

# Case study

## Debase productions

### Details

**What:**

A creative development process undertaken by Debase productions resulted in a new work – The Furze Family Variety Hour – a two-person comedy show featuring clown, vaudeville, music and dance.

The Furze Family Variety Hour revolves around a contemporary comic duo attempting to stage an old school vaudeville extravaganza. With only each other, a faded set and a lion costume they stole from Cirque De Soleil, they take the audience on a never-to-be-forgotten ride through their dysfunctional relationship, presenting classic comedy routines with a postmodern twist. Vaudeville cross-talk in the style of Who's on First is reset in a hipster coffee shop and the classic ventriloquist act becomes a pas de deux with a blowup doll.

Channeling Jerry Lewis and Lucille Ball, performers Leon Cain and Helen Cassidy present a virtuosic homage to the Golden Age of physical comedy for a new generation.

Originally developed as The Vaudeville Hour, during this creative development process, Debase were able to finish the script, develop musical and design elements and showcase their work to potential presenters.

**When:**

January to April 2014

**Where:**

QUT - Brisbane



*The Furze Family Variety Hour – Creative Development. Image courtesy Debase productions.*

**Arts Queensland contribution:**

\$12,668 – Projects and Program Fund

**Contact for further information:**

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**Links:**

<http://vimeo.com/86819116>

# Outcomes

- **Development of a new work:** After creative development The Furze Family Variety Hour is now ready to begin its premier season. The performers and the writer/director took the script from loose ideas to flesh out characters and final draft script. The production design and sound design were developed and are now ready for rehearsal.
- **Showcase of new work to stakeholders thus consolidating partnerships:** The performance outcome was a chance to showcase The Furze Family Variety Hour to stakeholders and help cement these relationships. This enabled the team to reconnect with Brisbane audiences and involve them in the work while in development. Audience feedback for the showcase was positive:

*"Congrats, you have a wonderful show without any clichés or saccharine"*

*"It shall be a great show, can't wait to see the end product."*

*"The lo-fi messy feel is really effective and I hope you keep it."*

Debase has been able to have further conversations with presenters now that they have seen the work in development and a premier season has been confirmed.

- **Consolidation of creative partnerships:** The Furze Family Variety Hour relies on the artists involved working closely and collaboratively with each other. The creative development was a chance to test these relationships as well as the original concepts. The creative development also allowed the team to negotiate roles and responsibilities.



*The Furze Family Variety Hour – Creative Development. Image courtesy Debase productions.*

# Learnings and reflections

The project was a successful creative development process. The work presented at the creative development showing demonstrated that the show concept, design, themes and performance style are theatrically effective and pleasing to audiences. The creative team is strong, and collaborates well together.

Debase noted a challenge for this type of the development – a primarily physical piece – was the *high level of rehearsal*:

*‘Unlike a reading, the actors can’t read the stage directions to indicate “what would happen” - it has to be demonstrated, and thus must be rehearsed and polished.’*

Debase also noted that good communication with stakeholders and an ability to be innovative in presenting work to potential presenters is essential.

*“In future, communication with potential stakeholders could be better managed to ensure a higher attendance rate - some of these were unable to attend the showing due to a timetable clash. However, this was managed by the production team by ensuring a high quality filmed version of the work was made available to these stakeholders immediately after the showing.”*