best stories have been written in the new sub-sectors: in the larger arts centres, in dance and music theatre. Since then the decretal history has revealed a shift from a scripted theatre system to a diversified landscape, in which the role of the traditional company structure is waning and the importance of facilitators and intermediaries is waxing. This trend is borne out in the table

through the huge success of the arts centres category. To give just one indication of this growth: in 1993-1994 there were two arts centres with a larger than average slice of the cake. Today there are eight.

Through flow and diversification

With the introduction of the Performing Arts Decree the government allowed the arts centres, as well as dance and music theatre, a rather hesitant start. And there were a few bumps and bruises, as can be seen from the early exit of two music theatre companies. Clearly, it had been decided to give certain people opportunities and make adjustments along the way. The grant amounts in the new categories are very modest to start with, but there is a relatively vigorous expansion not long after.

As we have said, the start-up phase for these new sub-sectors lies outside the Theatre Decree, in the experimental regulations of the nineteen eighties. We have already pointed out that the spectacular growth seen in older theatre organisations (MMT, Blauwe Maandag Cie, Needcompany) is no longer a feature of the theatre organisations that have flowed in since 1993. This leads us to the remarkable conclusion that the most recent success stories in the development of structural funding for theatre date back to the time of the Flemish wave.

This finding could lead us to several conclusions: that there is something lacking in the through flow of the theatre generation after nineteen eighty, for example. This is certainly a matter for debate. It might be more accurate to suppose that anyone who wants to say something about the life cycle of the organisation would be better off looking at the long-term perspective. When we talk about lifecycles we are talking about developments stretching over a much longer period than one or even a couple of four-year grant periods.

This puts any discussion of the position of the dance sector within the performing arts sector after the decisions of 2006 into perspective. In *Courant#77* we delved into this problem more deeply. Our graph confirms that there was outflow in dance, but no inflow in the last grant period. This is nothing short of baleful in a slow (long term) grants system. Indeed, compared with their big brothers in other categories the big dance companies take a relatively small slice of the cake. And there are no 'big houses' in dance. But the graph also throws a few things into historical perspective, which helps putting in perspective the doom scenarios. We are reminded of the fact that since the Performing Arts Decree was introduced the dance sector has been through a massive expansion.

Is the massive expansion in dance reaching its end? When the Arts Decree was first implemented the minister spoke of a 'ceiling for dance'. In the long-term perspective we see that the spectacular growth experienced by the larger dance companies will progress at a slower pace from now on. Dance is currently at its peak. The time is therefore ripe to debate the development of individual organisations and the future prospects for the dance sector. Talks of this kind are in progress at the present time in the wake of *Courant#77*. By the end of 2007 they will lead to a collectively developed 'master plan'.

For several years now just about all the bigger dance companies have shown signs of wanting to re-profile themselves. The 2006 policy plans revealed initiatives to gradually reform the existing structures of organisations based around one or more artists, so as to create casual production nuclei of the type that appear standard in the theatre. It would be counterproductive if the infamous 'ceiling' were to nip this evolution in the bud.

In the meantime, the two-year grant decisions (a new feature of the Arts Decree) have amended the standstill: in 2008-2009 three new dance producers will receive structural funding: Deep Blue, Peeping Tom and Cie Soit.

Long-term grants

Before and after 1993 inflow and outflow follow a different pattern. The Performing Arts Decree marks a break. The drawing on our poster is less capricious after that. Prior to 1993 there were no long-term grants in Flanders. Under the Theatre Decree the grant amounts were reviewed every year. At that time there was an annual inflow and outflow. Among the smaller companies in particular (D category under the Theatre Decree) there was talk of refreshment and turnover, but – as we have indicated above – not enough, apparently, to respond adequately to quick developments in practice. Back then the system was criticised for being insular, in the case of theatre companies too. The period after 1993 shows the impact of the four-year plans. The economic fluctuations decrease for individual organisations. With a few exceptions, inflow and outflow occur in four-year blocks. The grant amounts fluctuate less.

The advantages and disadvantages of that long-term system are immediately striking. Organisations are now able to think on the longer term, but at the same time the situation is cast in concrete for four years. It seems too that there was still plenty of experimentation during the initial implementation of the Performing Arts Decree: in the size of the amounts, in recognition without funding, a number of organisations were even prematurely written off... Thereafter, the situation became more stable. Under the Arts Decree, inflow and outflow would again reach a higher pace, because two-year grant envelopes were now being awarded for the first time.

Exit strategy

Decline, just like growth, occurred at different rates. Here again, 1993 marked a break. Sudden exit scenarios were particularly evident in the nineteen eighties. When the so-called 'red cards' were still in use, quite a few little snakes stopped at their relative high-point: obscure little groups such as the Merksems Kamerateater, Poëzien... This seems to involve forgotten, rather small organisations that were also a part of the system, but, rightly or wrongly, were never given the chance to develop. In the time of the Performing Arts Decree another pattern appears to dominate. Since 1997 outflow has mainly been the result of mergers. There are a handful of exceptions to this rule (Woestijn '93, Hush Hush Hush, Opera Mobile and Podium Modern). But it is the last grant period in particular (2006-2009) in which we see the new exit strategy. The government isn't exactly pulling the plug from the socket, but turning up the heat on the fire. Actually there is talk of a gradual process, in which a reduction in share might be construed as a signal from the government and their advisors. Few organisations disappear in the last period, but quite a number see their share go down. De Zwarte Komedie, Alibi Collectief, Ultima Thule, Theater Zuidpool and DAS Theater: their subsidy touches on the borders of endurance. How do you cook a frog? Not by throwing it in boiling water, because it will jump out. What you do is put it on the fire in a pan of cold water, and then you gradually raise the temperature.

In the end, people and organisations draw all kinds of conclusions from signals like these. The graph shows a few examples of organisations that after years don't manage to flow through, or simmer on an ever-reducing flame, without anyone wanting or daring to pull the plug. The question is, what future does the simmering scenario offer for the likes of Raamteater, de Zwarte Komedie and Alibi Collectief?

On the other hand, there are quite a few organisations that manage to survive moments of crisis and string a number of bell-shaped curves together. Theater Antigone and other theatres of 1975 are a good example. Theater Antigone's share regularly dips a little, but the organisation now occupies a relatively strong position, comparable with that of the late nineteen seventies. Outside of this there have been other organisations that managed to rekindle a growth scenario after a period of decline and crisis. Evidently, they have understood these moments of crisis as a signal for reorientation. Now we are beginning to see clear signs of re-sourcing in a number of organisations that have considered their futures after the decisions of 2006: a new team arrives at Zuidpool, DAS theater becomes Cie Cecilia, there is the merger between Nieuwpoorttheater and Victoria...

A glance at the past can give them hope. Because, how many elephants can a snake swallow? Nobody will know the answer to this before Doomsday.

metamorphosis in the performing arts scene

TWELVE SEASONS OF STAGE PRODUCTIONS (1993-2005)

In the previous contribution we looked at how the Flemish government has distributed its performing arts funding in the last thirty years. Can we also see how the money was spent? In earlier stages of the field analysis we looked at how the *VTi* databank, which contains information on stage productions by Flemish producers, might help us in this. *Courant#77* contains an analysis of the figures for dance: we have detailed who, in the period 2000-2005, was involved in producing dance. In this chapter we elaborate more on that material. We now present figures for the whole performing arts sector and over a longer period, spanning almost the full duration of the Performing Arts Decree (1993-2005). During these twelve seasons who was involved in stage productions in Flanders? What have been the crucial metamorphoses in the performing arts scene?

SOURCES AND METHOD

Yearbook

How can you tell who was an important figure on the performing art scene? Fame, reputations and artistic relevance are, unfortunately, difficult to measure. And we don't have any detailed information on the budgets for all these productions. What follows is not, therefore, a financial analysis of the organisations' production output. The *VTi* yearbook offers other clues to help us gain a

picture of productions on stage. It is a continuation of the theatre yearbook published as a book since 1969. In the run up to this field analysis we put all the information for the period 1993-2005 into one databank and published it on the *VTi* website.

Therefore, our current website offers data on professional stage productions involving Flemish producers, from the seasons 1993-1994 to 2004-2005, the twelve seasons in which the Performing Arts Decree was in force.¹ And it is with these data that we set to work here.²

A databank is the result of sweat and tears, as is the *VTi* databank. The sources of information on which it rests are extremely diverse (websites, flyers, annual programmes, etc.), and the information on the twelve seasons under study has passed through several hands. A number of steps have been taken to reduce errors:

- Several conspicuous differences between the paper and digital yearbook have been straightened out for this study.
- In cases of doubt or obscurity contact is sought with the producer at the time of the première, to be sure of having the most recent information.
- At the end of the season organisations were systematically invited to check the information relating to them, and verified data are marked.
- Thematic studies and specific projects provide an extra check of the databank.

And yet errors inevitably creep in. When applying the figures in this study to specific situations it is best to allow a certain margin for error.

Productions and credits

The yearbook holds decades of information on professional stage productions involving organisations in receipt of Flemish funding. Which productions were made? How many seasons did they run? Which performing artists and producers were given credits for these productions? Every production is given a record in the databank, mentioning the following details from flyers and programme brochures:

- production (title, date of première, season)
- details about the cast
- producers and co-producers
- genres

Seasons always start on 1 July and every performance date in another season marks the start of a new production record. Language versions, reruns (possibly with different casts) are also registered as separate, but linked productions.

On the basis of the production records in the yearbook we can make simple overviews of the people and organisations involved in the productions. The first step here is to parse the lists of people and organisations according to frequency, much like an index in an encyclopaedia. This is part of what we do in the analysis of credits.

For these data we base ourselves on either the printed yearbooks or information provided by the organisations (companies, culture centres, arts centres, impresarios, etc.).

PRODUCER'S CREDITS

The contributions that organisations make to a production are described in several ways. Here we went in search of the organisa-

tions responsible for the production. Orchestras and permanent groups of performers also count. Only the polite but meaningless 'with thanks to' is ignored.

Thus all manner of partnerships come to light: contribution in kind, increased buy-out values, agreements on première series, various financial arrangements, and actual collective production. Over the period of twelve seasons, production in (often international) partnerships is one of the most vigorously growing phenomena.

PEOPLE: 'ARTISTIC CREDITS'

From the total list of people involved we distil those given specific artistic credits. Only these details are available for the entire period, because the paper Theatre Yearbook of old makes a distinction between technical execution and artistic authorship. The latter includes, of course, the work of directors and actors, choreographers and performing dancers, but our scope is fairly broad. In this exercise artistic authorship includes everyone on the scene, as well as all of the artists and designers involved (video, photo, text, music, etc.).³

METAMORPHOSIS # 1: GROWTH

General overview

For the entire duration of the Performing Arts Decree the databank contains a total of 6,653 productions. 4,582 of these are creations; 2,071 are reruns (some of these are of productions that premiered before 1993). A total of 12,304 people and 1,288 organisations worked on these productions.

Not all contributions were of equal weight. There is a wide range, from prolific producers to casual passers-by. Three performing artists (Jaak van de Velde, Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, Jan Fabre) were given credits for more than a hundred productions. Of these 12,304 people, about half worked on just a single production in twelve seasons (5,625 to be precise). Of the 1,288 organisations, this applies to a mere forty percent: 496 producers appear just once in the databank. Here too, the top is high and narrow. Over the space of twelve seasons Kunstencentrum Vooruit, De Munt/La Monnaie and Kaaaitheater collected credits for more than two hundred productions (reruns are counted separately).

Below we bring relief to these somewhat colossal figures. Thus we see that production and the sector have grown strongly in the period 1993-2005.

Three growth scenarios

Table 1 shows how many productions were made in each season of the period under study, as well as the breakdown of creations and reruns in that figure:

Table 1. Number of productions and reruns per season (1993-2005)

season	productions	creations	reruns	
1993-1994	403	269	134	33%
1994-1995	419	282	137	33%
1995-1996	415	276	139	33%
1996-1997	446	300	146	33%
1997-1998	539	384	155	29%
1998-1999	577	405	172	30%
1999-2000	663	475	188	28%
2000-2001	659	435	224	34%
2001-2002	637	445	192	30%
2002-2003	603	460	143	24%
2003-2004	632	454	178	28%
2004-2005	660	397	263	40%
total	6653	4582	2071	31%

It is immediately apparent that productivity increased during the time of the Performing Arts Decree. The 1993-1994 season was good for 403 different productions. Twelve seasons later the figure was 660. There is also an increase in creations (from 270 in the first season to 397 in the last). The number of reruns actually doubles: from 134 to 263 annual reruns.

But this increase in production is not rectilinear. The growth is at its most vigorous in the 1997-2001 grant period. The peak lies in the 1999-2000 season, when 663 productions were made. Growth stagnates in the period 2001-2005. Where the number of creations is concerned, there is even the suggestion of a slight relapse.

The number of reruns peaks in the 2004-2005 season. The ratio of creations to reruns reveals a striking but recognisable

pattern. It follows the rhythm of the four-year funding cycles. In every final season of a grant period the number of creations drops and the number of reruns rises. Is this an economy measure, because less risk is taken before the start of a new funding round? Is the energy in the last year spent on policy planning rather than on new productions?

As said above, for these 6,653 productions a total of 12,304 people were given artistic credits. Are there any noticeable shifts in this? Table 2 gives the figures.

Table 2. Number of people and credits per season

season	number of artists	sum of artistic credits
1993-1994	2351	4693
1994-1995	2292	4630
1995-1996	2464	4722
1996-1997	2540	4611
1997-1998	2609	4995
1998-1999	2320	4733
1999-2000	2505	5165
2000-2001	2634	5354
2001-2002	2448	4906
2002-2003	2763	5212
2003-2004	2851	5254
2004-2005	3453	6304
total		60579
different individuals	12304	

Here too we see growth. In 1993-1994, 2,351 performing artists were involved. As a whole they received 4,693 'artistic credits' (i.e. as a whole they played that many artistic roles in that year). Twelve seasons later and the figures have risen sharply. In 2004-2005 at total of 3,453 different people were given 6,304 credits.

All in all, the rise in the number of performing artists is not spectacular. The figures slowly creep upwards until the year 2000. In some years there is even a slight fall in the number of artistic contributors. Only after 2002-2003 does the increase begin to attract attention in a very small way. The trend is clearer when we take the figures for each grant period as a whole. In 1993-1997 we count 5,266 different people, in 1997-2001 there are 5,388 performing artists involved and in 2001-2005 there are 6,628. We find the increase in the number of artistic contributors solely in the last grant period.

What is a 'sector'? Considered as a group of performing artists, it has increased somewhat in size during the time of the Performing Arts Decree. As the 1993-2005 period progresses, more and more people are artistically involved in stage productions. Somehow that seems obvious. Production rises. And if there are more productions, it is only logical that more artists will be needed to make them. But it is not that simple. Productivity explodes in the 1997-2001 period. The number of artists does not increase until the 2001-2005 period, just when the production increase has reached its peak. So there is talk of a late catch-up, a noticeable phase difference.

We have already seen that a total of 1,288 organisations received credits for the 6,653 productions in our databank. Here too we see an increase between 1993 and 2005:

Table 3. Number of producers and production credits per season

season	number of credits	number of organisations	of which executive producers
1993-1994	554	202	131
1994-1995	552	186	136
1995-1996	575	196	127
1996-1997	613	212	139
1997-1998	836	276	154
1998-1999	937	301	183
1999-2000	1185	356	215
2000-2001	1253	389	219
2001-2002	1249	435	222
2002-2003	1210	428	213
2003-2004	1246	431	207
2004-2005	1471	497	215
total	11681		
different individuals		1288	621

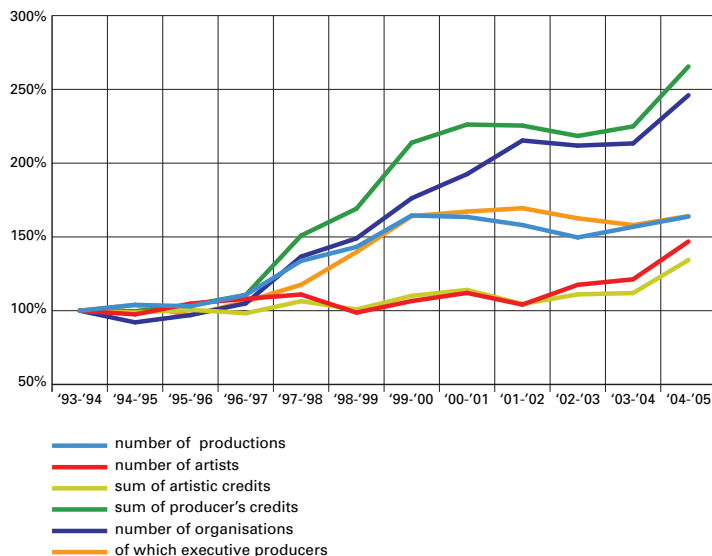
More and more organisations were involved in more and more productions. In 1993-1994 202 organisations signed for 403 productions. In 2004-2005, 497 organisations were given credits for a total of 660 productions. Considered as a group of producers, the Flemish performing arts 'sector' has become about 2.5 times bigger. What stands out, however, is the rise in the number of production credits: this goes from 554 in 1993-1994 to 1,471 twelve seasons later. This is partly due to the fact that many more productions are realised in partnership today. We unravel this phenomenon in one of the later chapters.

And the number of producers grows, but in a pattern we

haven't yet seen above. The rise in the number of organisations and the credits they collect is much sharper than the growth in the number of productions and the number of artists. And the increase is not restricted to one grant period. It rises continually throughout the time of the Performing Arts Decree.

The graph below allows us to compare the three different growth scenarios.

Graph 1. Comparison of three growth scenario



This graph shows that the number of productions, performing artists and producers grew, but at different speeds.

- The number of producers rises vigorously, the number of productions modestly, and the number of performing artists barely.
- Where productions are concerned, there is an explosion in the 1997-2001 period.
- Artistic employment does not follow right away. The number of active performing artists and the number of credits they gather barely rises in the second period. The catch-up does not occur until the 2001-2005 period. What also stands out is that the number of performing artists rises faster than the number of credits.
- Where producers are concerned, we see continuous growth. Both in the 1997-2001 and 2001-2005 periods.

Catch-up manoeuvres of the culture ministers

The fact that the number of productions rises so strongly in the nineties in particular is remarkable in the light of how structural funding increased under the Performing Arts Decree. In both 1997 and 2001 the ministers for culture – first Luc Martens (CVP), then Bert Anciaux (Spirit) – were prepared to announce a significant increase in funding at the start of a new grant period.

With the large funding round of 1997 – the second implementation of the Performing Arts Decree – it was already clear that many more applications had been submitted than the funds would stretch to. At that time VDP (the defender of the stage organisations' interests, now known as oKo) came knocking with a request for a 'serious rise' in resources under the decree. Minister Martens went looking and was able to uncover an extra 213 million Belgian francs, but its distribution was subject to sharp criticism. Ten years later and that criticism sounds extremely topical again: to prevent 'fragmentation' and stimulate 'cooperation', the money went to the so-called 'big institutions' and to the development of

existing structures. There were also complaints about the limited inflow of new companies. A great many grant claimants were referred to project-based funding: Damaged Goods (Meg Stuart), Contrecoeur (Bert van Gorp), Hyena (Marc Vanrunxt), Ceremonia, Plateau, Leporello... For some – Kunstencentrum Netwerk, Theater Teater and the puppet theatre Froe Froe – special solutions were sought. A few companies, the 'structural projects', were given project resources every year as an interim solution. It wasn't sustainable as it turned out. The project system was severely tested. At the same time the through flow of new organisations was restricted to the centre field.

Who described the euphoria in the performing arts scene when four years later Bert Anciaux announced the injection of an extra half billion Belgian francs? There was talk of a major catch-up operation. The number of structurally funded theatre companies rose from 28 to 37. There was clearly room again for inflow. Not just for Leporello and Ceremonia – passed by in the round of 1997 – but for companies with little experience, such as Martha!Tentatief, Braakland/Zhebuilding and 4Hoog. Anciaux gave them a modest starting envelope as a 'knapsack', while in the newspaper he declared: 'To address falling down and getting up again: it should be possible in culture too. This test garden can hardly be called a market threat.'

This history places our figures in an interesting perspective. The growth in productivity came before the largest increase in resources. Martens' injection coincided with a *boom* in new productions. But Anciaux's half billion didn't stay the course in the market of productions.

When Anciaux pumped half a billion into the sector the number of productions fell. The question is, though, was this stagnation a bad thing? In the nineteen nineties there arose a discourse in Flanders over 'oversupply' and limited touring opportunities. That

led to a policy reaction. In 1999 there was a review of the Performing Arts Decree, in which the quantitative standards for the number of performances to be given per annum were lowered. This may have had an effect on production. If the required number of performances is high, problems of spread can lead to spiralling production. Indeed, with shortening play lists companies have to make more productions to reach the standards. Lowering the minimum count of performances removed the pressure.

Did the review of the decree in 1999 correct the 'overproduction'? Was supply again better tailored to falling demand? Whatever the case, if the extra resources didn't go towards more productions, then they went somewhere else. Perhaps they contributed towards a growth in the quality/professionalism of the activities; perhaps they also stimulated communication and participation, subjects the culture policy had placed higher on the agenda than ever since 2001. When the grants were awarded Anciaux expressly called on the sector to use the extra money in the area of cultural participation.

Our figures suggest that the extra resources also went on bringing in more artistic contributors. Is this a catch-up operation that benefited artists? Our databank prompts us to very cautious conclusions on the subject of artist employment. The *VTi* year-book is based on flyers and brochures, not contracts. We don't know whether, how much and under which type of contract the performing artists in our databank were paid. But the fact that heavy investments were made in artistic costs and employment in the period 2001-2005, is also confirmed by a study by the Administration for Culture late in 2006. The Administration has given a picture – at least for structurally funded organisations – of how the total costs related to artistic costs and to employment costs, for the seasons 2001-2002 to 2004-2005 inclusive. The various sub-disciplines occasionally show contrary trends, but in general total costs in the performing arts appear to rise by 11.99%. Em-

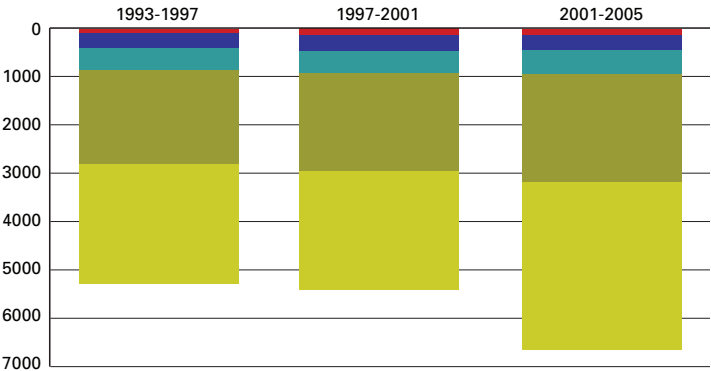
ployment and artistic costs rise more rapidly than the total cost, which in turn rises more rapidly than the grants and revenues. According to this study there is 'talk of a growth in artistic employment'. In what follows we will look to see if the effects of it can be found in our databank.

METAMORPHOSIS # 2: INDIVIDUALISATION

Fragmentation of artistic credits

Who did well through the rise in artistic credits? Is it the case that individual artists were hard up in the 1997-2001 period, and that their position has since improved? The graph below shows the number of productions in which the performing artists were involved for each of the three grant periods.

Graph 2: How many productions were performing artists involved in?



number of productions	1	2 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 20	> 20	total
1993-1997	2470	1936	464	302	94	5266
1997-2001	2453	2012	475	322	126	5388
2001-2005	3456	2232	516	303	121	6628
total	8379	6180	1455	927	341	17282

Each grant period is shown as a bar. At the high end, five to ten people had more than fifty credits to their name in any one grant period. (This can also include several jobs in one production – for example, for *Aars. Anatomische studie van de Oresteia* Luk Perceval received two credits, for 'script' and 'direction', while Peter Verhelst was also given credits for script). In the middle of the bars there is a core group of people who collected credits on a more or less consistent basis, and therefore contributed regularly to stage productions. This group remains more or less constant in the time of the Performing Arts Decree. In the last period there is, however, a slight rise in the number of people who gathered between two and five credits. But the evolution is particularly striking at the bottom of the suspended bars.

Again it is clear that the group of performing artists did not grow up to 2001, the two left-hand bars are the same size. The catch-up does not come until after this point. However, the increase is almost exclusively situated in the bottom block of the right-hand bar, in the segment for 'passers-by' who were credited for just one production in that period. The group of artists, with a more regular contribution, does not get bigger. If, in the period 2001-2005, extra resources were indeed invested in artistic contributors, then these were not permanent relations but one time only relations.

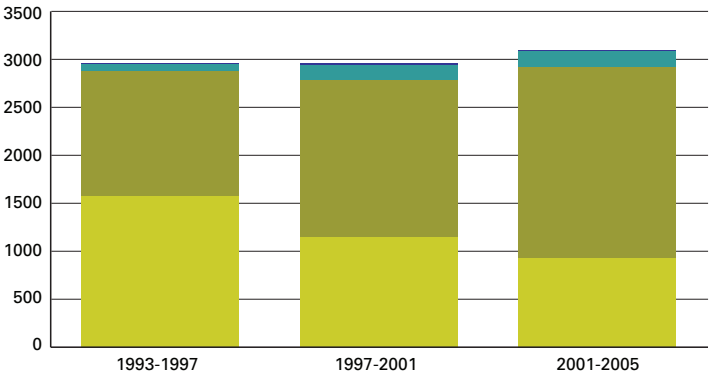
Did the investment in individual performing artists lead not to greater stability, but to one-off arrangements with a growing

number of individuals? In all respects the artistic credits become fragmented. In what follows we take a closer look at a few trends that might offer an explanation: the emergence of a freelance market, growing inter-disciplinary practice and the internationalisation of the performing arts scene.

The emergence of a freelance market

Graph 2 shows that 12,304 performing artists appear to be associated with the 6,653 productions. Graph 3 shows how they relate to the 1,298 organisations. With how many different organisations did our performing artists work?

Graph 3. With how many organisations does a performing artist work?



number of organisations	1	2 - 5	6 - 10	> 10	total
1993-1997	1578	1299	87	3	2967
1997-2001	1149	1641	158	11	2959
2001-2005	933	1990	167	9	3099

There are two important points to bear in mind if we are to understand this graph. To start with, the large group of ‘passers-by’ we mentioned in the previous paragraph is no longer shown. If you only contributed to one production it goes without saying that you only worked with one organisation. Furthermore, the graph only contains data on collaborations of individual performing artists with *executive* producers. Co-producers and other institutional partners are not counted here for obvious reasons. Suppose, for example, that someone worked on *Isabella’s Room* with Need-company on one occasion. This means this person worked with one organisation and not with the eight partner organisations who also received credits for that production.

Thus the graph only shows data on people who made at least two productions in a four-year period. The graph gives the number of executive producers they worked with in that period. The table confirms that the core group of regularly employed performing artists remains roughly equal in size between 1993 and 2005. It consists of about three thousand people. But the way in which this core group of performing artists ‘stands in the sector’ has changed greatly during the time of the Performing Arts Decree.

Throughout the period we have ‘house artists’ and ‘job-hoppers’. There are of course always people who remain loyal to one organisation. This is true of a number of artists who have developed their own production structure, such as Rudi Meulemans and his company De Parade. There are also companies that maintain a more or less permanent association with their artists and hands. There are companies with a permanent team of contributors who scarcely if ever work for other organisations. Thus the artistic core of Theater Taptoe remained relatively stable between 1993 and 2005. Els Deceukelier collected fifty credits working for Jan Fabre/Troubleyn, and beyond that she only worked once for another company (in 2002 she appeared in SS, for Het Net).

At the other end of the spectrum we have the very busy free-

lancers, who collect lots of credits from many different organisations. The absolute topper during the period in question is Lieve Pynoo, who saved up 80 credits from 25 organisations. It is no coincidence then that she is a costume designer. People who don't have to attend the performance every evening tend to be quicker in starting a new job. Yet there are also a great many actors who have worked with a large number of producers, such as Lukas Smolders (22 organisations), Wim Willaert (18), Chris Lomme (18), Robbie Cleiren (16) and Dirk Roofthoof (16).

There will always be representatives of both types. But graph 3 does suggest an obvious trend. The loyal 'house artist' type always occurs less and less frequently and there are always more 'job-hoppers'. In 1993-1997, the left-hand bar of the graph, the block at the bottom is the biggest. At that time most people (1,578) worked for just one organisation. This is the norm for the time; it accounts for more than half of the group. A few years later the benchmark shifts. The group of long-term resident artists reduces in 2001-2005 to 933, less than thirty percent of the total. But a good 1,990 performing artists spread their efforts over two to five organisations. And the group of 'job-hoppers' – six to ten different employers in the space of four years – doubles (167 in the last period).

Our figures reveal the creation of a freelance market. Artistic job migration within the sector has clearly risen. The phenomenon of the house artist, who limits his contribution to the same ensemble or collective, becomes less frequent.

To briefly summarise, we see that from the perspective of the individual artist, the performing arts scene has changed fundamentally in the period in question:

- To start with, performing artists could scarcely take advantage of the sector's growth. In 1997-2001 more productions did not mean that there was suddenly more work. The increase largely involved monologues and productions carried by small artistic teams.
- In 2001-2005 there is talk of a slight catch-up operation. There are economic, as well as artistic-intrinsic reasons to explain this. There are fewer monologues. Mostly there is an increase in casts involving two to ten people on stage. The days of the large cast do not return.
- Most probably, from the perspective of the individual artist, the slight recovery is imperceptible. It is more or less completely confined to the segment of 'passers-by' who worked on just one production.

Pending further study, we can say that the fragmentation of artistic credits and the higher number of 'passers-by' in the performing arts scene suggest an ongoing increase in external job migration. In all likelihood it is not just amateurs or the semi-unemployed who accidentally end up in a professional production. One factor might be that performing artists often work in other sectors (advertising, television, education...). Alternatively, it might also be the case that the performing arts attract more and more temporary workers from other sectors. From what follows it appears that the practice is becoming more inter-disciplinary. This can lead to occasional associations with experts – visual artists, video makers... – recruited from other sectors. Most probably another important factor is the internationalisation of the performing arts scene.

METAMORPHOSIS # 3: HYBRIDISATION

Demarcation of genres

In the *VTi* yearbook all productions are classified according to genre. For this, as when inputting credits, we base our work on the information supplied by producers and distributors. These data are not always unambiguous. Some productions are known in one arts centre as a dance performance, in another culture centre as a theatre production... When we input information on genres there is – more than with info on credits – a certain amount of interpretation involved. The *VTi* staff use their expertise to solve the problem. Or not: given good enough reason they will attach several genre labels to one production. Thus *Angel of Death* by Jan Fabre – for which William Forsythe danced in a video and used a script by Fabre – is included in our databank as ‘dance’, ‘theatre’ and ‘video’. *Sonic Boom*, a co-production by Ultima Vez and Toneelgroep Amsterdam, is ‘dance theatre’ and ‘music theatre’.

Through the years we have used an awful lot of different labels and genre indications in alternating combinations. To bring order to this diversity we have clustered them in five categories: ‘theatre’, ‘dance’, ‘music theatre’, ‘children and youth’ and the residual category of ‘other disciplines’.⁴

These categories are *fuzzy*. This means that we haven’t parked the 6,653 productions exclusively in one of the five clusters. Wherever necessary, we kept their hybrid nature intact. Thus, prototypical theatre performances – such as *De gebiologeerden* by Cie. De Koe or *De Jossen* by Olympique Dramatique – appear under ‘theatre’ only. *Verosimile* by ZOO/Thomas Hauert is purely and simply ‘dance’. Performances which are more difficult to define appear in several clusters. Thus we find productions with hybrid labels – such as ‘movement theatre’ and ‘performance’ – under

both ‘dance’ and ‘theatre’. We did the same thing for productions with different labels. Sticking with the examples given above: Fabre’s *Angel of Death* belongs under ‘theatre’, ‘dance’ and ‘other disciplines’. *Sonic Boom* is ‘theatre’, ‘dance’ and ‘music theatre’. With fuzzy datasets like these not only do you get a picture of the alternating relations between genres – you can also look at whether mixed forms occur more frequently or less.

From ‘theatre’ to ‘performing arts’

Above we saw that stage production grew, particularly in the period 1997–2001. Then it seemed to peak. Does this tendency appear within the various sub-disciplines in the same way? The table below gives the answer.

Table 4. Increase in productions in the various sub-disciplines

	all productions		theatre		dance		children and youth		music theatre		other disciplines	
1993-1997	1683		1270		201		333		192		16	
1997-2001	2438	+45%	1673	+32%	520	+159%	401	+20%	257	+34%	54	+237%
2001-2005	2532	+4%	1646	-2%	606	+17%	434	+8%	270	+5%	176	+226%

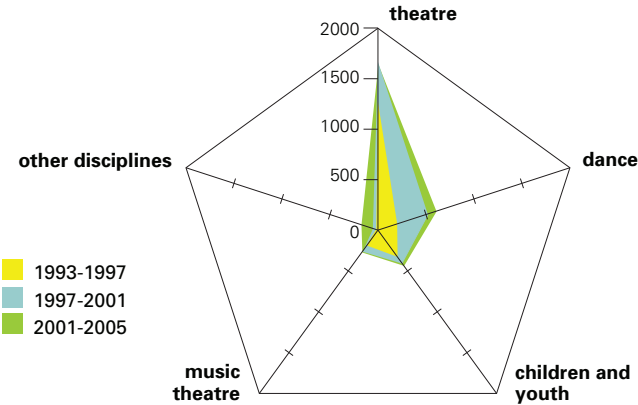
How many times have the labels we later clustered as ‘theatre’, ‘dance’, ‘music theatre’ and ‘children and youth’ been used in the three successive grant periods? Table 4 gives the list and immediately shows that the big trend – stagnating growth – occurs in the various sub-sectors of the performing arts. At the same time it seems to manifest itself there at a different speed and intensity.

Production grows the slowest in the cluster ‘theatre’. This is the biggest category in absolute figures. In the period 1997–2001 production grows by 32%. This is a lot, but growth is stronger in the other genres. What stands out, for example, is the ‘children

and youth' cluster, which grew by almost a fifth in the last period. Spectacular above all is the veritable explosion in dance productions. Start-up in the first period is modest, to be sure, with 201 productions, but the growth of 159% is impressive. Music theatre also occupies a relatively strong position on the map. In the period 2001-2005 there were again a quarter more productions than we label 'dance' or 'music theatre'.

We will see that the further we get into the period we are looking at, the more productions there are – such as *Angel of Death* or *Sonic Boom* – to which different labels are attached and which therefore appear in the different clusters. This explains why in 2001-2005 the number of genre labels attached rises more sharply than the total number of productions. And yet there is one cluster that doesn't benefit from this: theatre. And in this sense the message in table 4 is as clear as the light of day. In relative terms 'theatre' concedes ground to other sub-disciplines of the performing arts. The graph below illustrates this tendency.

Graph 4. Metamorphosis in the performing arts scene



This graph contains the same data as table 4 and therefore shows the expansion of the different genres during the time of the Performing Arts Decree. Each of the three grant periods is shown as a solid area of colour. The weightiest genre clusters stretch the coloured area the most. It is as if they are pulling the sheets up. In the period 1993-1997 – the smallest, yellow area at the top – the theatre peak is very pointed because it differs so much from the other clusters. A few years later we see that the theatre segment stops getting bigger, while the growth is prominent elsewhere. Compared with the first period, the 2001-2005 period – the green sheet – produced three times more dance.

In absolute figures theatre is always the largest group in the 2001-2005 period. But its hegemony is less pronounced than ever. What we are seeing here is metamorphosis, from a theatre to a performing arts landscape.

Product differentiation at a theatre

Looking back on the discussion of the decretal history of the performing arts between 1975 and 2007 in the previous chapter and in relation to the poster, another interpretation arises. With the introduction of the Performing Arts Decree a number of new disciplines and art forms were given the green light. In 1993 there was the decretal inflow of the dance and music theatre organisations and arts centres. The snake poster shows how these sub-sectors of dance and music theatre developed. Some organisations saw their hesitant starting envelope systematically increase in 1997 and 2001. The poster also shows that policy focuses more and more on how the arts centres operate, which perhaps helps explain the diversification of disciplines. In every respect, with the introduction of the Arts Decree the 'theatre company' became less than ever the dominant form: not so much through a fall in the number of theatre producers or a shrinking in their size, but

through the huge progress made in other sectors in the space of twelve years.

It is not in the least the case that the theatre producers underwent this evolution passively. A final, but not unimportant factor in explaining the increasing genre diversity is of course that the structurally funded theatre producers were less than ever exclusively concerned with the production of 'theatre'. They too diversified their activities. Theater Antigone is a fine example of how a theatre company managed to completely renew itself during the time of the Performing Arts Decree. A change of management in 1997 led to a development from classic ensemble to open production structure, no longer confined to theatre but regularly involved in other disciplines.

Table 5: Genre labels at Theater Antigone 1993-2005

total	52	6	4	5	2	1	1
	theatre	social-artistic	music theatre	children and youth	location project	dance	video
2004-2005	3	1	1	1	1		
2003-2004	7	1		1		1	1
2002-2003	5	1		2			
2001-2002	5			1	1		
2000-2001	5	1					
1999-2000	4	1	2				
1998-1999	6	1	1				
1997-1998	3						
1996-1997	2						
1995-1996	3						
1994-1995	4						
1993-1994	5						

This matrix shows the labels given to Theater Antigone productions in each season. The diversity is striking. Until the turn of the century Theater Antigone produced theatre and nothing else. It is clear that theatre was also the main business after this, but music, video and dance were brought into a number of productions to the extent that different labels were acquired. In 1998 a social-artistic line of community based productions was started. Since 2001-2002 a variety of children's and youth productions have been made. This product differentiation is the combined result of extremely different considerations. There is the artistic need of a maker with a plan. There is also talk of a determined cultural-political strategy from a production nucleus that aims to focus on the various target audiences of a medium sized city. Artistic director Jos Verbist:

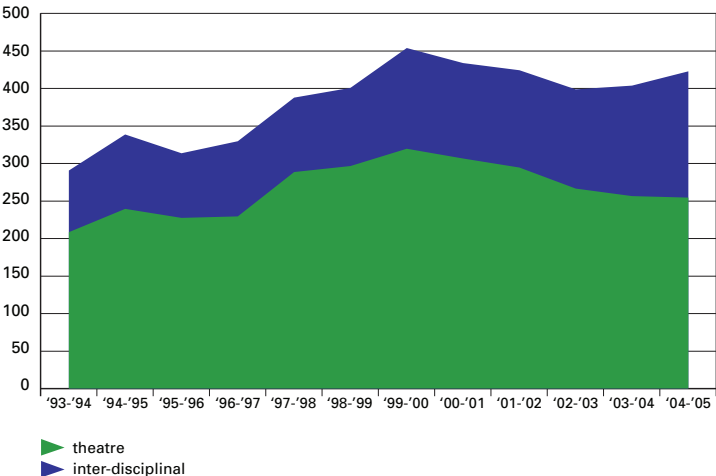
As an organisation it is all about being in contact as much as possible with all sections, all segments of a city. The moment I arrived here in Kortrijk, I sensed this need. And it continued to grow. You do this to develop diversity as much as possible. The social-artistic is an important element, but we also perform to a young audience, which is undeveloped territory here in Kortrijk. These are the possibilities you explore.

The case of Theater Antigone is not isolated. Jan Lauwers' Need-company and Jan Fabre's Troubleyn are funded as theatre companies. More and more of the organisations funded in the category of theatre are developing activities in various genres (even the city theatres KVS, NTGent, Toneelhuis...). The fact that the spectrum of theatre structures is extremely broad means, of course, that the distinction between it and the decretal category of arts centres is becoming ever more blurred.

Hybridisation at all levels

Hybridisation does not occur solely in the landscape or activities of one organisation. Separate productions have become more difficult to pigeonhole than ever, as can be seen from the graphs below.

Graph 5. Hybridisation of the 'theatre' cluster



Graph 5 shows productions labelled as 'theatre' in each season. We also show whether these 'theatre' productions appear in the other genre clusters too ('music theatre', 'dance', 'children and youth', 'other disciplines' or a combination).

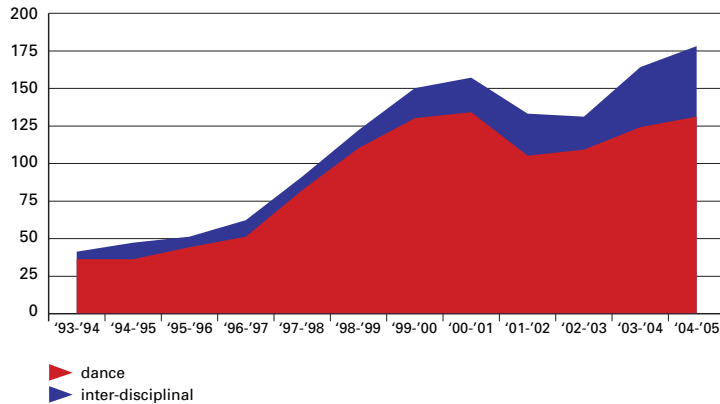
In the early days of the Performing Arts Decree the majority of theatre productions are mono-disciplinary. In 1993-1994 208 productions are easily classified as 'theatre'. The fifty productions in the blue band are the theatre's share of 'children and youth'. The overlap with dance (light blue) counts just five. Other crossovers do not occur.

Eleven seasons later and the picture has radically changed. The bottom, mono-disciplinary block was able to develop at the start, but has returned to its original level since the turn of the century. Much has come in its place in 2004-2005: crossovers of a different plumage. Children's and youth theatre are still there. The crossover from 'theatre' and 'dance' already existed in 1993-1994, but occurs much more frequently in the last season: from five to around fifty. On average there is a première of some 'performance' or 'dance theatre production' every week.

Most striking of all is that the range of different overlaps and crossovers gets broader. Much of this has to do with the emergence of labels under the 'other disciplines' cluster. Theatre productions are ever more frequently linked to non-performing arts labels such as 'visual arts', 'literature', 'cabaret', 'acrobatics', 'installation', 'exhibition', etc.

There is a tendency in which 'theatre' is becoming less 'pure theatre' than ever. The crossovers occur not just in a new, hybrid genre such as performance. The border with other artistic disciplines is under attack and wearing down. This tendency to hybridise also occurs in the clusters of 'dance', 'music theatre' and 'children and youth'. The crossovers are particularly frequent in the cluster 'dance'.

Graph 6. Hybridisation of dance



The enormous dance explosion in the period 1997-2001 is situated mainly in the bottom, mono-disciplinary segment. The emergence of crossovers appears to be a fairly recent phenomenon, which we see most in the period 2001-2005.

In the accompanying snake poster the various decretal categories have a different colour. This clearly shows how other sectors have found a place for themselves on the map alongside theatre funded by decree since 1975. In the article 'How many elephants can a snake swallow?' we spoke about diversification. But there is a danger lurking in a presentation of this type: the illusion that all these different sub-sectors of the performing arts might be 'flowerbeds', which blossom and grow beside each other without touching. The opposite is revealed above. To conclude, hybridisation takes place at different levels:

- The macro level of the landscape: the metamorphosis of theatre in the performing arts scene.
- The level of the organisation: the case illustrated by Theater Antigone, in which theatres worked on product differentiation. They played a role in the development of the developing disciplines.
- The micro level of a production: more and more productions are being assigned different genre labels.

METAMORPHOSIS # 4: MUTUAL DEPENDENCE

Types of producers

What background can be identified for the 1,288 organisations that worked on at least one production between 1993 and 2005? We have assigned each of them a label to say something about their grant status and/or organisational form. In what follows we start out by using four covering categories: 'Performing Arts Decree', 'other subsidies', 'foreign organisations' and a residual category of 'non-funded, Belgian organisations'.

Under 'Performing Arts Decree' we place organisations that applied for structural or project funding from the Flemish Community in a particular grant period under the Performing Arts Decree:

- To start with, these include the structurally recognised organisations. In the period 1993-1997 these were only theatre, dance and music theatre organisations and arts centres; since 1999 they have included festivals. Workshops have only been recognised since 2006, with the introduction of the Arts Decree.

- b) Project resources are allocated to *productions* under the decree, not to development of organisations. In what follows we will, however, use the subcategory 'project companies'. By this we mean the legal entities that applied for project funding at least once in a particular grant period, such as the dance company Peeping Tom in the period 2001-2005.
- c) Between 1993 and 2005 various organisations flowed in and out under the Performing Arts Decree, as the poster clearly shows. For this reason we have not assigned organisations one label to cover the whole period. Their label has been reviewed for each of the three grant periods. Opera Mobile was a structurally recognised music theatre organisation in 1993-1997, realised a music theatre project in 1997-2001 and disappeared from our databank after 2001.

The category 'other subsidies' contains organisations that are funded, but not under the Performing Arts Decree. There are a few subcategories:

- a) Other authorities/ministries: these include organisations that receive Flemish grants outside the culture budget, from Flemish ministries other than culture, from authorities at other levels (federal, local, European). In a number of other rather exceptional cases these authorities also act as producers themselves. The Tourism Board of the City of Ostend contributed to *Lac des Singes* by Les Ballets C de la B.
- b) Nominatim grants: as we have explained in the notes to the poster, there are quite a few organisations that receive funds under ad hoc items in the Flemish cultural budget. Thus BRONKS and the Beursschouwburg arts centre were paid from a 'Brusselse podia' fund until 2001. Thereafter they streamed in under the Performing Arts Decree.
- c) Further on, we also deal with the credits of cultural centres.

These venues receive funding from lower authorities and Flemish grants outside the Performing Arts Decree. A number of bigger cultural centres, such as de Warande (Turnhout) and ccBe (Berchem), are also prolific producers.

- d) Training: graduation projects for performing arts courses also find their way into the *VTi* databank.

'Foreign organisations' have their seat of operations outside Flanders/Brussels. We make a distinction on the basis of geographical criteria, which we will look at in more detail in the next section.

Finally, 'non-funded' is a residual category of Belgian organisations with very different art forms and trajectories at the end of the day:

- a) Temporary, sometimes one-off collaborations.
- b) Organisations that stream into the funding system only later. Ben Benouisse's company Latrinité would receive project grants later, but in the period 1993-1997 already staged a production: without subsidies, but under the auspices of the Ghent production house Victoria.
- c) Organisations that develop professional activities in the free market, such as Fakkeltheater and Theater Paljas.⁵
- d) Organisations from other art sectors, such as music ensembles (for example Bl!ndman) and galleries (for example, Etablissement d'en Face in Brussels).
- e) One real residual category of organisations whose backgrounds we were unable to establish.

Number of credits per type

The graph below shows the distribution of production credits for each of the four categories described above. What were the trends in the 1993-2005 period?

Table 6. Organisations and credits per category in the various grant periods

		credits		number of organisations	
1993-1997	abroad	245	10,68%	127	34,51%
	other subsidies	337	14,69%	39	10,59%
	performing arts decree	1427	62,20%	99	26,90%
	non-funded	285	12,42%	103	27,98%
1997-2001	abroad	740	17,57%	262	42,19%
	other subsidies	835	19,82%	84	13,52%
	performing arts decree	2070	49,15%	121	19,48%
	non-funded	566	13,44%	154	24,79%
2001-2005	abroad	1194	23,06%	428	46,12%
	other subsidies	741	14,31%	97	10,45%
	performing arts decree	2761	53,34%	185	19,93%
	non-funded	480	9,27%	218	23,49%
total	abroad	2179	18,65%	817	42,61%
	other subsidies	1913	16,37%	220	11,47%
	performing arts decree	6258	53,57%	405	21,12%
	non-funded	1331	11,39%	475	24,77%

Between 1993 and 2005 more and more organisations got involved in performing arts production. The table above shows how many organisations of each type appeared in the three grant periods, as well as the number of credits per type. In general, we again see an increase in the number of organisations and the number of credits in the overall period. Now we can also see which categories of organisation are responsible for this.

The influx of foreign organisations in the overall period 1993-2005 is simply spectacular. In 1993-1997 127 organisations collected a total of 245 production credits. At that point already, there are many foreign organisations involved in production (34.51% of

the total number of organisations account for 10.68% of the credits). The foreign share in production rises sharply in the time of the Performing Arts Decree. For the period 2001-2005 we count no less than 428 different foreign producers. This is almost half of the total number of organisations for that period. Their share in the production credits is also rising: there is talk of them doubling against 1993-1997. We count a total of 34 foreign organisations making contributions during the entire period of the Performing Arts Decree.

In the period 1997-2001 there was vigorous growth on all fronts, as can be seen from table 6. Only in the category 'Performing Arts Decree' is there no suggestion of the figures doubling, but there the rise is the highest in absolute figures (from 1,425 to 2,070). In relative terms the share of the decree funded organisations falls. In 1993-1997 they still accounted for 63% of the credits. In 1997-2001 their share fell to 49%. As we have said, minister Luc Martens injected 200 million Belgian francs in the performing arts scene in 1997, but evidently this investment was not enough to cater for the boom in creativity. They would have to be more frugal with the resources. In this period casts were a lot smaller, as we saw in the last chapter. Partners were also sought outside the decree. Foreign partners and otherwise-funded organisations featured more strongly on the map in the period 1997-2001.

In the period 2001-2005, when production stagnates, we see new developments. The number of otherwise and non-funded producers still rises, but their contributions are restricted: the number of credits falls. Therefore there are no new, strong partners to be found. But there are abroad, as we indicate. And the Performing Arts Decree organisations continue to collect more and more credits.

In the third period, the Performing Arts Decree is again more representative of total stage production: from 49% to 53% of the credits. Most probably the financial injection by Anciaux has some-

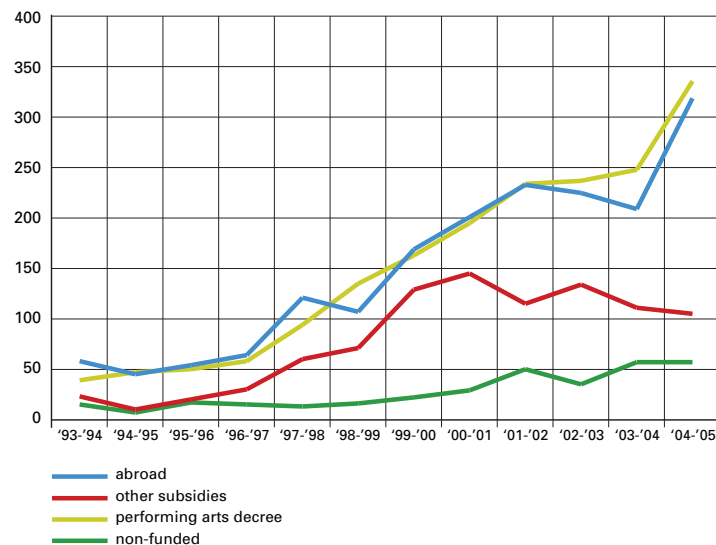
thing to do with this. As we have said, lots of new organisations are structurally recognised (from 28 to 37 theatre structures), a number of ad hoc funds ('Brusselse podia') are incorporated, and after 2001 festivals too receive grants under the decree. This also helps explain the fall the in category 'other subsidies'.

Mutual dependence

In 2001-2005 the number of productions stagnates, but more and more organisations are involved. This is because the number of credits keeps rising for collaborations. In what follows we will look at this more closely. For each production one 'main producer' is identified – before we would have talked of the 'company', but this term is not always the most adequate. If there are other institutional partners and co-producers involved in a production, we name them 'partners' below. This category will always be vague because it is home to so many things. The partnerships recorded in our databank are sometimes co-productions with negotiated contracts, informal arrangements, heavy financial investments or a passive provision of infrastructure, higher show fees or simply an exchange of symbolic capital... On the flyer, mostly 'co-production' or 'in association with' are used to describe this diversity of partnerships. What exactly does 'co-production' involve? It is something that is negotiated with every new project. Most probably, the meaning of terms like these has shifted through time.

Despite this restriction, a distinction between 'executive production credits' and 'partnerships' allows us – at a basic level – to ascribe a relative weight to the different types of involvement in productions. Partnerships experience an enormous *boom* in the time of the Performing Arts Decree. The graph below illustrates this phenomenon, giving data on the number of partnerships per category and per season, excluding the credits for the executive producer of each production.

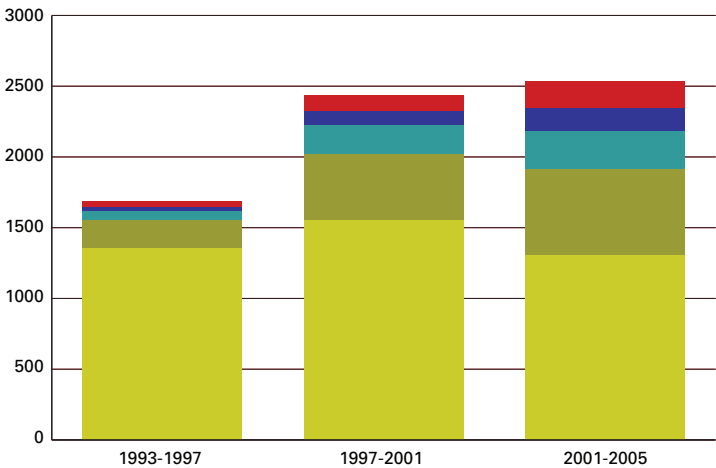
Graph 7. Increase in 'partnerships' 1993-2005



The number of partnerships, co-productions and collaborations increases. They mostly occur after the turn of the century among the decree funded organisations and their foreign partners. A few people in the performing arts who had access to an earlier version of these statistics have advised us to be careful with our interpretations. During the time of the Performing Arts Decree sensitivity at being mentioned as a partner or co-producer has risen appreciably. Earlier, the more informal collaborations were less likely to be mentioned in the flyers and programmes. Compared with earlier, the importance of giving credits is more keenly felt today, which most probably comes out in our statistics. But, all in all, the rise in the graph above is still fairly spectacular. During

the time of the Performing Arts Decree there was a break in the trend of how productions were made. The graph below looks at this. It shows the number of producers involved in the 6,653 productions in our databank for the three successive grant periods. How many producers were involved in their making?

Graph 8. Number of producers per production



	1993-1997	1997-2001	2001-2005
1	1353	1550	1305
2	202	469	611
3	59	204	262
4	32	98	169
5 or more	37	117	185

The way in which productions are made has fundamentally changed during the time of the Performing Arts Decree. In the period 1993-1997 organisations produced on their own. Four fifths of productions were the work of one company. In the period 2001-2005 it was barely half of this, and we think it will be even less in the time of the Arts Decree.

All other segments are more important: the number of productions involving lots of partners and co-producers is extremely big. The graph shows that this practice also occurred in the period 1993-1997. At that time 37 productions were made by five or more partners, on average nine per season. In 1993-1994 *No Longer Readymade* by Damaged Goods takes the crown with ten partners. *Orfeo* by Needcompany, *The Cave* by De Munt and *Da un'altra faccia del tempo* by Jan Fabre/Troubleyn and Kaaitheater all had seven partners. At that time these were telling exceptions, which also turned out to be trendsetters. This is because in the period 2001-2005 the number of productions involving more than five partners has increased by a factor of five or so, to 185 productions. Back then you could have seen a première of a piece like this once a week on average.

So there was plenty of cooperation. Why? Of course, we have financial necessity. In 1997-2001 there is an enormous increase in productivity. Our figures suggest that the injection by the minister for culture, Luc Martens, was not enough. The explosion of new productions was realised with a similar sized group of performing artists. They also sought extra funding from partners abroad and organisations outside as well as inside the Performing Arts Decree. But there is more going on than being frugal. Collaborations like this are not at all compulsory in order to produce, but are needed to make a certain type of production that would otherwise be impossible: the larger-scale work for the international circuit. And organisations can collaborate because a certain pro-

duction requires the combination of very specific artistic skills or networks. Increasing hybridisation also plays a role. Individual projects combine partners for all kinds of reasons: ro theater from Rotterdam coproduces with DeMunt (Belgian national opera) and Filmfabriek (experimental film and new media producer).

The fact that our respondents mention an increasing sensitivity to accurate crediting also shows that there is more to it than purely seeking funds. When artists and houses form associations and alliances they are exchanging symbolic capital. For performing artists it is a good thing to be able to refer to previous collaborations with prestigious houses in their résumés or grant applications. These houses in turn benefit from being seen as having a nose for new talent. With that, it is becoming less and less clear what a co-production or partnership stands for today. As shown above, it most probably covers anything from a fully-fledged practice of joint production to the sharing of credits for a whole host of reasons.

Whatever the case, our figures document an important, increasing interdependence in the production of the performing arts. The desirability of this is open to discussion. Is this growing mutual dependence a good or a bad thing? Organisations are joining forces more than ever. And this is something the last culture ministers, Paul van Grembergen and Bert Anciaux, have been arguing for in recent years. It makes it possible to produce new, more diverse and better quality work. But, at the same time, organisations also become dependent on each other and production capacity begins to fragment.

METAMORPHOSIS # 5: INTERNATIONALISATION

Touring and co-production

A large percentage of the Flemish organisations develop intensive international activities. In the period 1999-2003 about a third of all Flemish stage productions crossed the Belgian border. The figures were highest for dance. A good 40% of all Flemish dance performances between 1999 and 2003 were given abroad. For the other sectors the figures were a little lower, but in theatre and music theatre too there are companies who give the majority of their performances abroad: Troubleyn, Needcompany, LOD, Transparant... However, international activities involve more than just import/export. They also involve an increasing exchange in the area of productions. This was very clear from the dance dossier in *Courant#77* (May 2006), where we mapped out the production contributions of foreign partners. For the years 2000 till 2005 it transpired that more than half of the organisations involved in the production of 'Flemish dance' resided in a foreign country. These international partners accounted for about a third of all production credits in total. What is the case for other disciplines and sub-sectors?

Table 6 gave the first indication of the number of foreign organisations and their credits in the time of the Performing Arts Decree. The number of foreign credits rises from 245 in 1993-1997 to 1,194 in 2001-2005, by a factor of almost five. This growth is relatively faster than the total growth in the number credits: the share of foreign credits expanded greatly, from 10.68% in 1993-1997 to 18.65% in 2001-2005. Between 1993 and 2005 we note an increasing internationalisation. There are literally hundreds of foreign organisations involved in Flemish stage production. The most active are based in France, the Netherlands or Germany: Théâtre de la Ville (Paris, 140 credits), De Rotterdamse Schou-

wburg (63), Springdance (Utrecht, 42), Holland Festival (Amsterdam, 37), Hebbel-Theater (Berlin, 31), Wiener Festwochen (also 31), Festival d'Automne (Paris, 30), Künstlerhaus Mousonturm (Frankfurt, 22) and Centre Pompidou (20). Once again: these figures include reruns and co-productions.

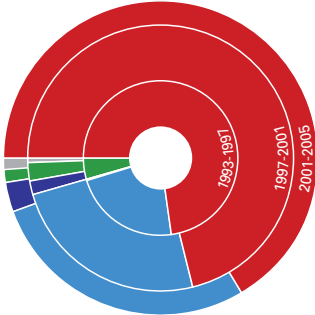
Obviously, this increasing internationalisation is closely linked to the emergence of co-production. But there is more to it than that. The share of the foreign executive production credits rises sharply between 1993 and 2005: from 1.37% in 1993-1997 to 8.41% in 2001-2005. This rise indicates an increasing reciprocity in the international relations of Flemish stage producers. In the first two periods international co-production is still largely confined to seeking resources from abroad. But the further we travel in time under the Performing Arts Decree the more we see investments in foreign companies. This is most probably connected with the fact that at that point arts centres and festivals are gaining more and more financial elbowroom. Some of them – Kaaitheater, deSingel, Vooruit, KunstenFESTIVALdesArts – play a prominent role in the international production circuit.

Dance is something of a prototype

In the next two graphs we compare international cooperation in dance against the figures for the whole of the performing arts. In so doing we make our first refinement in the fairly general category of 'foreign credits'.

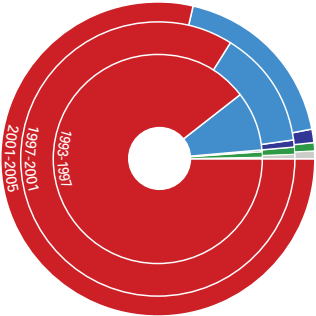
Graph 9. Share of continents in 'dance' only

	1993-1997		1997-2001		2001-2005	
	credits	number of organisations	credits	number of organisations	credits	number of organisations
Africa			2	0,15%	5	0,28%
all other countries					3	0,17%
Australia					5	0,28%
Asia			2	0,15%	5	0,28%
Belgium	316	72,81%	939	71,14%	1196	66,56%
EU-15 (situation 1995)	98	22,58%	323	24,47%	504	28,05%
North America	19	4,38%	31	2,35%	23	1,28%
Europe non-EU	1	0,23%	22	1,67%	54	3,01%
South America			1	0,08%	2	0,11%
total	434	126	1320	287	1797	458



Graph 10. Share of continents in total

	1993-1997		1997-2001		2001-2005	
	credits	number of organisations	credits	number of organisations	credits	number of organisations
Africa			4	3	9	7
all other countries			0,09%	0,02%	0,17%	0,14%
Australia			1	1	7	5
Asia	1	1	4	4	6	5
Belgium	2058	248	3533	374	10	8
EU-15 (situation 1995)	89,71%	590	83,90%	4080	78,83%	525
North America	208	101	14,01%	197	946	325
Europe non-EU	9,07%	12	0,95%	21	18,28%	23
South America	20	6	0,85%	19	1,47%	24
total	7	3	0,07%	2	7	6
	2294	368	4211	621	5176	928



Graphs 9 and 10 place three *doughnuts* one on top of the other. Each *doughnut* represents one four-year grant period. The period 1993-1997 is on the inside and 2001-2005 on the outside. Each ring shows the share of 'domestic' credits vis-à-vis foreign credits for a single grant period, classified per continent. We split Europe into the European Union as defined in 1995, and a European residual category.

The first graph shows that before the start of the Performing Arts Decree the process of internationalisation was already quite established in dance. In the period 1993-1997 a quarter of the credits can be ascribed to foreign dance producers. The international share continues to rise during the rest of the period in question. There is a rise from 27% in 1993-1997 to 33 % in the last period. Another striking fact is that this also involves greater diversification. In the first period there are three colours: domestic, the EU and North America. Then the rest of Europe and other continents appear on the map.

To what extent is the internationalisation of dance, a discipline obviously less hindered by language barriers than the scripted theatre, an exceptional phenomenon? Graph 10 shows that the other disciplines are indeed less internationally oriented. In each of the three periods the foreign share in the whole of the performing arts is much lower than in the sub-segment of dance. But the whole also shows a clear tendency towards internationalisation. By the time the Arts Decree comes in, one fifth of the credits are foreign. Developments in dance [again] appear to set the trend for the performing arts as a whole. Here too we see diversification, and other continents appearing on the map. Below we take a closer look at the varied origins of the foreign organisations that contributed to Flemish stage production between 1993 and 2005.

The year of aquariums

Table 7. Regional distribution of organisation credits

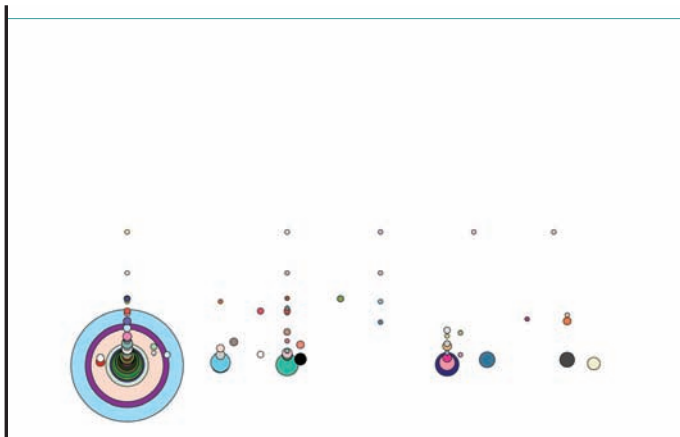
Countries / Provinces	1993-1997	1997-2001	2001-2005
Antwerp	934	1410	1427
Brussels	423	873	1123
East Flanders	449	686	689
West Flanders	110	211	322
France	52	167	322
The Netherlands	65	173	259
Flemish Brabant	104	194	197
Germany	45	108	186
Limburg	19	104	161
unknown	13	40	130
Austria	7	45	54
Great Britain	10	31	34
Italy	7	34	33
Switzerland	2	25	33
Belgium: Walloon Region	6	15	31
USA	17	22	12
Canada	3	18	23
Portugal	12	13	17
Spain	5	13	24
Norway	3	6	31
Denmark	3	6	4
all other countries	5	17	63

Graphs 13 and 14 present the regional distribution of production credits. Table 9 gives more detailed information on the origins of the foreign producers. We sort domestic credits according to province, and foreign credits according to country. All of these figures are given in descending order for 2001-2005.

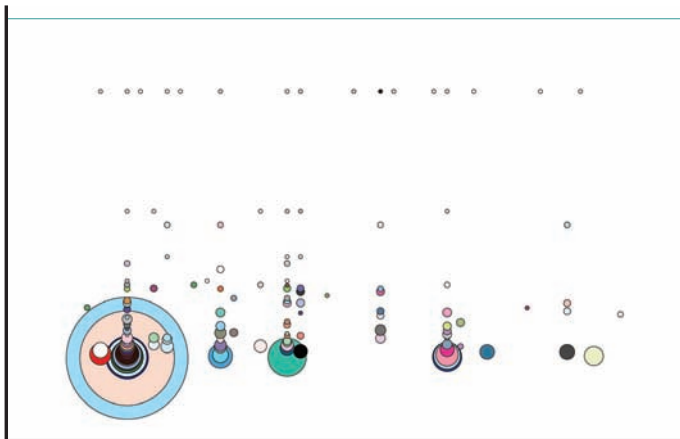
In Belgium the proportions are just about overturned during the time of the Performing Arts Decree. Again there is strong growth across the board during the period 1997-2001, but after the millennium the contribution from East Flanders (read: Ghent) and Antwerp gets no bigger. At the same time Brussels continues to strengthen as a significant pole of production, which can most probably be explained by the expansion of dance. See also the almost expansive development in West Flanders (the number of credits multiplies by three), in Limburg (by eight) and Wallonia (by six).

There is also growth in many of the foreign countries. Only the US slows. What stands out is that France plays leapfrog with the Netherlands. And the increase is not only in depth, but also in breadth. The diversification of foreign credits can be indirectly derived in table 7 from the sharp rise in the category 'all other countries': from 5 to 17 to 63. In the period 2001-2005 in particular quite a few new nations appear on the map, including Singapore, Syria, Estonia and Iran. The diversification is best seen through a subdivision based on cities – rather than countries and provinces, an obvious criterion for clustering international credits. This is what we do in the next three aquarium-like graphs.

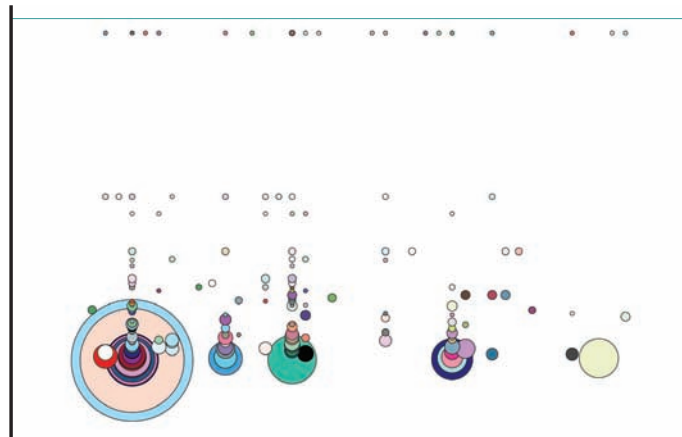
Graph 11. Aquarium 1993-1997



Graph 12. Aquarium 1997-2001



Graph 13. Aquarium 2001-2005



In the aquariums every city that contributed to stage production is represented as an air bubble. The more credits a city collects, the bigger the bubble. The biggest bubble in the three aquariums is always Antwerp. We see how in the period '97-'01 Ghent disappears behind that massively expanding bubble for Brussels. All cities located in the same country are ordered in the same vertical column. Thus you can see that there are four countries whose share is rather striking. From left to right we have Belgium, Germany, France and the Netherlands.

There is an aquarium for each of the three grant periods and through this the evolutions can be outlined. There is an intensification of cooperation with the large production centres in our most important neighbouring countries: the bubbles for Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin get bigger. In the most important neighbouring countries/columns we also see more air bubbles, indicating a better geographical spread of credits in those countries.

As we have said, there is also diversification: in 2001-2005 in particular, a lot of new countries appear on map b: the number of columns with only a few relatively small air bubbles rises systematically. All in all, the contribution of these cities and countries is fairly small, but the sheer number of these lightweights is impressive. Taken together they account for an appreciable share of productions. The number of cities contributing to Flemish performing arts production rises from 74 to 168. How 'Flemish' are the Flemish performing arts after this metamorphosis?

Notes

1. The Performing Arts Decree still applied in the second half of 2005, as a period of transition to the Arts Decree, which is structured in years, not seasons. To facilitate a comparison of the three four-year grant periods we have omitted production in this half year.
2. For this study we placed one important filter on the material in the *VTi* yearbook. In the first period of the Performing Arts Decree production by non-funded producers was better monitored than in later seasons. To prevent this change in data collection from impacting on the study we have confined the data to organisations that came in contact with the subsidy system during the 1993-2005 time span. We have retained only production by organisations that received money from the Flemish government between 1993 and 2005. We also look at production by organisations that collaborated at least once in the entire period with a 'funded' organisation of this type. Thus a company that collaborated once with an arts centre will remain in the databank.

In practice, part of the so-called 'free sector' is still contained in the information. Not Theater Houtekop, who produced a great deal in the 1993-2005 period, but did so completely independent of the grant system. What is included is the work of Theater Paljas,

which was recognised as a professional theatre company under the Performing Arts Decree in the 1993-1997 period, but was not funded.

The theatre yearbook has never kept systematic tags on all free producers. We have deleted productions by organisations that never received grants and never worked with funded organisations. We decided to tell the story of the funded system mostly because of the scope of the available data.

3. We have clustered a total of 154 job descriptions as artistic. Below we give the full list in alphabetical order. The number of times the job was performed in the 1993-2005 period is given in parentheses:
acoustics (2), acrobatics (8), actor (14,794), advice (119), animation film (16), arrangements (62), artistic advice (35), artistic director (7), artistic direction (14), artistic contribution (22), audiovisual designer (1), author (1,656), ballet master (3), bass master (2), visual artist (25), accompaniment (152), locomotive advice (68), adaptation (791), modelling work (2), choreography (1,489), film maker (3), circus artist (1), coaching (235), dance coaching (3), music coaching (2), composer (659), opera composer (11), composition (28), concept (1,383), concept & direction (65), concept & playing (209), concert master (3), co-direction (3), creation (24), creation & dance (119), creation & play (39), dance (1,297), dance advice (5), dancer (3,377), dancers & actors (167), dance master (6), dance design (2), dance research (2), decor/scenography/costumes (49), decor advice (3), decor design (1,774), dialogue (3), conductor (41), door (41), dramatist (1,354), drama advice (19), ensemble (3), character (52), character play (130), film (45), photo (6), photography (241), sound advice (1), sound recording (6), sound design (42), adaptation (7), 'in association with' (1), illustrator (7), installation (8), interview (2), sound recording and effects (10), sound decor (87), sound design (37), choir (144), choir conductor (15), choir master (149), costume advice (9), costume design (1,625), costume designer (5), lecture (1), librettist (43), libretto (254), light design (2,118), songs (1), lyrics (17), masks

[45], contributor [18], 'with' [2,724], mezzo-soprano [4], mime artist [2], mimography [8], multimedia [2], music [2,395], music & play [9], music arrangement [19], musical adaptation [11], music dramaturgy [3], music ensemble [22], music direction [4], musical performance [327], musical advice [35], musical accompaniment [24], musical director [447], musical adaptation [3], musician [1,579], adapted from [934], designer [4], orchestra [40], conductor [1], orchestration [2], orchestra direction [2], performer [154], piano [42], pictorial interventions [1], puppet design [203], puppetry [290], puppetry advice [1], puppeteer/actor [19], direction [4,264], direction advice [14], director [2], research [2], space design [9], composition [30], scenario [37], stage designer [104], scenography [1,085], script [48], soloist [1,894], soprano [7], soundscape [28], performance [920], performance advice [7], performance coach [158], voice [60], voice advice [27], technical design [1], technological research & development [10], artist [1], drawings [7], script [2,089], script/performance [109], stage setting [82], 'by' [138], 'by and with' [920], translation [1,031], song translation [2], narrator [66], video maker [29], video [307], video realisation [7], vocal arrangement [3], vocal ensemble [44], vocal accompaniment [9], design [708], song [1,153], singing advice [5], singing coach [17], singer [90].

This list immediately shows that much has changed since 1993: new jobs have been created, others have disappeared or been given new names. Regrouping as 'artistic credits' makes it easier for us to compare the production records.

4. The five clusters contain the following labels:

'Theatre' = visual theatre, movement theatre, comedy, bunraku, burlesque, commedia dell'arte, dance theatre, recitation, documentary theatre, experimental theatre, characters, puppetry, character theatre, humour, improvisation, improvisation theatre, youth theatre, adolescent theatre, kabuki, chamber theatre, children's and youth theatre, children's theatre, comedy, location project, marionettes, mime, monologue, multimedia, noh, object theatre, open air theatre, pantomime, performing, performing

arts, puppets and object theatre, puppetry, puppet theatre, radio drama, shadow show, shadow play, school performance, school play, social-artistic, solo performance, street entertainment, street theatre, script reading, television drama, theatre, theatre with young people, theatrical production, theatre, theatre writing, total theatre, tragicomedy, variety, storytelling theatre, video theatre, popular theatre, recitation, recitation-literature and sociodrama.

'Dance' = ballet, kinetic art, movement theatre, butoh, dance, dance theatre, flamenco, court dance, jazz dance, modern dance, performing, performing arts, tap dance, video dance, popular dance.

'Music theatre' = cabaret, café-chantant, chanson, chamber opera, children's opera, song, multimedia, musical, music, music theatre, opera, operetta, oratorio, performing arts, revue, variety show.

'Children and youth' = youth theatre, adolescent theatre, children's and youth theatre, children's opera, children's theatre, puppet and object theatre, puppetry, puppet theatre, school play, school performance, theatre with young people.

'Other disciplines' = acrobatics, amusement, entertainment, architecture, author, visual art, sculpture, cartoons, circus, clown, concert, cultural diversity, film, philosophy, installation, jazz, classical music, cabaret, literature, multicultural events, research, training, plastic arts, poetry, politics, promotion, advertising, novel, television, exhibition, video, video art, education, workshop.

Note: the VTi databank does not monitor the circus or classical music. 'Circus' is given as a label when elements from the circus tradition are employed in a theatre or dance production.

5. We have already indicated that this study does not pretend to map out 'the free sector' in Flanders and Brussels. All organisations in our databank, including the non-funded, have at least a link with the funded system: during the time of the Performing Arts Decree they will have realised at least one production in association with a funded producer (under the Performing Arts Decree or receiving 'other grants').

Running water and a tree

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS SCENE

The way things are done in the performing arts scene has changed dramatically during the 1993-2005 time span. There has been a quantitative growth in production, but not an unbridled one. Growth slows down in the 2001-2005 period, possibly due to the reduced quantitative standards imposed by the revised Performing Arts Decree. More important, though, are the qualitative metamorphoses. We see increasing individualisation, the emergence of a freelance circuit and the fragmentation of artistic credits. There is hybridisation at several levels: in the landscape, in the organisations, and at the micro level of specific productions, which increasingly occur in mixed forms. There is increasing mutual dependence between organisations at home and abroad.

These are radical changes, which relate to different facets of performing arts productions... And as we can see from some of the above, policy-makers, stage organisations and individual artists are in search of answers. Where artists are concerned there is talk of a 'Protean' career. In referring to Proteus in this way – the Greek god of the sea who was able to change shape and appears in mythology as a lion, a snake, a leopard, a pig and even as running water and a tree – it is clear that artists today have to be flexible and versatile. It seems that just producing art is no longer sufficient. This gives rise to questions. Should artists suddenly become businessmen now? Do policy and regulations facilitate individual trajectories that cross the boundaries of nations, sectors, disciplines and organisational forms?

Evolutions in the performing arts also test an organisation's ability to adapt. Indeed, organisations find themselves faced with the cost disease identified by William Baumol and William Bowen. In the labour intensive performing arts sector fewer productivity improvements can be achieved than in other sectors. This leads to ever rising employment costs and more expensive productions. How do you, as a stage organisation, get the right resources together? You embark on a quest for economic capital, which takes you past grants to partners at home and abroad. Producers are becoming more and more dependent on each other. The issue of dealing with human resources too is changing under the pressure of increasing production costs and the status quo in the grant situation. Will only the biggest continue to have the resources needed to employ performing artists as professionals in an artistic, technical, communicative and business framework? Are project companies and other small structures well advised to return to working more on a voluntary or 'semi-professional' basis? Is this still feasible and desirable in the current social context? What administrative, fiscal and legal risks might be lying in wait?

The metamorphoses also require policy makers to make adjustments. They carry implications for the Arts Decree (April 2004) as an instrument, its implementation, aspects of cultural policy and connections with other areas of policy. In itself the Arts Decree anticipated a number of the metamorphoses described above. It is deeply rooted in the tradition of the Performing Arts Decree [1993; reviewed in 1999]. Compared with the latter, it has already created possibilities for further hybridisation, individualisation and internationalisation. The material from this field analysis offers clues to help update and refine a number of sections, and may prove inspirational in the decree's implementation. It also raises more general questions about our future attitudes to the metamorphoses detected above.

How can a performing arts policy, which concentrated on organisations in the past, cope with increasing individualisation? How far do the policy implications of ongoing hybridisation stretch? Should we discuss the famous 'partitions' in the Arts Decree, which still tends to categorise on the basis of artistic disciplines? What is international or intercultural activity in the performing arts? Most of all, however, these changes in the performing arts are forcing all involved to get a new fix on their position. Both government and the arts field need to consider seriously the causes and effects of these metamorphoses. Are they good for the development of the arts? Should we stimulate this visible transformation in the performing arts scene or should we counter it?

These are important questions, which above all require good dialogue between government and the field. In the past we have seen constructive, open dialogue lead to good cooperation. Cooperation between government and the field is crucial again today, if we are to guarantee autonomous development in the arts, embedded visibly in our society.

The policy suggestions below are designed to fuel dialogue between performing artists, arts organisations and policy-makers. There are all manner of suggestions. Some of the ideas have been around for a long time. Others are new or imported from abroad. We collected a few concrete and practical suggestions on the subject of reviewing certain passages of the Arts Decree. Also, we include suggestions on other aspects of cultural policy and links with other sectors.

The rest of this contribution offers a selection of policy suggestions from the original Dutch version of *Metamorphosis in the Performing Arts Scene*. They are not solely based on the statistical analysis above, but on other texts from the original book and other interventions in the line of research that led to it.

INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL

The material in the field analysis calls for a higher valuation of the international dimension of the performing arts in Flemish cultural policy. In the minds of policy makers, international activity is still equivalent to import and export, whereas in the meantime the internationalisation of the performing arts sector has become deeply anchored in artistic practice. Recognising the complexity and necessity of this international dimension calls for a reappraisal of how the tools are applied:

- **Differentiation in the support options.** This should be tailored to the international ambitions of artists and organisations. It is important that organisations – including those in receipt of four-year grants – themselves state whether their international activities are to be structural or project-based.
- **Scoping of the policy at home and abroad.** In the field analysis calls were made to consider ‘Europe’ as our home territory too. Obviously, this argument raises the question of which Europe we consider as home: the Eurozone, the EU-15 (situation in 1995) or the EU-27 (situation today)? There is potential for a discussion about exactly how far our ‘cultural biotope’ extends. But the crux is that those with a structural international option in the four-year system will again have to draw on ad hoc funding for international projects in exceptional regions.
- **More money for international activities is a necessary precondition for this new dynamism.** The added value from exchanges with exceptional regions transcends the artistic and cultural. For this reason we can consider a transversal fund to connect the resources from Development Cooperation,

Foreign Policy, Education and other departments. Only a joint policy can point the way towards identifying priority countries.

- **Formation of a knowledge interchange.** At the colloquium entitled *2010: A Stage Odyssey* Guy Gypens (then Rosas, now Kaaithheater) argued for ‘an active knowledge centre (...) for the international practice of the arts, to centralise and open up experience and knowledge gained. (...) Not only should a centre of this type be a reservoir of past experience, but it should also be active and dynamic in seeking out players in the field. To do this it would be able to make use of proactive ‘networkers’ – not officials – based in a number of crucial places (for example, Beijing, South-Africa, New York, Kinshasa...). They can complete the link between Flemish and Brussels-based organisations and the players in situ.’
- **Interest in intercultural processes.** In the book *Tracks. Artistieke praktijk in een diverse samenleving* An van. Dierden, Joris Janssens and Katrien Smits identify success factors for diversity processes: self-reflection, contextualisation, long-term perspective, dialogue, innovation. Now that ‘interculturalisation’ is the buzzword at various policy levels, these process qualities can give real meaning to a term like ‘intercultural competency’. They can provide a guideline for refining conditions and criteria in grant applications.
- **Are quotas an impulse or obstacle for organisations that aim to interculturalise?** Thinking in terms of target groups carries the risks of stereotyping and stigmatising. However, if you don’t give diversity due attention, you run the risk of allowing it to drop off the agenda. However, this doesn’t require regulation, writes Laurien Saraber: ‘Keep regulations general and broadly accessible, earmark budgets behind the scenes

only; allow institutions themselves to indicate whether or not the intercultural is an *issue* for them; encourage good plans; honour the most serious ambitions, experience, daring and a sense of reality; make sure the entire budget earmarked is well spent; and in the next assessment evaluate institutions in terms of their own goals and in relation to the overall arts landscape.'

HYBRIDISATION

In the time of the Performing Arts Decree we saw an increasing hybridisation at several levels. The poster 'How many elephants can a snake swallow' – which gives an overview of the decretal history of the performing arts since 1975 – shows clearly how theatre is increasingly flanked by the other sub-sectors and organisational forms which have been eligible for funding since 1993. At the same time, the borders between these sub-sectors are less pronounced than ever before. Where individual productions are concerned, there are more and more crossovers, performances which are hard to tag with just one label. Interesting too, is the fact that more and more theatre, music theatre and dance organisations are operating in an inter-disciplinary way.

This analysis places the existing 'partitions' in the Arts Decree under pressure. Both in terms of the organisational forms described in the Arts Decree, and in terms of the assessment procedures and budgeting. The field analysis material suggests that the time has come to take the step towards a truly open decree.

- **Dispense with the art forms defined.** The organisational types and art forms described in the Decree (article 3, 1°, organisations and 2°, projects) are still based on solid artistic disciplines and so are becoming ever further removed from

current practice in the performing arts. Thus, for example, more and more theatre companies are taking on functions, which, strictly speaking, do not fit in with the form referenced by the Decree.

- **From a category-based to a functional approach to the practice of the performing arts.** Today the Arts Decree already describes a number of 'functions' to which organisations can ascribe. For the most part these involve creation, presentation, working with the public, plus a number of optional functions (international, social-artistic and art educational activity). Refining and possibly adding to these functions (including e.g. interculturalisation, networking, research, archiving...) makes it possible to custom-develop a flexible system for organisations. At the same time the authorities are able to preserve the balance between the various functions in the landscape. Of course, defining these functions does not mean that all organisations have to embrace them all. The organisation is free to set up one or more functions or disciplines. It is also perfectly possible to operate in a mono-disciplinary way if so desired.
- **Bring self-profiling of arts organisations further to the fore.** Organisations themselves decide which activity they want to develop and work the details out themselves in their policy plan. After the assessment and decision stage the updated policy plan forms the actual touchstone for further monitoring and evaluation.
- If network development becomes a function, it might be possible to structurally fund and anchor international network organisations under the decree. Now the operating resources for networks like IETM are reviewed annually.

Quality of the assessment. The further 'de-partitioning' of the decree calls for a consistent and at the same time more flexible quality assessment. Today, the assessment is made by commissions, which are permanently composed along disciplinary lines. To take advantage of hybridisation it would be desirable to amend the present assessment procedure in several areas:

- **Create a truly integrated quality assessment.** There is a need for evaluations in which business and artistic elements are considered together in order to reach an integral quality assessment of grant applications. Today the assessment is split into an artistic recommendation (given by the commissions) and a business evaluation (by the administration). Despite the consultation between both bodies, the existence of two recommendations alongside each other often leads to confusion. This gets in the way of trying to improve the quality of the assessment.
- **Professionalisation of the recommendations.** Here, we can consider a stepped system of recommendation in line with the Dutch proposed model (the Alons report, 2006). The idea is to base the final quality assessment on draft recommendations from a permanent secretary with freelance staff. In the recruitment, appointment and remuneration of the secretary and staff account should of course be taken of their expertise and knowledge of the field. The definitive recommendation is given by the commissions, which are composed alternately from a broader pool of experts. The increasing variety of grant applications calls for more flexible assessment commissions. This is a way of guaranteeing continuity and flexibility in the recommendations.

INDIVIDUALISATION

Creating and putting on performances is a labour intensive occupation. Employing contributors and paying for services takes up the lion's share of an organisation's budget. In the course of our research the individualisation of the performing arts kept coming to the fore, as organisations have become flexible networks. Whereas in the past attention focused on the waning permanence of jobs for actors and makers, it now seems that the other professional groups too are evolving towards freelance employment. This situation requires an investment from all involved.

Suggestions for a deliberate individual career plan

- An individual who wants to develop a lifelong career in the sector can never rest on his laurels. Knowledge has to be continually improved, the network calls for constant development. At any given time you have to know and communicate what you can and want to do, why, how and with whom. A good reputation is the highest symbolic capital in this labour market. You are only as good as your last job.
- It is best not to put all your eggs in one basket and to follow several paths: from the performing arts to the wider arts and culture sector, from the funded to the free and commercial sector, and back. Besides talent and knowledge of the trade you need enterprise and business acumen to survive the profession's constant selection processes. Schools need to be responsible and to raise the students' awareness. Graduates often start their careers through their lecturers' networks, so we have learned from our survey of starting theatre-makers. Choice of training position or thesis subject is a crucial first step in the working sphere. Programmes for lifelong learning

and for career advice are not yet tailored to suit the performing artist. Therefore it takes extra dedication to find your way to the institutes that do exist: the arts policy centres, the Kunstenloket, the Social Fund for the Performing Arts, (international) networks, etc.

Up rating of bursaries and projects under the Arts Decree

Policy makers must address the needs of a flexible labour market. A great deal is possible through the Arts Decree, given a few small adaptations and the desire to use projects and bursaries as fully fledged tools for individual artists/artistic contributors. The shift from permanent to ever more casual collaborations, and the continuing individualisation of the performing arts, require not only an adjustment and up rating of the short term policy tools. They also call for a new budgetary relationship between structural and project-based support. Below we give a few lines for consideration:

- **A minimum share for bursaries and projects;** reserve a minimum of 25 percent of the total amount for bursaries and projects. A minimum amount should be guaranteed per project, to pay wages correctly. For years now, government and sector have been advancing professionalism. However, this implies that project-based support should also allow artists to work professionally. Project grants awarded in the future should at least guarantee that all wages can be paid in line with the performing arts CLA.
- **New types of bursaries and projects,** such as a grant for re-runs: current project grants are intended solely for making 'productions'. It appears to be increasingly difficult distribute project-based productions (even if the demand is there).

Better distribution of powers over the various levels of government.

The flexibility of collaborations is not yet sufficiently offset by certainty for employees:

- The free circulation of people within the European Union is more of an abstraction than a reality due to the lack of coherence in the law. The European funding programmes for culture could also devote greater attention to the international mobility of artists. IETM and PEARLE* are studying the possibility of a mobility fund for trans-national nomads working on a freelance basis (Poláček 2007).
- Belgian industrial relations law is still geared towards long-term employment relations.
- Politicians wax lyrical about the importance of innovation and creativity in (economic) society, but are still slow to recognise the true value of people with 'talent, technique and tolerance' (Richard Florida's formula for success). Investing in *employability* is a shared responsibility and the only way of striking the balance between flexibility and certainty.

ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

The increase in casual collaborations forces arts organisations to evolve from permanently staffed, 'closed' houses (the classic theatre company) to flexible structures, open to guests, alternating functions and new ideas. This calls for an appropriate human relations management and a new distribution of tasks. It most probably leads to other collaborations too, and a new position for

the organisation in the overall landscape. But most of all it forces organisations to keep a watchful eye and show a readiness to adapt to new artistic paradigms.

The government too should be alert to these new developments. The instruments, which are still for the most part modelled on the artistic practices of the nineteen eighties, must be adjusted to suit the latest needs. And most of all, government and organisations should work together here too to take advantage of transformations in the landscape. In the area of organisation development we still see - besides all the above - a few extra challenges:

- **Variety of organisational forms at the macro level.** Policy makers and quality assessors must recognise the multiplicity of artistic practices for which the Flemish performing arts scene is renowned abroad. This implies that organisational and landscape development cannot be reduced to a division of power between the large and small houses. Room should be given for diversity to develop among organisations.
- **An appropriate personnel policy:** Funded performing arts organisations can, in their personnel policies, address the balance between permanent and casual workers. A number of organisations are developing a new kind of mentoring, guiding staff both in their artistic development and in their enterprising spirit. It is no longer just the beginners who are in need of guidance. Reflection and guidance are also crucial for people with ten or twenty years of professional experience who want to ascertain their employability.
- **Better distribution of tasks between organisations:** Independently of the criteria in the Arts Decree and their artistic profiling, organisations can make mutual arrangements on a better distribution of tasks. Do alternative management bu-

reaus work on *project management or people management*? Do workshops look at project guidance for people flowing in? Do arts centres in turn take the people who flow through under their wings?

- **Infrastructure option.** Some stage organisations have an infrastructure, others not. This distinction has a huge impact on the everyday operation of an organisation. It can sometimes give cause for concern, but is a huge boon above all. Organisations with their own infrastructure are better equipped to devise an integral approach to creation, presentation and participation. Not all the possibilities in this area may yet have been exhausted. Were 'infrastructure' to be an option in the light of the functional aspects of the Arts Decree described above, it could provide a huge impulse for organisations.

ACCESS TO CULTURE AND PARTICIPATION

The performing arts scene is getting bigger, but the growth is not unbridled, or so the figures tell us. Peak production was achieved at around the turn of the century. Is the market saturated, has the 'overproduction' been remedied? The relationship between supply and demand is most probably unclear in a landscape that leans so heavily on funding. A review of the Decree in 1999 probably reduced the pressure. But in the meantime it seems that on the longer term it is the tours that have become smaller on average. There are more productions, with fewer performances on average. How do we deal with this fragmentation? How much of a threat is it to the cultural participation so sought after by the policy-makers?

In the course of our field analysis quite a few voices argued for a qualitative approach to the discussion about distribution and

participation. Long touring schedules are not enough to ensure better cultural participation. What is needed is a long-term investment in the relationship with the audience. In a panel discussion leading up to *Metamorfose in podiumland*, Staf Pelckmans (director of the De Warande Culture Centre, Turnhout) called for an investment not only in productions, but in a better 'quality of take-up'. Along what lines can this be done? How do we tune the Flemish policy tools?

- **Long-term investments.** People are quick to call the arts 'elitist', but in other sectors too participation in public life appears unequally distributed. Level of education is an important parameter in this. And this tells us straight away that a long-term investment in cultural participation needs to start at a very young age. It requires the continual development of art for young people and innovative links with education, wellness, media, tourism... too.
- **Involving and engrossing the public.** In itself the Arts Decree offers plenty of opportunities to work from a variety of perspectives towards involving and engrossing the public in the performing arts: social-artistic practice, art-education activities, interculturalisation, e-culture... Through their creations artists themselves fashion a new link with the public. But a small adjustment of the Arts Decree can make way for extra incentives.
- **Tuning of various decrees.** There is certainly something to be gained from tuning the various Flemish policy tools: besides the decrees on amateur arts, social-cultural work and youth policy, the Arts Decree and the Local Policies for Culture Decree are important - where the first regulates 'supply' and the second 'take-up'. The latter decree is being reviewed today. The draft already shows the Flemish government's intent to

give boost to projects that can improve the spread of the offering it funds.

- **Role of the culture centres.** Levels of government other than the Flemish are strong players in this area. Culture centres are fiercely loyal to the local authorities and this is why the Flemish government has fairly little room for manoeuvre here. Since the Flemish grants are just a small proportion of turnover at the culture centres, coordinating them to the Arts Decree is probably not feasible without a financial injection. Also, much depends on high level talks between the various authorities over the optimal distribution of their powers (arm's length principle). This year the Flemish government intends to conclude ad hoc covenants with cities and districts.

LINKS

The following links between the performing arts and other areas of policy deserve extra attention today:

Education

As did the Performing Arts Decree in 1993 start a series of metamorphoses that fundamentally changed the performing arts, so too has the Higher Education Decree of 1995 become an institutional accelerator for education. A first wave of mergers created big institutions, all offering the broadest range of courses. The second step was to harmonise all the courses offered in the college. In this exercise art courses were forced to concede a large part of their long-held autonomy and the emphasis came to lie on education policy targets. Today the association of the colleges with a university gives rise to new challenges.

This so-called 'academic upgrading' of art courses opens opportunities in several areas. When artists work with scientists, lots of mutual misunderstandings have to be cleared away first. Afterwards, however, they often discover that in research both groups have much in common. The fact that art courses are again expressly being given a practice-oriented research function in the education system, and are receiving the resources needed for this, is also good news for the performing arts scene. Research and artistic development are important functions in the performing arts, in which the expertise of the art courses supplements the practices of arts centres, workshops and companies.

Yet there are a number of risks with this upgrading. Educational reform brings its own jargon with it, which clouds the discussion for outsiders. Besides more research and more research resources, the academic upgrading entails strong formalisation. Within training courses this gives rise to a dual concern: the *formats* and formalisms of accreditation must not cut short the individuality of the artistic research, or conceal courses from the outside world under a new layer of jargon. The latter is an open call to the performing arts sector: not just to look at exercises and theses often and critically, but to actively help education in the calibration of artistic research. Working out research partnerships or teaching from practical experience are cases in point.

Amateur arts

The Arts Decree addresses professional artists and arts organisations. First and foremost 'professional' means the capacity to develop a professional activity, or: 'being able to make a living from your art'. It makes no statement about the quality of the work produced by the artist or his organisation. Yet the division of professional versus amateur is coming increasingly under pressure.

On the one hand, this comes clearly to the surface in relation

to the 'laborious' interculturalisation of the arts sector. Lots of artists of non-western origin are still too often referred to amateur arts or social cultural work; regardless of their ambitions or the route they have come (in their country of birth or elsewhere). To date any discussion of the qualities of their work remains difficult.

On the other hand, the increasing individualisation implies that more and more artists, faced with the lack of an adequate framework, are forced to work in a semi-professional context, irrespective of their professional ambitions. In music this dividing line has been considered irrelevant for a much longer time.

In the performing arts too it has been increasingly difficult to make a strict separation of professional and amateur art. The challenge here is to see to what extent a closer cooperation can arise between the professional performing arts sector and (a part of) the amateur arts. Ideas to create a policy framework for semi-professional arts are therefore best developed on the basis of sound dialogue between the current arts and amateur arts sectors (and not solely from the socio-cultural perspective).

FINALLY

This field analysis is not a finishing point but a reference point. To start with, the material offered is an invitation to discussion for all involved: policy (cabinet, administration), sector (individual artists, organisations, representatives and umbrella organisations). *Vlaams Theater Instituut* will take its intermediary role here seriously.

In the future *VTi* aims to update these statistics regularly (every four years). This affords us the opportunity to map changes in the landscape more systematically and place them in their historical context.

Finally the material holds a number of lines that require fur-

ther research. *Vlaams Theater Instituut* is prepared – in discussion with the field and the government – to shoulder some of that research. However, this also assumes a greater openness than exists today to share data with others. In association with other arts policy centres and arts sector representatives, *VTi* is currently preparing an online benchmark, which should enable us to compare figures on aspects of the performing arts business in an interesting way.

This type of research is crucial. Not just to help us avoid discussions or perceptions based on assumptions, but above all to formulate solid arguments to convince future opinion and policy-makers of the importance of art and artists in our society. More than ever.

PLATFORM FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Since it was founded in 1987, *Vlaams Theater Instituut* has developed into an open organisation with strong links to both the sector itself and the policy-makers. The reason for its existence is the need for sound information among the public, theatre professionals, politicians, students, press and academics. On performing artists and their work. On cultural policy and cultural management. On international work. On developments and trends. On infrastructure, touring and art education.

VTi wants to provide all this information in a broad range of easy-to-use resources. To this end it currently fulfils three main functions: documentation, research and information/awareness. Its intention is in this way to contribute to the ongoing growth of the sector and help build a social environment for artistic creation.

Documentation Centre for Theatre, Dance and Music-Theatre: *VTi* assumes responsibility for the intensive documentation of performing arts practices. The sector and its context are observed, artistic and policy-making developments are recorded, sorted and made accessible by means of the extensive database, library and website.

Sectorial Think-Tank in a Diverse and International Flanders: Applied research is a major component of *VTi*'s work because it converts the information in the database and collections into a useful form. The research is applied to actual practices by means of descriptive and analytical fieldwork. In this regard, the performing arts are not simply the object of research, but also play an active part in shaping opinion.

Critical Interface between Theatre-Makers, the Public and the Policy-Makers: *VTi* is a place for knowledge, study and also vision.

It is for this reason that it sets debates going, and wants to actively inform people and increase their awareness. Research and new insights are presented as feedback to the sector on the website, in publications and the periodical *Courant*, through the library and at study sessions. The chief concerns here are reflexive dialogue, practical usefulness and an overview of the broader picture.

In all these activities *VTi* links current events in the performing arts to long-term projects. At the moment, for example, attention is being focused on a thorough analysis of artistic practices and oeuvres, on public participation (concentrating on art education, touring and criticism) and on the challenge of international and intercultural cooperation.

DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS

VTi's three core tasks are organically combined in its day-to-day business.

In the *VTi library* visitors can consult books, periodicals, cuttings and documentation free of charge and without enrolment. It includes:

- Documentation on organisations in Flanders
- Books on the performing arts, cultural management, policy, art education, etc.
- At least 10000 plays, in both published and manuscript form
- current subscriptions to over 100 professional journals
- Cuttings archives of relevant information from newspapers and periodicals
- A video library with over 5000 hours of tapes

The www.vti.be *website* is intended to be flexible and keep pace with current news. It enables you to keep track of *VTi*'s work, with an overview of all its activities and documents. In addition, the site contains a mass of useful information on the performing arts sector: the ins and outs of subsidies, a list of first nights, the latest job vacancies, etc. An ingenious search engine also provides you with a huge amount of online information from the database.

The quarterly information booklet *Courant* keeps performing arts professionals with special topics, in-depth articles and brief news items.

VTi staff also answer specific questions by phone, e-mail, fax or post.

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Colophon

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