

INTRO

(The following is read by Laura Colby over jazz music composed by Manual Cinema)

Hi, I'm Laura Colby and this is the Middle Woman, A Roadmap to Managing the Performing Arts. I'll be sharing personal anecdotes from my 30 years in the field, exploring the nitty gritty and the technicalities of this job. I'll tell you the story of how I got here and what it's taken for me to work in the industry of the performing arts.

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EPISODE 19

LAURA COLBY: Hello, this is Laura Colby. I'm the founder and president of Elsie Management, and I'm here today to talk about working internationally, very much from the perspective of taking U.S. artists work overseas. What it takes, how to do it, the challenges of exporting U.S. artists abroad. Not an easy task. And I'm so happy to have Anna Amadei, Elsie's Vice President.

ANNA AMADEI: Hello everyone.

LAURA: And Jimena Alviar, Elsie's Contract Manager.

JIMENA ALVIAR: Hello.

LAURA: Here today to be in this conversation because without their guidance and wisdom, we would not be doing this at Elsie Management.

Our history, my very, very first booking over a border, happened to be Brian Brooks. I believe that tour date was in 2001. It was for a solo that he was performing. I learned a lot in that first engagement because that was the very first time I ran into things like, Oh currency exchange. And yes, when you negotiate a \$5,000 fee in Canadian dollars on Tuesday, by next Wednesday, it could be a whole different math that \$5,000 Canadian may have dropped in US dollars, or it may have gotten stronger in US dollars. That's just one aspect to think about.

U.S. artists are at a disadvantage because they are not funded in the way their colleagues are in other countries around the world. They're not funded with sustaining annual operating funds. The amount of grant money available to US artists to create new work, sustained operations, let alone tour, is essentially nothing in comparison to their colleagues in other countries. And we especially

know about that because we represent artists from other countries, and we're very aware of how much money they get from their government to sustain their operations, to create a new work, to tour their work into North America.

So this is our painful reality for our U.S. artists. They cannot compete over borders because all of their expenses have to be covered by the paid fee. And so our presenters overseas constantly have sticker shock. Once in a while, we might be able to get the one grant that exists to cover some of their airfares. But that grant is administered by the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. It's called the USAI grant, U.S. Artists International grant. It's highly competitive and it's really hard to get. We can't count on any of that support. And so when we're quoting our U.S. Artists fees, our overseas presenters, they're more accustomed to it now than they were 25 years ago, but they're like, Oh, good God. I can't possibly cover that.

ANNA: And of course, you know, talking from the perspective of a foreigner and somebody who grew up in the performing arts field in Europe, I'm sure Laura, if there are European artists listening to this podcast, they would have, you know, completely different view about who is at a disadvantage. And I'm sure Latin Americans would say probably the same. I think the main difference here is that the specific support that other governments provide for touring internationally. The companies might not have specific funding to create works, but they do have access to grants and applications and European Union funding for exporting their work, at least to support the travel expenses and the housing and the per diems and everything that entails traveling.

The other great disadvantage is that the currency of the U.S. dollars has always been much stronger than all of the other currencies. So when it's time for those countries to book and bring over U.S. artists, they are faced with salaries that are much higher because they're needed because U.S. artists live. In the U.S. and they have to pay their bills in the U.S. and so their salaries respond to that need. And so the other countries see the amount that the U.S. artists ask for as humongous, you know, and completely out of their budget. So that's always been another challenge to export U.S. artists abroad.

LAURA: As someone managing a roster, you may not have the time to try to export your U.S. artists overseas. You may be just so focused on your backyard. Maybe that's just the tri-state area. Maybe it's the Midwest region, or you're very focused on the 50 states. That's a full time job, to begin with. So, how on earth do I start thinking about exporting these artists to South America or Europe or Australasia? Uh, it's a daunting task. I did not sit down at my desk one day and decide to do this.

That invitation for Brian Brooks came from the presenter in Montreal who had seen Brian showcasing at the APAP conference in New York City and she extended the invitation to Brian. So we made it happen. The next international engagements we inherited, which happened to be in the country of Spain. These were confirmed terms and we essentially executed, we serviced those engagements. So we learned a lot in correspondence with our Spanish colleagues. And then the next one was with a very established U.S. dance company that received an invitation to perform in Guatemala. And we were delighted to have this connection. Again, this was not something I sought out. That invitation came to me in my inbox one day and we pursued it and we got a contract and four weeks out to the engagement date the festival wrote to us and said we're canceling this date. And Anna had literally, you weren't even with me one year yet.

ANNA: No, definitely not.

LAURA: And you were acting as Contract Manager at that time.

ANNA: Yes, I remember this very clearly because it was a very enlightening moment for me. I remember when Laura and I had my job interview we did have a conversation about the fact that I was coming with an experience abroad and, you know, she was hoping that that would be, you know-

LAURA: And language skills.

ANNA: And language skills.

LAURA: You spoke four languages.

ANNA: And so she, you know, I remember Laura saying, well, you know, I would hope that eventually, you know, this could also open more doors for Elsie and the bookings in other parts of the world.

That day that the presenter in Guatemala wrote that email and say, we want to cancel, and Laura responded as she would do with any presenter that wants to cancel an engagement four weeks out. She literally pointed to the signed agreement and to the fact that the agreement said, well, you can cancel, but you still have to pay me the full fee. Cause the contract says so, we have an agreement in place. And I just remember just thinking for a moment, these people are just going to stop writing and this engagement is going to not happen and we have no power over this. And so I offered Laura to pick up the phone cause I had been in contact with these people to service the contract because it was doing contracts at the time. And I said, Laura, do you think I can pick up the phone and maybe have a

conversation with them? And she said, go right ahead. And I picked up the phone and we came to an agreement of slightly, reducing the fee.

LAURA: But the key here is that you were speaking in Spanish. So you had had some correspondence in Spanish via email, but when you suggested that you would place a phone call, that was a phone call in Spanish.

ANNA: In Spanish, yes.

LAURA: Speaking Spanish to someone on a different continent and a different culture than mine, and that was a huge asset for me. And the engagement went forward because of that.

ANNA: I offered that because of the cultural barrier. I was in the U.S. for less than a year and I kept seeing contractual and legal and the presence of lawyers in everything you do and all of the liabilities and the insurances. Things that we don't have to deal with in Europe, in Italy, especially, but, and I know in South America is also the same. Of course there are contracts and lawyers and courts and all of that, but the negotiation and the contractual work in Europe is very different and it's very personal. You do have to make friends and you do have to act like friends to make sure that an engagement goes through and that there are no surprises like that.

LAURA: Having Anna and Jimena, two women, not American-born coming from two different continents, Europe and South America, having them on my staff is a game changer in terms of the reach that we've been able to have at Elsie with other programmers over big oceans and across big borders. As we've talked about in previous podcasts, they have brought other work to our roster that I wouldn't otherwise have ever known about, but also, they have brought their world's perspective into the room, which has changed my lens and my capacity. Because this does get down to capacity, and it may be that your decision is, I can't even consider extending my work to include another territory, especially one that's over a big ocean and requires a completely different kind of handling. And that's understandable. And this gets back to the artist expectation. Because of course, every artist wants to perform in London, in Paris, in Adelaide, and Mexico City.

In my case, again, these first three overseas engagements coming 25 years ago happened because a presenter reached out to me. In the course of my work, through my attendance at international convenings, by invitation. I have had a presence, a consistent presence. Has that helped us with our overseas sales? Inevitably it has, but it's not the only thing. It's all of these things, your presence somewhere, be that at a conference or an industry convening in another country,

having that in your history, just showing up someplace can change everything for you.

I remember when I took my first trip to China, to Shanghai, The Western Arts Alliance supported my trip to Shanghai with this little delegation from the U.S. and I came back and I said to you. Yeah. No, we're not working in China. We are not working in China unless some magical China based producer raises their hand and says I want to represent these following companies. Because what I learned on that trip was that the Chinese market was incredibly emerging. It was overwhelming and daunting.

And I had the experience of many of our international colleagues who come to the U.S. and they're like, Oh my God, how do you do this? What a mess. How do you ever get a routed a tour? And I just laugh and say, it's, you know, it's a miracle. But in China, I was just like, yeah, no, we need someone who knows the ground, who knows the map of the land inside and out, who's a legit producer. And then we will gladly work with them. There was no way that I could even consider or take on or touch the Chinese market without that kind of knowledgeable expert there.

ANNA: Yeah. But I think that's really what we have learned throughout the years, like, even having a staff with international people, you know, you still have to work. I say we need a touring manager, a producer, an agent locally. We highly support this idea of yes, it's double agency. And yes, that might raise the fees or it might mean that you as an agent, you have to split your commission with someone else. It depends on what the agreement ends, you know, ends up being. But it is extremely helpful and healthy also for the benefit of the tours to have someone that knows the in and outs of a country, of a region, of the presenters on the ground and just organizes a tour locally.

JIMENA: Also because these people, these roles, will be talking to each other and will be working as the bridges for cultural differences, for language barriers, for everything that you two have mentioned, having that other person is going to help with communication, it's going to get things done faster, and everyone is going to be happy on both ends.

LAURA: Well, it gets back to the artist being on tour and being able to relax. So they're not always having to figure every situation out. If you send a U.S. company to Spain, for example, and no one speaks Spanish, you need an English and Spanish speaking person to be touring with that company. Not just as a translator, but as company manager, tour manager, some role on the ground. And again, our goal here is to put on a good show, kids, and the artist is not going to put on a good show if they feel abandoned and lost and they can't figure it out and they

don't know, when is lunch? where is lunch? I just need to be fed today, you know, before I have to go on stage at two o'clock, so.

ANNA: I think we tend to forget, especially now because we're so connected globally. back in the days, it's really just like 15 years, maybe 20 years ago. It was not like that. I think that, you know, the, the social media and the internet and the zoom and all of the new technologies, I think are changing the way we experience the touring internationally and to be internationally connected.

I think we can't forget the fact that there are a number of cultural barriers that we always have to face when we tour internationally. And not just when we actually tour and we are physically in another country, but also throughout the negotiation. I know I said this phrase before in the episodes. I always say it's a thin line. Because it is a thin line. Because you know how you're doing your work and you have a work ethic and you go by structured rules that have helped you build a business, but then you encounter the fact that you got to take those barriers down or flex your structure, because otherwise certain engagements and certain conversations would not happen.

LAURA: You have to be ready to compromise.

ANNA: Very ready to compromise.

LAURA: And, and adapt to the situation. So for example, our colleagues in Mexico. Mm hmm. Took us a while to figure out that those engagements are booked literally within the calendar year. Our Mexican presenters get their funding early on in January or February and they are straight out of the gate booking, booking, booking for that same exact calendar year.

So you have to have a stomach to be able to handle an invitation that comes literally three months out and your company has to be ready to jump. And maybe they can't work at that kind of speed for many, many, many reasons. And all of us have to be prepared for all of the different paperwork that all of it has to get notarized or some kind of stamp on it that we haven't heard about these stamps and, and we don't know what the hell are they talking about. And somehow we managed to comply. And then there's the money. And the negotiation process, are we getting paid in U.S. dollars, are we getting paid in Mexican pesos, what's the exchange rate today? And we have a list of logistical and practical things that we will go through. So, you may have set up a construct with, *this is how I work!* And it may be that you have to give it all up to be able to get that show in Mexico City.

JIMENA: Not just, this is how I work, this is my timing. And the timing is going to change no matter what, and it's going to depend on who you're talking to. And what is the workflow or the lines of hierarchy? We don't know what are the hoops that they have to go through or how many people, someone needs to convince for this tour to happen for these engagement to really go on. And maybe that timing is not going to match with ours. It's just a matter of understanding that every culture also works at a different time, just not in terms of the calendar year, but making decisions, looking at things. And someone can be really, really interested in bringing this company to their home country. But it might not happen

LAURA: Or they don't have the authority actually to be the person extending that invitation and you don't find that out until after you and your company have turned yourselves inside out to accommodate this request

JIMENA: To travel in a month.

LAURA: To travel in a month and then you get that classic "Oh, just kidding" or "the committee decided" or "my boss decided" and because you didn't know this person or the structure of their institution, you were not aware they zero authority to even remotely be the booker, if you will, to the programmer who shows up and makes the ask and can confirm the terms and then can actually execute the engagement.

I want to use an example of a U.S.-based outdoor spectacle company of ours, accepted an engagement in Mexico that ultimately they got down there and the engagement had been canceled. They were literally stranded at the airport. So these things happen and hopefully we hear about them so that we can be really honest with our clients when we get that, ask for that, Ooh, that sounds really good, like a great gig south of the border. But we can be like warning, warning, warning five years ago, the artists were actually never paid.

ANNA: When it comes to getting on an airplane and actually showing up in an airport, you want to make sure that you have a deposit or a contract signed or some sort of confirmation. Maybe let them purchase the airfare so that you don't get on an airplane without having the confirmation that the festival is going to happen.

LAURA: Let's talk about those, the list of logistics and practicalities, if you will. It is really important that you always ask, are visas necessary? And if you get a wishy washy answer back, *I'm not really sure*, you have got to go figure that out. We have been surprised to discover even a tourist visa can be a 15 page exhaustive process, 15 page per person on the tour, people, process. So. You must always ask, *does my company need visas to perform in your country?*

ANNA: Yeah. I mean, I think the latest example that we have for that, and yes, it's not a U.S. company traveling internationally, it's a Colombian company traveling internationally, but Sankofa Danzafrö is performing at the Venice Biennale, Dance Biennale in the summer, and Colombians don't need a visa to go to Europe anymore. The visa has been removed a couple of years ago and Colombians specifically this company, Sankofa Danzafrö, have just finished a tour in Europe that needed absolutely no visas.

But where did they go in Europe? In Spain and France. Now they're going to Italy. Do we need a visa to go to Italy? I mean, thankfully I know my people. And I know that when they say, *Oh, I'm not really sure*, you better dig. And in fact, we needed to apply for a visa because an engagement is actual work. And it's not just going as a tourist or on business. So we did have to file visas, which was a daunting process.

LAURA: And the other question you have to ask about is what is my taxation obligation? If you don't ask these two questions, you are doing yourself a huge disservice and you could get stuck at passport control and never get to that engagement. And also you could get a bill for the taxation.

JIMENA: You need a passport to travel internationally for sure. If you don't have it, you check the timing for getting it done or renewed before you're going to travel and with enough time for any delays. If you have lost a passport and reported it to any authorities as lost and then you found it, you still need a new passport.

LAURA: We found this out the hard way people!

JIMENA: And it's not fun. You don't want to be stopped at a point of entry at any country and being denied entry.

LAURA: Even though they're not stamping the damn passports, well, the majority of the time they're not stamping the passports. You still have to have enough blank pages.

ANNA: You know, they are definitely saying there are plenty of countries that do stamp the passport you do have to have enough pages.

LAURA: And what is enough pages now? A minimum of four?

ANNA: Well, you have to have at least three blank pages in your passport.

LAURA: Okay, okay.

ANNA: Like for sure. Most countries don't care. If you only have one, it's fine, as long as they have a little corner where to stamp your entry and your exit. But, you know, just make sure you have three pages. And if your passport has been in your bag for a year or, and it's, it's slightly damaged. The cover dented or, or detached a little, go get a new passport, go get a new passport because you're going to be stuck at the airport and sent back.

LAURA: Don't leave your passport in the back pocket of your jeans. Treat it like a very special document that cannot be bent, can't have any ripped pages, can't have a curled page or, a bent page. No, no, no, no, no.

JIMENA: And in terms of the expiration date, you got to make sure that you have at least six months from the date you enter that new country. So you're not going to run into any issues about like, no, no, no, you have to go back. So six months is the minimum.

LAURA: So let's count, let's count that as an example. So for example, if your passport expires on January 1st, 2025, don't even think about entering whatever country you're going to after July 1. That's six months.

ANNA: On that matter, yes, every single country has a different rule. But if you keep the six months rule in your head as a general guide, I think you will do yourself a big favor because yes, there will be countries that accept you to come in, even if your passport is going to expire in a month, as long as you have your, airfare to go back, you know, before the expiration of your passport, but just, you know, do yourself a favor and just keep the six months as a general rule in your head.

LAURA: Some other logistics and practicalities. When you are negotiating the engagement, you want to be sure to build in rest days into the schedule. So if you are flying, for example, to Lisbon, Portugal, from Chicago for just a festival in Lisbon, you don't, you don't want to have your company arrive on Tuesday and load-in on Wednesday and probably perform Wednesday night. That is brutal. That's really really hard on the artist. You have to build in an extra day. So if they arrive on Tuesday, they get Wednesday off as in nothing, no nothing, and then Thursday they can load-in and if they do have a same day load in a show, fine, then they can perform Thursday night. But this is also part of the goal of putting on a good show folks. You want your artists to be well rested and to be ready to deliver the performance.

You also need to know how long this stuff takes. How long does it take me to get to Lisbon, Portugal from Chicago? Oh, wow, it does actually take two full days to get to Australia. I'm taking two days out of my calendar. Damn straight, I need a day off once I get down under.

Another thing to think about is altitude, because some of us are very sensitive to altitude, and some of us don't know that until we get to altitude. "Being at altitude," my understanding is anything over 5,000 feet. And as someone who is sensitive to altitude, I know how crippling it can be to the point of almost being taken to the hospital. And I do know people who have been hospitalized with altitude sickness. You don't want to have that happen to your company. So again, know what the altitude is that they're landing at, prepare them for altitude. There are actually medications they can take in advance that will help mitigate the altitude sickness. But again, you must build in an extra day. So this is interstate We've got a team flying into Denver and performing in Breckenridge, Colorado, for example, this year, and that team is from Cleveland, Ohio. We built in a day for them to acclimate because they really, really need it.

ANNA: And just always remember that when you add a day off, you have to build that into your budget because that is going to add up on salaries and per diems for your artist. And also when you have to adjust to altitude, you want to build in into your tech rider that you need oxygen backstage.

LAURA: And you might need oxygen in the hotel room.

ANNA: Yep.

JIMENA: Even if you don't know if you are sensitive, Do not hesitate to ask for oxygen if you're starting to feel like not yourself. It might be just that, that with oxygen everything will get fixed and maybe the local person will recognize those symptoms and will be able to say, *oh, this is it. Like, let's fix it this way.*

LAURA: And with climate change, of course, this is a real issue. Not only climate events causing more, more, more force majeure, force majeure "called shows," force majeure "called events," which can, yes, end up canceling your show, but climate change, meaning our outdoor spectacle companies, who, their tech writers all say know performing over 93 degrees. Last summer, they were all performing at 95, 98. And then here in New York, it was compounded by the smoke that had come down from the Canadian fires. So this is real. This is so real people. I think we had nine shows for that company. And we, the company called one of them. There was one day where the show was at high noon or one o'clock and they were

like, okay, okay, we cannot do this today in this 98 degrees. And of course, we're here to stand behind them and say, yep, you're absolutely right.

And there are other times when it's the presenter who calls it. So last year we had a situation where one of our outdoor spectacles was positioned outside in a garden, in a lawn area, and that presenter chose to move it inside into a lobby space, which is not artistically in artistic aesthetic alignment with that particular show, but it worked, and the gig went on, and everyone was in AC, and no one was in the 98 degrees.

JIMENA: Climate and weather is that depending on where you're going, check the temperature and really check the context. I'm going to put Colombia, my country, as an example. We don't have seasons, but we do have different weather and climate depending on where you are. So, not just because we are at the equator, it means hot weather. If you go to my city, Bogota, it's high altitude and it's fall weather, cold weather, that you thought you were going to the beach, and wearing sandals and then you're freezing. And maybe the theaters do not have the heat system or heating system that you really need. So it's going to be like, uh-oh, I don't have the proper clothing to warm up.

LAURA: Another logistic to always keep in mind is what currency are you negotiating in? And you may be told by the presenter in Canada, I have to pay you in Canadian dollars. Okay, fine. If they say the fee is 12,000 Canadian, at the point of negotiation, when you are accepting that fee, you need to know what that translates into in U.S. dollars and what you have just agreed to. And then, when either dollar makes a move, then what? Because you might be negotiating that fee a year in advance. By the time you're actually paid, you're looking at completely different math. So a couple of ways to mitigate this is to agree to that 12,000 Canadian, and in your contract say *today that equals 11,000 US*. We have often used a sentence that says, if the currency fluctuates in more than five percent either direction, the presenter agrees to pay X, or the equivalent of X, and will name a U.S. dollar.

ANNA: Yeah. I think in the very last agreement that we had, there was a stretch for the fee, because again, Canadian dollars is weaker than the U.S. dollar, so the presenter had less money than what we actually needed, right? So it was already a stretch, but that's how we put it in the agreement, we, we said we accept the fee in Canadian dollars, but it does not have to be less than this amount.

LAURA: It cannot be less.

ANNA: Cannot be less than this amount.

LAURA: It cannot be less than this amount. So you just need to be careful with all of that. You also need to answer the simple question, who's paying for all these transfer fees? Because what's great is that you can get paid via transfer. But who's paying for the transfer fees? So don't just assume that you are not paying for those transfer fees.

JIMENA: In terms of currency, if you are expecting or you want to have cash in hand, when you arrive at that country, put that into your contract. If it's either the per diem or you need a payment. So everyone has money upon arrival, just make sure that it's included in your contract, how much, how you want to distribute it, anything like that. It's always helpful to have it and make sure about that exchange rate so you understand that the per diem is really covering the needs of your team, of your, of your group.

LAURA: I would also add that points to credit cards and debit cards. You don't want to be traveling without credit cards and debit cards that work. So, I have gone through my entire wallet, you know, when one Visa doesn't work and one MasterCard doesn't work. I just keep doling out the credit cards until I find one that works. There's never an explanation as to why that one didn't work and this one did work, but I have been so grateful that I had multitudes of debit and credit cards in my wallet that I could at least try. So you want to be careful. You don't want your company going overseas with one card that works because that one card may not work when you get over there. And of course you should check with your bank and you should say to them, Hey, I'm going to Lisbon, Portugal next week. Don't shut me down the first time I purchase that cup of coffee in the airport when I get there, like, don't do that. And you should also know what charges your bank is charging you for every time you use that credit card or debit card. And you might want to make a different bank choice because that bank does not charge you an exchange rate fee.

In the U.S., you can't rent a car without an actual credit card. So don't come into this country with your debit card, thinking you can rent a car, because in most cases you will not be able to do so.

ANNA: Another logistic and practicality is when you book your airfares for entire companies. Our suggestion to you is that you have access to somebody on the phone about the group, because if anything happens and you have to change 19 airfares and, they're not all going to be on the same flight, maybe because there's not room on the same flight if you have to change it, then, you will really want to speak to somebody, over the phone.

LAURA: That over the phone part to me means 24/7. I need to be able to make that phone call at 2 in the morning wherever I am and get a human who will change those 19 airfares. So just take caution. And so if you do book your flight with Expedia, Anna's had experience with some Expedia insurance that has served her well. That's great. My default is to buy directly with the airline. And I know the carrier I'm working with, and I know that they will take my phone call at two in the morning. But just know what you're getting into. Don't book airfares where there's no one on the other end.

ANNA: Yeah. I know that there are agencies and services that do that for you, like there are travel agents that, you know, do that for you. When Irene, hit New York, and we were all stranded in Brazil for an extra week. The company management would receive phone calls as soon as two seats were available on a flight and then she would call the next day and then she would call the next day. So every day somebody would get a call. On a flight.

LAURA: Wow.

ANNA: Because she had that personal contact that would give her a call or that she could reach out to. So it does make the difference.

JIMENA: Talking about insurance, I just wanna say that, yeah, it might seem like it's an extra expense, but it's worth it. The travel insurance, just not so you can rebook your flights, but also just in case someone gets hurt or sick. Just like with altitude or food poisoning, let's hope not, but if someone gets injured or something else happens, you lose your suitcases, your costumes, anything else, you need to be covered.

I think this question is very important and I want to ask you to tell us or share with us, what is your main or biggest motivation for touring internationally? What was it back then when you two started and has it changed and what is it now?

LAURA: Well, I can tell you when that invitation first came for Brian Brooks to go to Canada, I mean, I was thrilled. I mean, Montreal, it's hardly foreign, you know, we can drive, right? Back then you didn't even need a passport to get into Canada. That was really a thrill, the fact that Brian was going to be able to perform the work internationally for the first time. So for the artist, because we work at the service of our artists. And the majority of them absolutely want to reach audiences everywhere. So if that means over a border or over a gigantic ocean, they are just so thrilled to share their work with people who they might otherwise never meet. Even in the great metropolis of New York City, where they're exposed to a very

international audience, but we represent artists from all over the states and all over the world.

So for each of them, I know every time our international companies come into the United States, especially that first meeting with a U.S. audience, They are so blown away, and here they love to talk about the response, and where the responses are different in the work, and how that registers and resonates with different audiences.

It's the same thing when U.S. artists go overseas. They get to share their work, their aesthetic genre, multidisciplinary language, and their renderings. With a completely different audience and there are learnings there really deep learnings and powerful exchanges that can happen post-show when they actually get to talk to the audience because I get most of our artists go straight out into the house and want to meet their audiences right away. So, that is a thrill.

Now Here we are 30 years later, definitely our exporting of our artists it's integral to our ambition for the artists we represent. And we talk a lot about the global stage. And we feel very strongly that each of the artists we represent is "worthy" of the global stage. So yes, their work should be seen in Hong Kong and it should be seen in Avignon. It should be seen all over the world, should be seen in Montreal and Vancouver.

And also, this is the part where, me traveling to these industry convenings over, over, and over, and over again, these last 30 years has made a difference because there are some key connections I've been able to make. In spite of all the challenges that we've already talked about today, and some of those people still have their jobs year after year, not all of them, but I get to have the continuity of an aesthetic programming conversation with these presenters.

It's tricky with the festivals because the festivals constantly change programmer with more frequency. That's harder. But again, when the Adelaide Festival calls you and says they want to book Manual Cinema, you say, hell's yes. And you make it happen. Like that was, wow. That was none of my doing. Maybe, maybe I didn't make a direct phone call there. We made it easy for the Adelaide Festival to find us, that we represent Manual Cinema and make that invitation.

ANNA: I think every time we promote or help and facilitate any kind of cultural exchange, I think that's the main reason behind touring internationally. And then of course there is the fact that for some reason, you know, both for foreign artists to come to the U.S. and for U.S. artists to go abroad, it does give you recognition and it is definitely, you know, building up your resume as a company or as an artist

because you've been called to perform in Hong Kong, or you've been called to perform in Europe. And I do believe that, especially now with the reach of, new technologies and social media and the internet, you know, we do get calls and we do get emails requesting artists because they have just been seen on the internet and maybe they, one of their videos became viral and-

LAURA: Or they saw a post on Instagram.

ANNA: On Instagram.

LAURA: That happened.

ANNA: Just a simple, simple, you know. I do strongly believe that your presence. When you've gone to Australia for 12 times in a row and being present at APAMS and, visited our companies abroad and visiting theaters and, people know you they might have collected your marketing material once and it just sits on their desk and then they come across an Instagram post and they're like, *Oh, geez, Manual Cinema, right. That's the company Laura talked to me about, you know, five years ago, seven years ago.* So it does really resonate, the international presence and you moving around as a manager or representative. It's a game changer.

LAURA: We can be faced with very powerful aesthetic differences when we travel. And Anna and I have both had scenarios where we have been approached by people who say things straight to our face like, *Oh, there's nothing interesting happening in U.S. dance.* You know, we just want to curl up and die because of course we know there's so much happening and it's such a massive country. We don't even know the half of it. Artists are making so much work everywhere that we never get to see. An ounce of it gets to travel overseas. So I know, as a U.S. born citizen, that there really is a bias, especially in Europe. About U.S. work, and that has a lot to do with politics. It has a lot to do with the pervasiveness of U.S. culture everywhere. And yeah, they've had enough. And I remember internally, where it became clear that the European market was like, Anna, let's book some more shows in South America. Like, can you go do that again? You know, so, because those territories became so much more viable, especially because we weren't being faced with a bias against programming U.S. companies, but that's a real thing.

ANNA: Yeah, it was definitely a real thing. And that's, I feel like one of the most powerful challenges because it is, believe it or not, the bias are much stronger to take down than the language barriers or even the economical barriers. You can find the money, but if there is a cultural bias against your work, believe me, it's over. I mean, it's very, very hard to change somebody's mind. They have to see you, which brings us to the conversation of all of the showcases opportunities that you have

abroad, but you really have to work hard to show that there is something happening in the U.S. that is worth bringing, you know, abroad.

LAURA: Thank you listeners. I hope that this was helpful. and gives you some insight as to what it takes to U. S. artists to take your work over big oceans and across borders. As always, you know what I'm going to say? Go see a show! My god, go see a show! And we'd love to know what you saw and what happened to you in the presence of that artist and that experience.

Drop us a line. Until next time!

(Fade out with jazz music by Manual Cinema)