

# Transcript podcast Portfolio: Production

Lux Jongen 210597, 15-12-2023

Lux: Hello, Thanks for doing this. Would you like to introduce yourself?

Bas: Yes, sure, sure. I'm Bas Schultz. I'm a freelancer in the event industry and I mostly do technical production or drawing in CAD.

Lux: Okay, and at which companies do you do this?

Bas: Well, actually that varies a lot. Uhm, currently I'm very busy for ESNS, Eurosonic Noorderslag and besides that I'm also busy with Stadsfestival Hilversum and with a theatre production in Harderwijk, the city I live in. Actually, during the year a lot of clients.

Lux: And how did you get here? How did you get into this world, this job? Did you do a study for it?

Bas: Uhm, actually it, yeah, sure, sure. Well how it went is that with my group of friends, way back in time, we organized a party once a year. And I really liked that, and it kept growing bigger and bigger. And um eventually I thought wow I really like this, maybe I want to do more with this. And then eventually I needed to choose a study, and then I chose for Cultural Social Education, and within that I did a minor event management. Thus, this grew bigger and bigger and I started organizing bigger events on my own name. So then I started with a small rock festival, since I really love music. And then eventually when I also finished my studies, I became a freelancer, which was actually necessary because you couldn't really find work in the events industry. So I did, I think it was in 2010, I think I had send out like 50 application letters.

Lux: Wow that's a lot

Bas: Yes very lot, and I think I got at 5, at all, a response. But because I really wanted it, I thought I would just become a freelancer and then just see where it would end. And uhm, at first it was really hard to find assignments, and now 14 or 15 years later my agenda is almost always really full with nice jobs, so it actually worked out.

Lux: And, you said you also draw a lot, also 3d drawings a lot, how did you learn to do this? Did you follow a course somewhere? Was it in your study or did you do it yourself? Or maybe did you learn it at work somewhere?

Bas: No it was from myself, I'm just a bit of a nerd, not in the negative sense of the word. But I have always liked to work with computers and uhm especially that drawing work spoke to me, if I saw people doing that. So then I started trying around, and yeah, the first time I believe, I was busy for 3 or 4 hours to only draw one fence. Uhm but eventually I started drawing more and more, because I also think it matches with the job of a site producer. And eventually I bought the software, and yeah, then you oblige yourself to put some time into it uhm, now I am I think half of the week busy with drawing event sites, and the last few weeks I also try to draw this in 3d. Which has some pros when comparing it to a 'flat' drawing.

Lux: And what kind of pros are this?

Bas: Well, what you see for example with the production of ESNS, there I am working at the artist village, with you of course. What you see is that we build the artist village at a new terrain. So for all of our colleagues and suppliers it's something new. We are going to put some tent and a lot of decorations. It's for you and for me very clear what it is going to look like since we are busy with it every day. But I noticed, also before, that when having a 2d drawing not everyone has the same image. And you have, well there are missing a few part whereby you get a clearer picture. And with those 3d drawing you can some, someone, very accurately what its going to look like, what you are going to build. How sightlines are at the terrain, if you are going to see a banner which is hang up at some point or not. Or if there needs to be any more lighting at a certain spot, because otherwise it would be a very dark place. It are all small things, but because of this you can already arrange it

before, and because of this the building up becomes more relaxed, since you already tackled these problems beforehand.

Lux: Would you recommend new upcoming producers to also learn how to draw?

Bas: Uhm yes and no

Lux: Why?

Bas: Yes, because it is really fun. And no because it takes a lot of time to learn. And the basics are fine to learn, but do you really want to be good and fast at it and accurate, then it just costs a lot of time, and you really need to want to invest this time into it. I really like that, but I notice that even my who work with it for 10 years, that I still, since I draw half of the week, that I still learn a lot of new things. It's the same as playing the guitar, if you sometimes play guitar well then you can play it but if you play it 7 days a week, only then you will become a good guitarist. So I think that if you really want something with it you will have to make a lot of time free for it. But I think it would be valuable for everyone if you at least know the basics, about how do you read the drawing, but also drawing small things like, so I really recommend the basics.

Lux: And you also talked about that you do a lot of productions, what was the largest one you ever did? Or where they all equally sized?

Bas: Uhm, well I have, I worked a few years for lowlands, and that always is very intensive building up and break, then I always was almost a month at the location. Uhm but the most, the most challenging was the Bio scholarship at the IJsselhallen in Zwolle. That was a convention for which I did site and technical production, with almost 400 exhibitors. And that was a bit more then 20.000 m2 floor. And uhm the challenge there was, it was an events hall, and it was a very busy event season so we needed to put the lights, and actually everything which had to do with the roof so also electricity and water in the roof months before. Because we had less then 24 hours for the building up, because the evening before there was some bird convention. So when the last bird was being caught, so to speak, the floor was already done for our event. So in the middle of the night we needed to put all of the 20.000 m2 of floor down. It was a real challenge, but eventually it all did work out. So when the doors opened everything was finished, so that was super nice, a really beautiful assignment.

Lux: Do you have any idea how big the team was? I'm just wondering? Because since you had so little time, you would think, the more people the faster?

Bas: Yes if you, well it was more a thing with the suppliers. Because production wise you just make sure you have everything done on time. But I thing, from my head, that the stand builder which also did the carpet, had a crew of 20 or 30 people to lay down the carpet. Uhm and when the carpets were done, they went on to build the stands. Then you had 5 or 7 people doing the electricity and 2 or 3 for the water. And then some people who did the decorations and also all of the exhibitors, so I think that there were like 200 people. On the quite moments. But I think well if you have 400 exhibitors, they all bring someone and all need to build up. So on busy moment there were probably more people but I think that mostly there were like 200 people working.

Lux: Yeah that's a lot indeed.

Bas: Yes sure, sure, and especially at a festival terrain you don't see al of the people because its so big, but when you are in a hall you can see everyone, that's very fun, you can just with one look see what you are doing.

Lux: And then another question. Are there things you struggle with as a producer? Things you find hard about this job?

Bas: Well, what you have as a freelancer, well you work for multiple clients and you want to show to everyone that you are there for them. So if they have a question they can always call me, and if they have an emergency so if they say shit I have to adjust that in a drawing because otherwise the fire brigade won't accept. Then I rather not say, well I'm now busy with ESNS but in about 2 weeks you

are the first, well that I find not that nice. And I also think its very important to say, oke I will do that for you today. And that is sometimes not necessarily hard, but a challenge. To be available and of meaning for everyone. I always feel bad if clients would come into trouble because I do not have time, so to speak. So that is sometimes a bit of a puzzle and costs some extra hours, but it also comes with the job so that also kind of makes it fun.

Lux: Yes, but you never had something which made you think well I'm going to quit?

Bas: Yes, very often daily. No way, no. Of course you've had moments, but that's that's more when I look back to the old days. In the early days I still did a lot, a lot of night shifts and that that was just part of it. Then it was actually the rule. One year you do day shift and the next year you do night shift. For example, for the Black Cross in the old days. But yes, I regularly had this feeling of, "Oh, what did I get myself into, why am I doing this? Because yes, nobody is actually there. In all honesty, I don't think anyone is waiting to go out in the rain in the middle of the night. For example, putting berries on at the Passion. And the best example was I. At the Passion in Amsterdam we had to place berries and that was one of the last jobs and we started in the morning at 8:00 am. I think it was already 10:00 in the evening, but some things went wrong so I had to put some barriers on my own and a colleague went to do something else and it just had to be finished. So don't complain and finish the job. So then I put up some forty or fifty meters of barriers by myself, which was already very difficult and, well, very difficult to do. So I think at about one o'clock, or well, sometime very late, so in the middle of the rain completely soaked, got your fingers between everything ten times. I had the barriers standing and then I got asked through the portophone the question what color barriers I had used and then I said well the color you asked me. Yes yes, so it should actually be a different color.

Lux: Oh oh oh.

Bas: Oh, Yes. So yeah. Then I did indeed thought yes, why? What am I doing here? Then I took them away again and a different color of barrier and then, I think, it was 2.00 or 3:00 a.m. or something. And yes, those were moments. You can laugh really hard about them now. I also often still joke about it with the man who gave me that assignment. But yes, no, those are the things that sometimes make you think, what am I doing? But yes, that is part of the job. It's often fun and sometimes it sucks, but that doesn't matter.

Lux: Yes. And you just said, you want to be available to everyone, so to speak. And you're a freelancer, so you take on your own jobs. So do you have a certain limit that you set for yourself of well, I only have so many jobs at a time, so to speak.

Bas: What I actually.

Lux: That you're not taking on more than five jobs at a time or so.

Bas: No I haven't, but would be a good resolution though. What I often do is I do a little assessment for myself of, I always plan myself, I always say I work four days a week. Because in practice it are five. And then with a few rush jobs and then that still sometimes becomes six. And that does make you, I used to work every day and often long hours. And now I have been able to reduce that a bit so that you can just have a normal weekend now and then, when there is no festival season or when you are not doing a very busy job. So that's really nice. And then, then you can also just divide yourself a little better for clients. Only last year I had a moment where I had three totally new jobs. And that makes it very difficult when you're doing something you've done before. Then it's often a bit of copy paste from last year. And some tweaking and some new stuff. But if you have to think of everything from scratch and then with three assignments at the same time, I noticed that it requires a lot. Because, yes, you have to think everything through and you have nothing to fall back on, like, well, how did we do that last year?

Lux: Yes. and yes. Yes that yes I understand that.

Bas: Yes, that's really tricky yes.

Lux: Yes. And again actually a completely different question. Do you have any trends that you notice in this industry? So I know for example AI is pretty much a trend now in the marketing world because obviously you can easily get pictures and text written with that. But are there things like that where you think oh, now that I'm working at different companies, I notice that since this year all of a sudden this has happened a lot. Think for example. You obviously have in the festival world that everybody is a little tight, often with budget since Covid. But there are some other things like that that you notice?

Bas: Well the main thing that strikes me, which I'm very happy about, is that. The reason of course is very annoying, because of covid there are quite a lot of people in the event industry who went to do something else and got stuck there. Which is what you see now. In any case, what I see is that more clients make decisions earlier: we want to organize a festival and we would like to hire you for that. So before, sometimes it took quite a long time before you finally got an agreement, so it also took quite a long time before you could actually start producing a festival. Yes, and then you, secretly, ended up having quite a bit of little time to do that. And then you sometimes had only a few months to produce a festival. And now I see that there are more and more parties that have already made up their minds: okay, this is what we're going to do, let's get started. So, for example, I am now working on the Hilversum stadsfestival. Last year we started quite late. That was also a licensing issue, but I've been working on it for a month now and it's not until next summer. The same goes for Straband a Street Theater Festival in Harderwijk. I've also been working on that for over a month now for next summer. That's in June, So that's really nice, because then you have less pressure as a self-employed person and you can plan things a little better for yourself. And that makes everything more relaxed and therefore more fun. So I think that's a very nice development.

Lux: Yes, I can imagine. Um, yes. Have you ever had a blunder that you thought no, you're not serious. I ordered, I don't know, the wrong thing. Or that your crew was 500 people and gathered on the wrong day or something. Blunders like that?

Bas: Yeah, well. I have, of course. What I said briefly at the beginning, I my always organized my own little festival and that ended up getting pretty, I thought, pretty big. We ended up having about 3,000 visitors every year and we had four stages and well that ended up being quite a whole thing to produce. And yes, if you actually, all the mistakes that you could ever make, I think I made those there. So that, that was not very helpful for myself, but because of that you now know where things can go wrong. But yes, of course those are the very basic things that all your suppliers and your crew are out front. While I myself was just still in bed and overslept because I had drunk some nice beers the night before. Yeah so then you arrive at once and then there's literally twenty people waiting for you who also for the most part volunteered to be there for you. Yeah, yeah, yeah, that. And yes, when you ask a question like that I always think of what have we, what have I always fucked up. But that's, that's secretly always been quite a lot. The last few years it's not too bad.

Lux: Okay.

Bas: So because of that I really have to think about it. But it just doesn't come into mind and, a really nice one to share. Of which I, think of, well I can tell those too without being ashamed to death, so to speak.

Lux: Doesn't matter, doesn't matter. And then time is almost up. And I actually have one last question and that is. Do you have any tips? For young or emerging producers?

Bas: Um.

Lux: Things that you really should know, should learn. Or things like um, how do you really get a good network? In this world. Or that sort.

Bas: Well, if I look at how it was when I started in the event industry, that was. That was basically the whole story of if you're lucky, you get to volunteer somewhere. And then, then you just work 100 hours in a week, work your ass off. And then, if you're lucky, you get to then, you get an envelope of €100 once. And you did that because you wanted to get into that work. And eventually the envelope of €100 was that you could send an invoice for €200 and it all became a bit more. And so you, then got into the industry because you showed that you just wanted to work hard. And I think that is something that still

applies today, that it is very important to show that you can work hard. But in addition to that, it's also very important that above all, you're just really nice as a person. Because yes, I really like working with someone who can work hard, but I like even more working with someone who works a little less hard, but which is a very nice, very nice person, especially when I do have to go on a job with that person for two weeks. And mostly I think it's just about your attitude. Making sure that you show that you're eager to be there and that you're willing to learn. Yes, and that, I think that's always the most important thing. For example, I really enjoy explaining things to people or showing them of well, how do I do that or how does someone else do that? And if I notice that people are really genuinely enthusiastic about the work and just really like the work and yes, then it's fine. Then it's all right to explain things a hundred times. And even if there is no time for it at all, then I'll make time for it. Because I think it's very cool when someone shows they have passion. And yes, whether you happen to be the very best in the class or not at all. As long as you really want it. And if you're a nice person, yeah then, then you have that favor factor. And yes, that's always, make sure that you get that. And yes. And then eventually just make yourself indispensable so that they never want to get rid of you. Yes or especially also can't.

Lux: Yes. Okay, well thanks anyway. Time pretty much ended. Anything else you really want to share? Something you think oh, this is something I really want to share. This is interesting. Or not really?

Bas: Well, I think I've said most of it and well, especially what you indeed said. For people or for young producers. Yeah, if you, if you think you want to get into this work, go for it. It is, it's an industry where there's still a lot of people wanted, where there's still quite a shortage of good people. And yes, so in that respect, we could use a few more people. Worldwide even, I think. So go, yes, go for it. Absolutely.

Lux: Okay. Would you maybe introduce yourself?

Ewa: Yes I am Ewa Minderman. I'm thirty years old, live in The Hague and have been working in the events industry since I was seventeen or so I think. Not professional right away, but I always see it as that's when I took the first step and really got into it. And currently I work at de Nobel, poppodium Nobel in Leiden as production manager and I also have my own company on the side, doing freelance assignments from time to time to keep up to date with the industry and occasionally explore the field a bit more.

Lux: Okay, and you just indicate of you started at seventeen. What did you start with then? What did you do then?

Ewa: I was doing a study that I didn't like very much. That was cultural social education. That's a little more socially oriented. And I then got, I then came into contact with someone who was doing theater and she said that at this theater school where she was teaching, she was organizing a festival and that that person could use help. And that was actually the first time I got involved with production. I then kind of became an assistant production and helped build that theater festival. And then I thought, oh, I like that so much, that I want to learn more about it, and so I tried again to get admission to a study in which I was more interested. That was Music Management at the Utrecht School of the Arts and luckily I was admitted the second time around. And that was the right choice, because I finished it. And besides my studies I organized a lot of events and dance nights at band nights. I volunteered a lot. I also volunteered for everything and anything. Yes, so actually from the age of seventeen in that way a little bit rolled into it.

Lux: Okay. And you just said of so now you're doing production at the Nobel. Do you do anything in addition to that? Things as a production person, say as a producer.

Ewa: Um, not necessarily as a producer. Assignments come and go and I always see what I can handle besides my work at The Nobel. So it depends a little bit. I do mostly freelance DJing, but I also do stage management, for example. I have a regular job for the Sniester festival in The Hague for example. I just got asked for that one ago, for next year. That's fun. Yes, that's really fun, So that's kind of nice that I have these recurring events that I do on a regular basis. And every now and then I pick up assignments that I see passing by, for example on the internet or through calls. For example, last year in the summer I spent an entire summer doing production for a kind of camping tour of spoken word artists and that was really more in the role of a producer though. But in terms of production, it's

kind of hard to do other production jobs in addition to my actually 38 hour work week at the Nobel. Because production just takes a lot of time and especially when you're going towards a big production, at the beginning when you start with such a production you might only have a few hours a week that you fill, but the closer you get, the more hours you spend on it and then it's a little harder to combine.

Lux: Yes. And then are there things that you find difficult in your work? Or just things that you come across that you sometimes run into?

Ewa: Um. I think um, what can be difficult sometimes is the workload. And you see that now, very much at a lot of other venues. Not just venues, but just festivals, regular festivals or freelancers you see that more and more. Not only as a producer, but also, for example, as a technique person. The workload is getting higher and higher because there. There are a lot more demands. Productions have become more difficult. People want more and more and more. Quite a lot is expected of you. You have to be able to handle a lot, a lot of stress. And you see more and more that, at venues also, that there are more and more productions. For example, to fill the gap of the subsidy which is getting smaller and smaller, but because of that, the team is not getting bigger to handle all the productions. Also in the end, increasing the workload. And that's really something I do worry about a little bit in this industry. That you see more and more burn outs coming by. And I really find that very difficult about work, because everyone likes it so much, but you actually get paid relatively little for what you do. While it is very crookedly regulated here in the Netherlands. If you look at the theater sector, for example. The theater sector has a very different collective employment agreement than the cultural pop stage sector, so to speak, while we actually do the same work. And I find that especially actually, that's the hardest thing about the work. The work itself I really enjoy and is very innovative and that brings challenges, but in a fun way. But the, the financial side, the workload, that is difficult yes.

Lux: And are there things that you do for yourself to handle this? Or ways that you have or something to kind of get out from that pressure? Or does that not really work because you just get assignments and just have to do them?

Ewa: Um, I think it should always be negotiable. Um, that's especially important actually. Yes. And I think it's becoming more and more discussable. It's much more normal now to raise this issue. Then I think five years back or ten years back. People are becoming more open about this problem and at all, it's becoming less and less of a taboo to talk about mental problems or physical problems as well, even in the work environment. So I think that's mostly the most important thing that, communication is key in this case. And especially keep checking with your colleagues about how you want to tackle things or how you can best tackle it together. Yes, I think that is very important. And indeed, looking at what can I handle? Can I handle additional assignments during a very busy period? In addition to that? Or do I leave that for a while? No matter how difficult I find that. Because I think it is very important, if you work in this industry, to also visit other places to see where you can learn more. And how people do things differently. What you can bring back to be able to grow or improve again in your regular work, for example. Yes.

Lux: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I get that. Um, okay, I actually have a whole other question as well. Um, yeah, um, what? Say in all your entire career as a producer? Have you ever made a really big blunder that you think oh no, now there's 500 people waiting for me somewhere and I said a day early or something, You know, things like that?

Ewa: Um, I don't really think necessarily big blunders in terms of production. I think that's all not too bad. And um, I think the mistakes that were made or things that went differently than normal are always fixed on the night itself or during such a production itself. I think for myself, the biggest blunder I've made is in my freelance career that I didn't put agreements on paper properly in advance. And that's something I do now always take with me to everything I do in the production field. Whether it's for freelance assignment or just for my regular work. I then had an assignment at a beach club for a festival and something was expected of me and I could do it, in the end, it was a far too high demand that they made, so I couldn't fulfill it. Ehm. And because those agreements were never put down on paper or the expectations were never expressed from either side, I ended up quitting the assignment early and I said, you guys get a discount on the invoice and in the end they almost didn't want to pay me because of no agreements were properly made in advance. So that's that may have been my

biggest blunder and I think since then I always do when I've had an appointment with someone, whether it's for a rental party coming to the Nobel for example or whether I've been in conversation with someone myself for a freelance assignment. I always mail after with: Hey, this was discussed, this is what we expect from each other, it goes this way and that and we, for example price agreements I always make a note immediately and that way I actually prevent this blunder from ever happening again. It also ensures that communication between both parties stays good.

Lux: Yes, yes, yes. Does indeed sound like something you don't want to do again. No.

Ewa: No, definitely. No.

Speaker2: And then? Well, one more. One, actually a whole other question. Um. You notice in this industry you sometimes hear of trends. Think of things like sustainability or budget. Things like that. Or marketing, for example. There's a very big trend right now, chat GPT, so AI, that that's coming up so to speak. And do you have anything that you notice during your work as a producer that you think oh, this has really grown a lot in the last few years, you see this everywhere. I do think this is going to be something or not.

Ewa: Ehm yes, is quite difficult to put it that way. I don't think there are necessarily really certain trends that. It's not like fashion or anything, that you see new trends every year. What I do see is that indeed. Sustainability, what you say is really high on the list. And especially the justification for why you're making things more sustainable at festivals, comes up a lot. You see more and more that there that you have to pay a token for or turn in a token for a cup. To keep it all cleaner, which also reduces cleanup costs. You see explanations everywhere why things are recycled or things are used preserved for décor. I see that a lot especially at festivals. I think that's definitely a good point, because it gives us a much better understanding of what the impact is of organizing a festival. Because that's just not really green. But they do try to do it as green as possible and I'm certainly in favor of that. What I also see in the area of for example club tours of artists is that you certainly see with Dutch artists that they want to pull all out to make their club tour as big and bold as possible. They no longer come with just a band, they also come with a lot of decor. I see LED screens coming more and more often, and that certainly brings production challenges. It means that we spend a lot more time building up and breaking of the production, which means that we have to spend more on personnel. At all, everything costs much more. You see that tickets are going up because the productions are getting much bigger. And more and more people also expect you to come up with something fat. Look at a Ziggo dome, for example. You can't just put your band there anymore. You either have to put up a catwalk, for example, so you can have contact with everyone. The bracelets that Coldplay always brings, for example. I see more and more fireworks, sparkles, confetti. All kinds of things are brought along to make it a kind of experience. But that also means that all fans have to pay a much higher amount to really experience the concert. And you see that not only in the international tours, but also in the Dutch artists who just tour in the Netherlands, for example. It's getting bigger and much more complicated, which also brings challenges, which means you have to spend much more time preparing for it.

Lux: Yes, and so you notice this when you're working for the Nobel. I assume?

Ewa: Yes definitely. For example, if we look at productions that we were doing two years back, we were doing, say, 250 productions in a year with much less staff to do that. And now we're doing maybe something like 300 productions. Well, that's already a lot higher, but with a much larger team because otherwise we can't handle it anymore to be able to prepare all the productions properly. That's really because you see that there are just much bigger productions, much bigger and more complicated because the audience actually expects that a little bit. And the artist wants to deliver that as well. You see that people are getting more and more creative, which I certainly stimulate, but it is also difficult to keep up with that on the side where I am. Because if we have to keep going at this pace, yes, what will we still be doing in a pop venue three years from now.

Lux: Having to grow more you mean?

Ewa: Yes, exactly. Whereas No. Yes, exactly. Whereas the clubs in Holland or the pop stages in Holland are, but just um, um, actually quite relatively small. You can only do the same tour. You can't vary it infinitely because we're just a small country and you can't do too many tours. Because yes, you

can't do the same tour every time, that's just not really feasible, as an artist, and you see because of that the tours, the first tours, it has to be more and more complicated and innovative. Because yes, you have to outdo yourself every time and make sure that enough is written about you. And that again creates performance pressure actually on the artists. And it is difficult, for example, to be able to tell them that, okay, you are now in the small hall with us. You can't take everything with you, because it just doesn't fit on stage. Or that doesn't go with the changeover that we have, with a band playing after you.

Lux: Does this also cause discussions with bands or not really? Because they want to do something on stage or in the hall. And you're just like yeah, it doesn't fit. So does it very often cause stupid discussions?

Ewa: Um, yes and no, because you always try to look at okay, is one thing not possible? Then what is still possible within the wishes of the artist or the dance organization? Ehm, within the the venue we have and what we can provide. So it's mainly. I always try to see first of okay, I see that it doesn't fit. What are we going to do about it to make it fit? So then you also have to challenge yourself. Of what can we do? Do we need to make adjustments? And do we want to do that at all? Because sometimes it might fit, but that actually causes you to deliver more workload also to the people who are on the floor. Which is also a challenge, because corona periods and people on the floor have actually gone in totally different directions. So you also want to keep the people on the floor happy and stay with you so you can still have the same club of technicians or stage managers on the floor. So that's another challenge that comes with it. And beyond that, it's just looking at okay if the desire one can't. How can we make sure that we can meet the needs and requirements in maybe another way? Or indeed you have to really sell a no, but explain really well why. Yes, it's definitely about, for example, when we've had big sold-out concerts and then we have a dance organization giving a big dance event at our place. Then we have to look at. Okay, if you bring decor. There's just limited space and time to be able to put that in, for example. Yes, and then you have to play with that a little bit of okay, which set pieces can be done and which cannot? And you always try to keep the customer, the organization, happy. Ehm. But it is difficult in terms of technique, for example, when bands are playing in our small hall. But they also want to bring all their own mixing tables in terms of sound engineering, so to speak. That's very difficult to get out of that, because they just want to deliver the best for that night and then sometimes we just can't sell no. And then you just basically have to row with what you have.

Lux: Yes yes, that does indeed sound uh. Yes, sometimes kind of tricky say. Yes, yes. By the way, I saw that our time is almost up again, so I actually wanted to ask you one last question. And that is. Would you to a young new, do you have any tips for young and new producers? Like, it's helpful if you learn this or know this or take a look over there or well you know that.

Ewa: My tip is mainly what I've actually done myself is just go to your local organizations, festivals and concerts that are happening around you. Start there. See if you can volunteer there. Now obviously you don't always get paid for your volunteer arts, but I got so much networking back from it. And networking is really key. Because I know so many people now that every time they post a call and I say hey, is that maybe something for me? Then I can be recommended. And it's also much easier to get a bigger serious production internship if you already have some experience with, even if it's maybe at the Popronde walking around or putting up posters or whatever. Just the little things make sure that you make sure that you gain a little knowledge every time. And just try to look further from that angle. And yes, also just try to send people a message from time to time, even if you don't know them. Just say Hey, I see you're doing something cool with production, do you want to have coffee sometime or can I ask you to run with me sometime? Or? It might be something you don't always dare to ask, but by all means do it. I think everyone is always open to help you. It's just kind of a small world, so you have to carve out a place for yourself. And you actually do that by just doing a lot so. My tip is maybe just do a lot.

Lux:: Okay. Well, good tip right? Um. Yes, then. Then I think I'm going to round it up a little bit. Is there anything else you would like to say or not? That's allowed as well.

Ewa: Um yes, I could go on for hours about production, but I think I've told enough for now in general I think. Yes.



Kim: My name is Kim, I'm 31, I live in Groningen and I work at Eurosonic as producer Oosterpoort, where I also do a part of Noorderslag and besides that I work a lot for Mojo as a backstage producer and that's where I'm going to be employed from February 1 and then I will become the producer of Lowlands.

Lux: Okay cool! So you do look forward to that.

Kim: Sure Yes. Super looking forward to it! I experienced Lowlands last year for the first time, so I really just kind of had a very luxurious sniff internship where I just walked around for three weeks and looked at everything. Because the girl who's doing it now, she's leaving and she's done that for eighteen years I believe. So woman not girl. Therefore she was looking for a replacement. That's what I'm going to do. But Lowlands is a very complex festival, so I'm looking forward to it, but it's also sort of scary to take on something like that.

Lux: Yes, yes, I understand. And have you done any of that kind of before. Because I do think Lowlands itself sounds like a very big job. Have you had very big jobs like that before?

Kim: Yes, I was a backup producer at the Amsterdam Arena last year and we had six different bands there. Which started in April with Metallica, then I did Bruce Springsteen there, Harry Styles, Beyoncé, The Weeknd and Coldplay, so that was really three months of arranging all the backstage stuff on location and in the Arena that means you enter an empty Amsterdam Arena and we have to make sure that all the facilities the band need to run their show are there. Of course the Arena has many, many facilities in, the near the soccer field and they can do quite a lot themselves. But backstage a lot of cabins have to be installed. Electricity and internet have to be arranged. So we come in a little earlier. We're going to set it all up and then it's my job specifically to make sure that there's crew, that the catering is arranged, that the, and that's what they call the backstage coordinator of the band itself contacts me about what do you need, what color should it be, how much should it be, where should it be? And I basically coordinate all that. So everything that has to do with what everybody needs to function, except when there's a plug on it, then it's somebody else again.

Lux: Then you don't do it.

Kim: Then I don't do it.

Lux: Okay, and you said here at Eurosonic you do the conference and Noorderslag. What exactly do you do for that then?

Kim: You kind of have to see it like that. The conference takes place at De Oosterpoort, just like Noorderslag. And my job in that is to make sure that both the conference and Noorderslag can do their work. So we actually have to set up and prepare the Oosterpoort so, that the conference can happen. So I'm absolutely not concerned with what's there, when it's there and how that's arranged in terms of content. I just make sure that if they say Hey Kim, there should be a little stage where the speakers stand and there should be boxes around it and there should be a screen and there should be chairs on the stage. Then I take care of that. So everybody knows that technical production knows that they have to get going, that conference production knows Oh, we have to do something with that. So that all those links kind of come together, that everyone knows from each other what they are doing and also when something is going well and when something is not going well.

Lux: You're kind of an intermediary then, right?

Kim: Yes.

Lux: Do you sometimes find that difficult?

Kim: Definitely. Yes.

Lux: What do you find difficult about that?

Kim: What I always find very complicated is. Everyone looks at the production with their own perspective and has their own interests. And it's actually up to me in that to filter. Okay, did someone say something because it's in their own interest? Or is it best for the party? ? So to figure out okay,

when is somebody really whining because they're just not comfortable in their skin, because there's just other things going on? Or is it really justified and we have to worry about whether it's going to be okay and in that not going along with how people are in their emotions and what they're all saying is quite a big job. And I also still make mistake. That you still took someone at their word and you think oh yeah, that was an opinion anyway and not a problem for the party.

Lux: Did you ever get into a lot of trouble because of that? So that you took someone at their word because you thought it would be better for the party. And then it turned out to be your own opinion. And that's when you actually went wrong?

Kim: I think it's not so bad in that because nine times out of ten it's surmountable or so that it can be resolved. Um. No, I don't think so. And so to make a side-step to something I did make a really stupid mistake once. Before I became a producer in Amsterdam Arena I worked as a production assistant for a long time. In which you basically just do all the small jobs for the producers and make sure that the producers can do their work as well as possible because they are disturbed. And so in that I learned very much that you always have to keep asking six times to find out what actually someone's question is and so what could be the problem. I had one time in the Arena, was that also that when the concert is over, then 200 men come to tear everything down on the stage. That company is called Hartman and Hartman. They would come in at 9:00 and they would want to eat a sandwich so they would be ready to go at 10:00. So I had consulted with Hartman. Okay, you guys then want to have your sandwich at 9:00am, so you can then get to work at 9:30am. Well, check. So I think okay, I'll get that sandwich there at 9:00am. Then the boss of that party comes to me and he says yeah, it has to be eaten by 9:00 so we can start at 9:30. And I thought I had checked that correctly, but so apparently I hadn't. So I. I've really learned now to kind of double-check everything three times and say okay, are you sure you mean this? Or do you mean this anyway? Yeah, and every time you find out afterwards shit, I asked the wrong questions after all and still made an assumption that I had it plotted right. And I think that's what that is. If you run a good production you're going to experience that this year. That one time you think oh I really thought I had it figured out right, but somebody still misunderstood me and so now I have something to fix. That's our job, so that's fine. But every time. Yeah. Yes.

Lux: Do you find that very difficult?

Kim: At first yes like in the last 4 or 5 years I found that very difficult, but I'm learning to deal with that better and better now. That in the beginning you can really have sleepless nights of oh my, what if it goes wrong? And I'm now more and more in a kind of mode of okay, we'll fix it if it goes wrong and if it can't be fixed that's also an answer. Yes, ultimately and that's a little easier said than done when you have Beyoncé visiting, that it, that it can't be. So you do go a long way in that. But ultimately it's also the case that you can go to a producer of, say, the band and say I can't do it, this is not a solution, so we have to think on, find another way to do solve it. And that's sometimes difficult and there are sometimes arguments about that. And then, yes, then you have to do something. So yes, yes is exciting sometimes.

Lux: Yes indeed. And something other than your problems sometimes say. How did you come into this world? Did you choose this? Did you get an education? Did you work very hard? I suppose so. But how? How did you end up here?

Kim: I actually always thought I'm going to work behind the scenes in events or theater or something. And then I started. Way back to media and entertainment management at the Inholland in The Hague. And actually after three months I already thought yes hello, if this is the training then I can do it myself. So then I got my propaedeutic and went to university, because I thought okay, I can really do something there. Something. Yes, intellectual learning sounds a bit dull, but I was kind of into it anyway. Then on top of that I started doing a lot of theater and all kinds of events and things like that as just on top of it. And then I. During my master's I started looking for internships that were, how do you say practical. Which of course at a university is not quite the thing to do. So I got all study delays, but did just all internships, including at the Melkweg as a producer. And besides that I just started volunteering at Bevrijdingsfestival and things like that. And then pretty soon that ball started to roll a little bit. That I came into contact with the producer of Bevrijdingsfestival Utrecht. And I was there as a volunteer. And then I said well I can do this, I want this, will you give me a chance? And then if I screw

up, then you never have to ask me again. He thought that was cool, so then he asked me to go site crew. So really just dragging fences, setting barriers, setting up dressing rooms, things like that. I was direct though for Mojo already, so I did that. Ehm first was my was a night shift because I would be breaking everything down all night. Pfff terrible. But I did that for two seasons and then I said I want more and that way I actually kind of moved on. So I just very much opened my mouth where I felt the space to do that and that's how I got a little bit further and further.

Lux: Yes, yes and because you work so have worked in different places and now there are some trends going on in the industry. So you have for example that we have to be very mindful of budgets after covid and the whole digitization and things like that. For example, I had marketing trends. For example, is chatbot now that it's being used a lot? Do you have anything that you've noticed in the last one, two, three years that you think oh, this is really growing?

Kim: Yeah, I think the biggest one is sustainability. What you're seeing now is that bands are also taking someone on tour who is purely sitting on sustainability. So those, that they call that then within Live Nation is that Green Nation. So we had Coldplay at the Arena last year and they are very much on the green and on sustainability. So there was a one rap with that from Live Nation. So someone on location overseeing that. And as a backstage producer I'm also in contact with them in pre-production: what do you want and how should you arrange it? And that even went so far that we had catering for breakfast for our crew. and those mini sandwiches and rolls and things like that, we needed to get rid of that. All had to go away because of all the little plastic snacks. Yeah, yeah, but yeah, the joke was kind of we had already purchased it so we threw it away. So I don't know if that was the best way. But, so that really goes on all levels. It's about offering drinking water for the public, so that people can bring their own bottle. Again, there are all kinds of things about that. That bottles that are hard, that are made of steel for example. That is also dangerous because people can throw them at the band. So that's another security risk. So you all have to consult on those kinds of levels as well, but it's also about what kind of food do they offer? Is that obtained in a sustainable way? The use of plastic bottles backstage, the segregation of waste? And those are all things that we're getting better and better at to regulate that, for example in an AFAS or in a Ziggo dome there are already systems for that, but in the Arena not necessarily yet. And especially since we set up our own world in the Arena, we just had to think very carefully. Okay, yes, those trash cans, yes, they have to be. Then we have to set up more trash cans. But we also have to start thinking about the waste streams. And how does that work? And how is that easy? And how can we make sure that, for example, the cleaning of the Arena is in line with that? There are all these things that we have to take into account. And I think it's very good that that happens, but that sometimes it does, that you very much see that it happens because it has to happen instead of it really being more sustainable. Like that example with the plastic. But then they don't want to hear that either. So if I then say to one of those bands, you know, we already have it lying around, so we have to throw it away if we don't use it. Doesn't matter. So in that, it does feel a little bit like it's that they just want to create a certain image of look how green we are. And Coldplay is really doing their best you know. They really are. Well it also has to be said.

Lux: Are they the ones with the app that or? A kind of a green checker or something?

Kim: Exactly. And and then that you can also as a visitor see how you then stand in that story. But also kind of social sustainability. So they have a kind of no-senses space. And um, what else did they have, special sets so that hearing-impaired people could still feel something and visually-impaired people could still hear something better or something. So there were all these things behind that. So they're really good at it. But that's the one I deal with the most I think.

Lux: Yes, okay. Yes and because you just said with for example that they then ask for example of hey I want drinking water points so people can bring their own cups and then you then have to have another discussion with security about the safety of it. Do you come across a lot of things like that as bands making demands and ehm. I can imagine bands making demands that just aren't possible at all, for example with security and things like that. Then what do you do? Because that band, they want that. But you think yes, that's not possible.

Kim: Yes, it, it, it it. It happens a lot with American bands coming to Europe who are used to the American standard. Because in America everything is very big. But it's not always very well set up.

And the funny thing is that you notice that if there's a production manager on one on a tour who is very used to working in Europe. So often they are really very old men as in men in their seventies who are still running those productions there. They have been coming to the Amsterdam Arena for fifty years, and they have known many of the people who have a good working knowledge for a long time. Then you notice that some negotiation is possible. That you can say you really don't need that fifteen golf cards because it's a two-meter walk. But if it is a new party then you find that indeed we have to double fold anyway, to make sure that we put something in place to make it possible anyway. So there is very little leeway in that. Except that afterwards they say yes indeed, you are right, it was not necessary. And that is very practical, but also indeed in terms of security, that they sometimes set requirements for the amount of security that must be in place. Which we think, yes, but that's really not necessary in the Netherlands. So yes. So you really do encounter that you have to have a discussion and you don't always win. Well it is true that at such shows the band pays, so if eventually they want it and the receipt is € 40,000.

Lux: Yes, it doesn't really matter to you that much.

Kim: So in the end if you really want it, fine, we'll arrange it. Yes, yes, yes. And that is of course very different from a festival, because there you are a bit responsible for your own budget. But at such a what they then call a promoted show there is just quite a lot of money.

Lux: Yes, yes, yes. And then what kind of shows are those promoted shows promoted? If you could give an artist or something as an example?

Kim: Yes, promoting shows more the type of show so all shows in the Ziggo dome and AFAS, but also in the Amsterdam Arena are promoted shows. And that means that the promoter, so a Mojo, a Greenhouse, a Friendly Fire, is responsible for selling and promoting the concert. Yeah, so. That's why it's called a promoted show. But you have what we distinguish between is promoted show and a greenfield. And a greenfield is actually also a promoted show, but on a grass field where so there is nothing at all. So there you're going to incur very different costs because you don't have to start building something from scratch. And then you have the festivals. That's actually the three flavors that we have.

Lux: Okay, so an example of that greenfield would be Muse, for example, right on the Malieveld?

Kim: Yeah. Yes, and then you also have inside. At least within Mojo also the club shows. And then those are the shows in Paradiso, where Mojo is often the manager or at least has something to do with the artist and not so much with the venue.

Lux: Yes, okay. Whole other question again. You said you. You freelance multiple jobs? Did you also set a certain limit for yourself like oh, I only take on so many jobs so many working days a week. Or. Or do you have those and always go over them or don't have those at all?

Kim: No, I actually don't have those at all. Which in itself would be good to have it, but I think that's a that's probably something you hear from more people as well when you're chatting with people. We all like our work so much. That we also actually want to take on everything. At least, I have it very much. I just have the luxury of being, very, well, not high up in the tree, that sounds wrong, but working for Mojo gives you a kind of certainty. Well a certain security in the sense that I just always that I know that, my summer does fill up, so I don't have to worry about that either. So I don't have to say at the little wood string festivals. Which can also be a lot of fun begging for a day rate of a 175. So I'm pretty comfortable in that, but you do notice that on the other side there are a lot of requirements on you that you actually have to be 24/7 available. So you can agree on something about a daily rate of 12 hours. I think, last season I think, I could count my day rate the days I actually worked 12 hours on one hand. Because it is actually always more. Because yes, you also want to make sure that you just do your job right and finish. And if the band calls at 12:00 at night, you answer.

Lux: Yes, yes, yes. Do you find that difficult sometimes? Or that then you work so much that maybe you miss some free time? Or do you find it all just fine? Because it's fun work.

Kim: I'm actually fine with it. I think it's really nice to be in such a flow or to get into such a flow that you're really just working. And of course that shouldn't be all year round, so then you really have to do

periods. But I think it is really nice when you're working at 16 hours and then you have a beer with your colleagues and then go to sleep and then get back on location at 7 a.m. the next morning and keep going. Yeah, I do really enjoy that, but that's what you do. Well, I did it for three months this year. That was really a month too long yes. Yes, I can imagine that yes.

Lux: Yeah and then? Time is almost up. I actually have one last question, do you have any tips for new young producers? Or for example, tips can be anything. So about how do you get into that network really well? But also what is something you should really know or be able to do or learn?

Kim: Yes. Anyway, dare to open your mouth. No you have, yes you can get. Even though sometimes that's pretty intimidating when you're working with people you might look up to. You can always ask and who knows, maybe something cool will come out of it or you can tag along or I don't know what. I would especially recommend that. And what helped me a lot and what I would really like to pass along is start at the bottom, so start too, don't start by immediately wanting to produce a festival on paper, but also know what it is like to indeed have to put your heels around the festival grounds. Also know what it's like to have to tap a beer and also know what it's like, so experience and learn as many things as possible so that you also understand what you're asking of people. What I see a lot is that sometimes people start immediately at a more agency producer level who just have no idea at all how much work it can be to put up a fence line and that that causes a lot of misunderstanding and you just don't quite understand how it works. And I think that can be really helpful to do and take that on board. And that will only make you better.