



PRODUCER FARM 2018 PARTICIPANT Q&A – ALYSSA SIMMONS



Headshot by Flordelino Lagundino

Alyssa Simmons (New York, USA) is a freelance creative producer and manager. Most recently she worked with the [Public Theater](#) and the [Bushwick Starr](#) in various roles. She is a woman of two cities: her hometown of Los Angeles and her adopted city of New York. Upcoming projects include serving as the Associate Producer on Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon's opera Octavia E. Butler's [Parable of the Sower](#), producer on the 2018 [Prelude Festival](#), and the general management associate on the 2019 [Under the Radar Festival](#).

1. What challenges do you encounter within your area of producing?

I think one of the challenges I continually encounter is working with the rest of the team to identify the most inspiring and most achievable selection of productions for the festival. For [Under the Radar](#), we have a Lego-like puzzle to assemble each year. We always wish we could present all of the shows but we, of course, have to make strategic decisions as to which artists we will feature and which artists to continue to develop and present at a later date. This also informs how we consider presenting international artists vs. US-based artists vs. New York-



specific artists. It's a fun challenge to figure out the mix of artists and productions which we need to present right now and how to financially achieve all of those creative ideas.

2. Why did you apply for Producer Farm and what do you hope to get out of it?

I view the Producer Farm as an opportunity to learn what my counterparts abroad are working on and how they are tackling the familiar challenges of producing performing arts in their respective countries and organizations. I'm looking forward to engaging with other producers and learning what motivates and inspires them. Plus, the gorgeous Devon countryside in June? Count me in!

3. Can you tell us about an event you have been to which has made you think differently?

In 2017, I was one of three co-producers on *Frontières sans Frontières*, a new play by Phillip Howze which we produced at the Bushwick Starr. In addition to my producer responsibilities, I was also the general manager and production manager on the play. Wearing all three hats on one production required me to evaluate tasks and challenges from each of the multiple perspectives. It increased my ability to critically solve problems and respond effectively. Next time though I'll happily only serve one of those roles!

Producer Farm is a partnership with [In Between Time](#), [Dance Umbrella](#), [Bristol Old Vic FERMENT](#), [Fuel](#) and [Coombe Farm Studios](#).

