

IETM MAPPING

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE PERFORMING ARTS SCENE IN IRELAND



Author: Lian Bell

photo: Pan Pan Theatre, *All That Fall*, photo by Ros Kavanagh



May 2015

ISBN: 978-2-9601106-6-1

IETM is supported by:



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL



Co-funded by the
Creative Europe Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

An Overview of the Performing Arts Scene in Ireland

IETM Mapping

by **Lian Bell**

Published by IETM - International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts, Brussels

May 2015

Editing and general coordination: Elena Di Federico, Nan van Houte (IETM)

Graphic layout: Elena Di Federico (IETM) on a template by JosWorld



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This publication should be mentioned as follows:

L. Bell, "An Overview of the Performing Arts Scene in Ireland", IETM, Brussels, May 2015. Link: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications>

For further information please contact ietm@ietm.org

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FOREWORD BY IETM

In spring 2013, IETM Plenary Meeting brought artists and cultural professionals from all over the world to Dublin, the capital city of Ireland, to discuss intensely under the big theme of Trust. Two years ago we got to know the country's lively performing arts scene, its main actors, venues and trends; many things have changed in such a short time, and today, this new IETM publication comes to complete the picture.

The following pages provide an overview of the Irish contemporary performing arts scene against the background of today's society, with its challenges, trends and hopes. This concise mapping provides a comprehensive review of the most vital issues and lists enough links and resources to help you to dig more into certain topics. We hope you will find it a good companion for your professional visits to Ireland and your networking and collaborations with the Irish performing arts scene!

boom of Ireland's economy over about 15 years, closely linked to an unsustainable 'property bubble', which saw Ireland grow quickly from one of the poorer countries in the EU to one of the richest. Without doubt, the subsequent nosedive has taken its toll directly on the finances and wellbeing of the Irish people, but it has also gone hand in hand with a growing discontentment with (and distrust of) a long standing political party system that goes back to the founding of the Irish State in 1922.

Awareness of political cronyism has increased. The Moriarty and Mahon Tribunals, two major public inquiries, investigated (and revealed) tax evasion by high-ranking politicians and leading businessmen, as well as payments by property developers to politicians for planning permissions and land rezoning. Most recently, local and national protests continue against Irish Water, a company established to install and manage a water

01.

THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: AN OVERVIEW

1.1. The Republic of Ireland: basic facts

Population: 4.61 million
 Official languages: Irish and English (English is most commonly spoken)
 Currency: Euro
 Capital city: Dublin
 Size of island: 275 kilometres at its widest point and 486 kilometres at its longest point

Average earnings: €704.34 per week (4th quarter of 2014)¹
 Minimum wage: €8.65 per hour²
 Current unemployment rate: 10%³

Northern Ireland (part of the UK):

Population: 1.8 million
 Currency: Sterling (GBP)

- <http://www.cso.ie/en/>
- http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment_rights_and_conditions/pay_and_employment/pay_inc_min_wage.html
- <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/lr/liveregisterapril2015/#VVVoQsWZFtRk>

1.2. Brief overview of some recent changes in contemporary Irish society

Since 2008, Irish society has been shaken a series of events, not simply related to the catastrophic end of the 'Celtic Tiger' years - the popular name for the transformative



source: http://img.static.reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/irl_ocha_500px.png

metering system widely believed to not only add a financial burden on a population squeezed over a series of austerity budgets, but also to be the latest example of underhand dealings between government and 'big business'. The continuing blocking of local meter installations across the country is possibly the most tenacious example of active protest from a population often seen as acquiescent (if not apathetic).

The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse published its report (the Ryan Report) in May 2009, outlining the extent and effect of widespread institutional abuse of children in the country since 1936. The endemic nature of the abuse, the tacit role of the State in creating and relying on institutions run mainly by the Catholic Church, and the depravity of the abuse itself, created a palpable shock wave throughout the country – further shaking the already weakened hold of the Church on a traditionally devout nation. A damning report into Magdalene Laundries (religious institutions for 'fallen women' and their children) was subsequently published in 2014. More recently, there have been allegations of the State once more turning a blind eye to dysfunctional institutions – this time while funding businesses to run poor quality 'direct provision' centres for asylum seekers. Another 'hidden' social issue is the treatment of the minority of nearly 25,000 Irish Travellers – a nomadic Irish ethnic group with a distinct identity, culture and

history, who continue to experience high levels of prejudice and exclusion within the Irish society. Traveller support groups estimate nearly a third of Travellers live without access to basic facilities of water, sanitation and electricity, while Irish Traveller adults have a life expectancy of up to 12 years less than settled Irish adults.

Counter to all this, a number of positive social shifts have also happened since the economic crash in 2008. While the Celtic Tiger years created an Irish society increasingly obsessed with wealth and property, the post-boom years have seen a swelling of community engagement, and creative entrepreneurship. The Grow It Yourself movement has taken hold across the country, with a resurgence in the popularity of growing fruit and vegetables at home. As well as increased interest in public and private allotments, many local community gardens have sprung up, often in empty building lots. Sadly, during the same time as these grass-roots initiatives were taking hold, the series of austerity budgets since 2008 ate into funds for existing community and social projects, particularly in poorer urban and regional areas.

Recent years have also seen an expanded awareness of health and wellbeing, possibly combined with many people having more time on their hands. The popularity of sports for fitness among adults has risen, particularly running and walking, possibly

due to being low-cost activities for those with less disposable income to spend. Walking the Camino di Santiago became an increasingly popular 'time-out' activity in the past years. With many people coming under financial pressure as a result of the crash, and an increased national suicide rate, awareness of mental health issues has also risen – for example, in Dublin there is now an annual arts festival dedicated to encouraging discussion around mental health.

Despite years of half-jokes about the national cuisine consisting of potatoes and Guinness, Ireland has discovered a love of good quality food and drink – and a large number of people are still willing to pay the price for regularly eating out. The influence of the diaspora, as well as ease of international travel, meant that over the past decades the Irish developed a much more refined and adventurous palate than most of us grew up with. Menus featuring locally sourced fresh ingredients, high quality home-made produce, micro-brewery ales, small-batch whiskeys and adventurous combinations of flavours borrowed from a range of cuisines can be found in every major town in the country.

The recent viral hit video of a speech by Ireland's most famous drag queen, Panti Bliss, has helped to bring national and international attention to engrained homophobia in Irish society. This speech



Protest against water charges, 2015 (photo: William Murphy)

was made from the stage of the National Theatre, the Abbey, after a performance in early 2014 – only 21 years after homosexuality was legalised in the country. On the 22nd May 2015, the Irish people voted to change the Irish constitution to include same-sex marriage, thanks mainly to the engagement of a large number of young voters who would not normally consider themselves politically active. The lead up to the referendum saw an extraordinary ground swell of door-to-door canvassing for the Yes Equality campaign, as well as a large number of young emigrants returning from abroad to cast their vote. However, the heated debate on Ireland's restrictive abortion laws still continues, another traditionally 'difficult' topic. National protests erupted again in October 2012 after Savita Halappanaver was refused an abortion in an Irish hospital and subsequently died of septicemia. No concrete move towards a referendum is expected to be made until at least the next government, while thousands of Irish women continue to travel to England for abortions each year.

Immigration and emigration have both recently played significant roles in the changing profile of Irish society. The 'boom' years saw a huge rise in the immigrant population – an estimated half a million people moved to Ireland (mainly to the Dublin area) in 10 years, with the peak being in 2007 when over 150,000 people arrived

in the country. Seeing as immigration to the country had been negligible before the economic boom, this influx was significant. The biggest immigrant group during the 'Celtic Tiger' years came from Poland, as well as from other Central and Eastern European countries; the biggest non-national group living in the country continues to be UK citizens. Since 2008, however, emigration has risen significantly, with many of the non-nationals who moved here leaving the country again. Since 2010, emigration has outstripped immigration as Irish nationals struggle to find work. The numbers of Irish leaving the country now recall the worst

years of historical emigration at the end of the 19th century and mid 20th century. Rural communities in particular are suffering from an exodus of young workers and graduates, often to the countries seen as 'traditional' destinations for Irish emigrants: the UK, United States, Canada and Australia.

Housing continues to be a focal point of Irish social consciousness. During the years of the Celtic Tiger, banks offered easy access to high amounts of credit and many borrowers bought property at what is now seen as artificially inflated prices.



Mural by Joe Caslin in Dublin city centre in the lead up to the referendum on same-sex marriage, 2015 (photo: William Murhpy)



LiffeyTown by Fergal McCarthy – floating installation as part of Dublin Fringe Festival 2010 (photo: William Murhpy)

Many of these people are now in negative equity and/or are struggling with heavy mortgages. To date, 14.5% of mortgages covering principle dwellings are currently in arrears, and there is much media discussion about the prospect of upcoming property repossession by the banks - notwithstanding the Irish State (and therefore the people) guaranteeing a bank bailout of over €64 billion. At the same time there is a growing housing crisis across the country, due in part to the collapse combining private and social housing shortages of the building industry after the 2008 crash. This is resulting in spiralling rent costs, particularly in the capital, and in turn has caused the number of homeless to rise across the country - both those sleeping rough in urban areas, and 'hidden homeless' families living in hostels, B&Bs and with friends or family.

As an overview of some of the societal realities and shifts taking place in the Republic of Ireland over the past years, this is very inadequate and slight, but will hopefully give a sense of a backdrop behind those working today in the Irish performing arts.

1.3. Outline of IETM's engagement in Ireland

History of IETM meetings in Ireland:

- Plenary meeting, Galway 2001
- Satellite meeting, Dublin 2008
- Plenary meeting, Dublin 2013
- On The Road meeting, Dublin 2014

There are currently 10 IETM members in Ireland, broken down as:

- 1 national funding body
- 1 performing arts support organisation
- 1 theatre festival
- 1 multi-disciplinary venue
- 1 regularly funded theatre company
- 2 theatre companies working project-to-project
- 3 freelance individuals.

There are 2 regularly funded theatre company members from Northern Ireland (under United Kingdom).

Willie White, current President of IETM, is the Artistic Director of Dublin Theatre Festival.

Despite an increased awareness in the Republic of Ireland (or at least, in Dublin) of IETM and its work since the Plenary meeting in the capital in April 2013, Irish membership to IETM is relatively low. Numbers have risen from 7 Irish members in 2012 to 10 members in 2015, though often a small number of non-members travel to each plenary. However, in a situation where many companies and artists are on project-to-project funding, and those who are regularly funded are often struggling financially to conduct day to day activities, membership costs and travel to meetings are seen by many as a luxury.



IETM Spring Plenary Meeting 2013 in Dublin - bag (photo: Lian Bell)

02. THE CONTEMPORARY PERFORMING ARTS SCENE

2.1. Overview of State funding and recent changes

The key state funding agencies for the arts are the Arts Council of Ireland (the government agency for supporting the arts) and Culture Ireland (which exists to promote Irish arts abroad). As has been happening across Europe, state funding for the arts has shrunk significantly since 2008.

The Arts Council awards funding by artform and under cross-artform platforms. The performing arts are funded variously under streams titled Theatre, Dance, Opera, Circus, and Street Arts and Spectacle - and also through Venues, Touring, Festivals, Arts Participation, and Young People, Children and Education. Arts Council funding reached its peak in 2008 with a total budget of €84.6 million. By 2014 this had dropped to €56 million - more than a 33% decrease that took place over a series of 'austerity' budgets (the 2015 budget stood still at €56 million).

The Arts Council also disseminates funds to a network of 34 local arts offices, often part of local councils. These arts offices are for the most part extremely supportive and active within their local region.

Most companies and artists working in the performing arts do not receive regular funding. Those who do are on annual funding agreements, so have no guarantee of funding stability from year to year - the exception being the Abbey Theatre, Ireland's national theatre. For more details on how changes to Arts Council funding has affected the ecosystem of the performing arts, see the section below.

The top 25 organisations on recurring funding currently receive 34% of the total Arts

Some details of the changes to funding under Theatre (as per research by Theatre Forum)		
	2008	2014
total funding:	€20,926,069 (25% of total Arts Council funding)	€13,651,502 (23% of total Arts Council funding)
National Theatre funding:	€10 million	6.5 million
recurring grants:	42 organisations with recurring grants of between €16,000 and €1.3 million (total grants: €6,077,400)	15 organisations with recurring grants of between €4,330 and €908,000 (total grants: €4,429,330)
project funding for new work:	€879,563 (distributed in 16 grants)	€1,000,000 (distributed in 44 grants)
artist support:	€283,841 (covering international travel support, bursaries & schemes)	€300,000 (covering bursaries, artist development, resource sharing & residencies. International travel support was suspended in 2014 but reinstated in 2015)

Some details of the changes to funding under Dance (as per figures from the Arts Council)		
	2008	2014
total funding:	€3,874,209 (4.6% of total Arts Council funding)	€2,751,012 (4.9% of total Arts Council funding)
recurring grants:	17 organisations with recurring grants of between €72,000 and €480,810 (total grants: €3,365,250)	13 organisations with recurring grants of between €24,000 and €400,000 (total grants: €2,057,500)
project funding:	€371,277 (for new work, once-off & choreographic research)	€298,000 (for new work, development initiatives & 'Step Up' programme)

Some details of the changes to funding under Circus, Street Arts & Spectacle (as per figures from the Arts Council)		
	2008	2014
total funding:	€1,161,000 (1.36% of total Arts Council funding)	€800,000 (1.43% of total Arts Council funding)
organisations with recurring grants	11	7
project funding for new work & touring:	€180,502 (distributed in 9 grants)	€151,108 (distributed in 9 grants)
artist support:	€5,000 (travel support, bursaries etc.)	€12,475 (travel support, bursaries etc.)

Some details of the changes to funding under Opera (as per information available on Arts Council website)		
	2008	2014
total funding:	€4,112,032 (5 organisations with recurring grants of between €30,000 and €1,757,800)	€2,100,000 (2 organisations with recurring grants of between €680,000 and €1,420,000)
project funding for new work:	€72,500 (distributed in 2 grants)	€0 (no project funding in this year - reinstated in 2015: €900,000 between 3 grants)

Council budget. Of the €56 million overall budget in 2015, the National Theatre (the Abbey) received the biggest single subsidy of €6.2 million, with the Wexford Opera Festival receiving the next biggest subsidy of €1.42 million.

The figures in the tables at page 7 are drawn from annual detailed analysis of Arts Council funding by the support organisation Theatre Forum, and depend on their research parameters, and from information provided directly by the Arts Council. Please note that it is meant to serve as an indicative general overview – it is an incomplete picture, and relies on differing parameters of research, and of the funding structures within the Arts Council. For further information the Arts Council has a searchable online database of all recent funding decisions.

This only gives a very rough overview of a complex and changing system of funding by artform. Please note that these figures do not take into account funding for venues, festivals and support organisations, which, to some degree, trickles down to artists in the form of additional support.

While funding was withdrawn in 2014 for 'Travel and Training' under Theatre (which is how many independent artists have managed to attend IETM meetings in the past), this has since been reinstated. There is also some travel funding available through the EU Cultural Contact Point at the Arts Council, for artists and organisations who are, or are planning to be, partners in a EU funded project.

Culture Ireland has seen even more significant changes happen in the past few years. In 2008 its budget was €4.75million; by 2014 that had reduced to €2.5million. As well as this significant decrease, Culture Ireland has gone from being a stand-alone government agency to being subsumed into the Department of Arts, Sports and the Gaeltacht. From Culture Ireland's inception in 2006 until it was incorporated into the Department, it was led by Eugene

Downes, who took up the position of Director of Kilkenny Arts Festival in 2012.

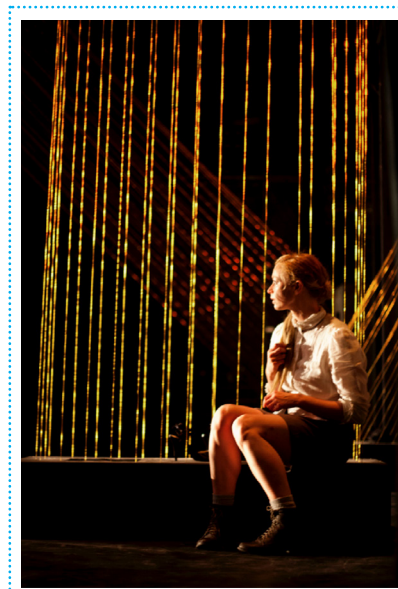
2.2. Outline of current political engagement in the arts

As well as a steady decline in funding available to the arts since the first 'austerity' budget in 2009, the terms of office of both the current Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Heather Humphries) and the previous Minister (Jimmy Deenihan) have been dogged by negative media coverage arising from a series of events, outlined below. Both of the ministers are conspicuous in having no arts or cultural backgrounds prior to their appointment.

A major Irish 'City of Culture' initiative for Limerick City was announced by Deenihan in July 2012 for the following year. However, hours after the opening of the programme on New Year's Eve, the Artistic Director and two lead programmers resigned. Deenihan was criticised for not responding well to the crisis, and the position of the CEO of the City of Culture came under scrutiny as it was found that she had been appointed without due process being followed. She subsequently stepped down.

The Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, a 2200-seat venue in Dublin designed by Daniel Liebeskind, was built for a reported €80 million and opened in 2007, just before its developer ran into significant financial trouble during the economic crash. The venue was sold to private investors by the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) for €28 million in 2014. Humphries, recently appointed as Minister for the Arts, was criticised in the media for a lack of response to calls for the government to consider a State purchase of the venue.

As a new Minister, Humphries also bore the brunt of a storm around political cynicism in relation to appointments to State boards. The decision had been made to give a seat on the board of the Irish Museum of Modern Art to a businessman lacking the cultural credentials to stand for election



Dusk Ahead by dance company junk ensemble, 2013 (photo: Inez Billings)

to Seanad Éireann, the Irish senate. He had subsequently stepped down from the board after six days of service; enough time to credit the position in his nomination papers.

The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, is a vocal and passionate supporter of the arts, though has minimal direct political power. As well as being a well-known poet himself, he was the country's first Minister for the Arts from 1993-7. Another significant figure currently bridging the cultural and political worlds is Fiach MacConghail, Director/CEO of the Abbey Theatre and current Senator in Seanad Éireann. He will be stepping down as Director of the Abbey at the end of 2016, and the search for his replacement has begun. Since he took the position in 2005, he has been credited with stabilising a financially rocky organisation. This is a notoriously demanding position, juggling the artistic, managerial and political, and there is already much informal speculation as to who will step into the role in 2017.

To formalise how the arts sector engages with politicians, volunteer-led grass roots

organisation [National Campaign for the Arts](#) was formed in late 2009, presenting a unified government lobbying voice. The organisation managed to maintain a high profile initially (though this has somewhat waned), and had some success in encouraging the safeguarding of funding and infrastructure for the arts during the worst of the austerity budgets through meetings with the Minister, local politicians and the Arts Council. At a local level, the group encourages lobbying of local councillors, particularly in the run up to elections, and provides information for individuals to use in their own emails or discussions with their political representatives.

The major upcoming event that will see the Irish political and cultural worlds working closely together, is the commemorations for the centenary of the Easter Rising that will take place throughout 2016. The Rising was an armed uprising that is the event commonly held as the symbol of the process that led to the break from British rule and the founding of the Republic of Ireland – though as a rebellion, the Rising itself failed and its leaders were, for the most part, executed. There is [a national programme](#) put in place by a 1916 team within the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which includes a significant investment in capital projects of [€22 million](#). Other than this, the government has allocated €1 million to be shared by the 34 local arts offices across the country. The Arts Council has announced another €1 million for direct funding of commemorative art works and events, plus 16 artist bursaries worth €12,500 each, and a boost to touring funding for the year, details of which are all still to be announced.

2.3. Changes in the balance between company-based and project-to-project work

As the amount of state funding diminished in recent years there has been a change of direction in the way the Arts Council allocates grants. In the 1980s and 1990s the funding structure encouraged artists

to professionalise their practice by establishing their own company and administrative structure. Many of the companies who still receive annual funding today were founded during this period. [Pan Pan Theatre](#), [Rough Magic Theatre Company](#), [Fishamble: The New Play Company](#), [The Corn Exchange](#) and [Corcadorca: CoisCéim Dance Theatre](#), [Liz Roche Company](#) and [Irish Modern Dance Theatre](#), for example, all grew from the work of individuals, pairs or small groups of artists with a collective artistic vision. All of these still have at least one of those original artists at the helm of the organisation.

For the most part, these companies are made up of a single administrator/producer or a small administrative team, plus one or two artistic directors. Performers, design team and technicians are all hired on a freelance basis for specific shows. [Blue Raincoat Theatre Company](#), based in Sligo, are the only established professional theatre company in the country working as an ensemble.

In more recent years, however, the focus has moved away from supporting company structures, to funding standalone projects while at the same time encouraging more established companies, venues and festivals to share resources with independent artists. This has resulted in many long-standing companies either cutting their administrative structure to the bare minimum, or folding entirely. While many younger artists continue to operate as 'companies', these are in name only – in these situations, there is usually no individual paid throughout the year to keep the work of the company going between funded projects. Increasingly, the sector depends heavily on a very small pool of freelance producers and administrators.

On one hand, this has generally created a very fluid and supportive atmosphere between festivals, venues, companies and artists, and there is undoubtedly a shift towards more inventive ways of working flexibly and affordably within dwindling

resources. Thanks to dedicated funding, there has been an increase in the number of artist development programmes and supports on offer (see the section below on artist support schemes). On the other hand, however, it leaves a system riddled with holes – a general lack of financial stability or ability to plan for artists and arts workers, gaps of unpaid time between project funding, difficulty in maintaining momentum to build tours, and unfeasible strain on freelance producers. Some organisations work hard to help independent artists bridge these gaps, particularly in terms of producing support – for example, Project Arts Centre through their [Project Artists Initiative](#). These same organisations, however, are under great strain themselves due to their own dwindling financial resources.

2.4. Other sources of financial support

The search for corporate funding for the arts has intensified in recent years as organisations struggle to supplement waning state funding, with many larger organisations taking on dedicated staff to tackle 'development' or fundraising.

[Dublin Fringe Festival](#) has had two drinks companies as title sponsors in the past few years, with Absolut Vodka for the 2009-2012 festivals and Tiger Beer since 2014. The 2,200 seat venue designed by Daniel Libeskind in Dublin's newly developed Docklands area is currently known as the Bord Gáis Theatre, thanks to the title sponsorship of a leading gas and electricity supplier. For five years AIB Bank supported SEEDS, a significant artist development programme run by [Rough Magic Theatre Company](#) and Ulster Bank recently stepped down as [Dublin Theatre Festival's](#) title sponsor. Rough Magic were also successful in a bid for an award of €230,000 from Sky Arts Ignition for a specific co-production with Opera Theatre Company that took place in 2014.

Membership organisation [Business to Arts](#) works to broker relationships between businesses, individuals and the arts. They

also run the island-wide crowdfunding website Fundit.ie which enables (often) smaller companies and artists across the country to raise money directly from friends and followers. A number of productions programmed in the Dublin Fringe Festival each year, for example, rely on such crowdfunding for support.

Many companies, venues and festivals run versions of a 'friend' scheme, for individual donors to support the organisation's work in return for acknowledgement of their support and varying benefits in return. Many of these are at a relatively small scale, as the amount of time needed to administer a large friends network is often seen as outside of the ability of smaller companies on tight budgets. Examples include: Dublin Theatre Festival's [Friends of the Festival](#), and Coiscéim Dance's [Angels and Devils scheme](#). As well as their own friend scheme, Project Arts Centre is also currently promoting an ambitious [50th anniversary Commissioning Fund](#) for people to directly support a major arts commission.

There are two recent significant programmes to build fundraising and sponsorship capacity within the sector: the [RAISE: Building Fundraising Capacity](#) pilot initiative by the Arts Council and the [DeVos Ireland programme](#) facilitated by Business to Arts. While the impact of these recent programmes is not necessarily fully felt yet, there is a clear intention by the main funders to increase the focus on private fundraising, and many arts organisations are being put under pressure to deliver in this area. Two significant issues to be faced by Irish fundraisers for the arts, however is a very short history of philanthropy in the country, and a small pool of potential donors to be targeted.



This Thunderous Heart. Macnas parade as part of Galway Arts Festival, 2012 (photo: Colm Hogan)

2.5. Outline of recent Irish engagement with Creative Europe

According to the [European Cultural Contact Point](#) in Ireland: 'over the lifetime of the Culture Programme 2007–2013, 32 Irish organisations were involved in successful proposals, either as a partner or as the lead coordinator. In excess of €17 million was awarded to the projects involving Irish participants. Over €1.8 million was awarded directly to Irish organisations either as sole applicants or as lead partners in cooperation projects.'

Looking at the number of applications from across the EU since the advent of Creative Europe, the Republic of Ireland has a track record of comparatively few applications submitted and a low level of demand for funds. Within that, the performing arts seem underrepresented – Irish partners in successful applications are primarily festivals, academic institutions or support organisations. Reading between the lines, it could be that those working in the performing feel they do not have the capacity to maintain the level of ongoing administrative work needed for successful collaborative EU projects – perhaps a symptom of the change from company-led funding to project-led funding on the part of the Irish Arts Council.

In 2014 and 15, successful Creative Europe applications with Irish partners that have (or have the potential to have) a contemporary performing arts element are outlined here:

Large Scale Cooperation projects:

- [COLLAB Arts Partnership Programme](#) (Irish lead partner: CREATE Ireland)
- [Small size Network for the Diffusion of Performing Arts for Early Childhood](#) (Irish partner: Baboró International Arts Festival for Children)

Smaller Scale Cooperation Projects:

- [Networking European Festivals for Mental Life Enhancement](#) (Irish partner: First Fortnight festival)
- [Sharing the Wor\(l\)d](#) (Irish partner: Galway Arts Centre)

Support to European Platforms:

- [Aerowaves platform](#) (Irish partner: Dublin Dance Festival)

2.6. Artist support schemes and resource sharing

As the Arts Council's funding is depleted, and the previous system enabling companies to access regular annual funding is discontinued, there has been much talk about 'resource sharing' as a way for the reduced funding to be more efficiently used. This has manifested in various ways, and every company or organisation has a different way of approaching it. Some of the remaining regularly-funded companies now see sharing their offices, equipment and expertise as part of their remit. This can manifest as a simple offer to individuals or smaller companies of access to desk space, WiFi and a printer, or can manifest in a stand-alone support strand built into the company's work.

In recent years the Arts Council itself has specifically made funding available to established theatre organisations and

companies to run more formal resource sharing arrangements, as well as dedicated artist support projects. However, this funding is only available through the Theatre section of Arts Council, not through Dance, Street Arts and Spectacle, or Opera.

Many of the support programmes devised by the various theatre organisations try to respond to the gaps for artists that occur between project-to-project funding, and the difficulties of keeping a creative practice going through these gaps. All of the programmes are different, however, and offer different supports for participants. While this funding stream has been warmly welcomed in general by the sector, there is sometimes a question around what happens next – there is no guarantee that artists who take place in these programmes will subsequently gain Arts Council funding to stage productions.

Further information on significant professional development programmes can be accessed here: http://irishtheatre.ie/resources/professional_development_programmes

Some other significant programmes not listed at the link above include:

- *Six in the Attic* (Irish Theatre Institute) – a programme gives participants a shared desk and practical office resources for at least one year, augmented by mentoring and advice services.
- *Show in a Bag* (Fishamble Theatre Company, Dublin Fringe Festival and Irish Theatre Institute) – a programme that facilitates the creation of five new small scale, tourable shows each year. Made with and for one or two performers.
- Various development opportunities via *Dance Ireland*, including residencies and mentoring.
- *LÉIM dance leadership project* (Dance



FARM by WillFredd Theatre (photo: Sarah Jane Shiels)

Ireland & international partners) – a two-year professional development programme (currently coming to an end)

- *Blank Canvas* (Firkin Crane) – two-week dance residencies
- *OTC Opera hub* (Opera Theatre Company) – a two-year support programme for a selected team of four singers, an opera director and a composer
- *Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annaghmakerrig* – a dedicated artist retreat centre supported by both the Arts Council of Ireland and of Northern Ireland, and open to Irish and international artists

Various local authority supports are available, depending on the local arts office. *Dublin City Council*, for example, offers bursaries, access to work space and residential space.

2.7. Some recent trends in the Irish performance scene

The traditional cornerstone of Irish theatre is in written plays, and while many younger companies increasingly create devised work, this is still true for the most part. The biggest production companies/

venues such as the Abbey Theatre, the Gate Theatre, Rough Magic, tend to present programmes of new and canonical plays in relatively traditional-style productions. Two companies in particular, *Druid* and *Landmark Productions*, have recently developed a series of comparatively large-scale productions to great acclaim, and with significant international tours. In the recent *DruidSynge*, *DruidMurphy* and *DruidShakespeare* cycles, the company's Artistic Director Garry Hynes has revisited iconic plays and the resulting distinctive works have often presented in epic day-long performances, both in Ireland and internationally. Anne Clarke, the producer behind Landmark, has created a series of highly successful large-scale productions in recent years – from the commercial end of the spectrum (e.g. the Irish production of the *Once* musical) to productions of new writing with household-name actors (such as Enda Walsh's *Ballyturk* with Cillian Murphy, Mikel Murfi and Stephen Rae in 2014).

Pan Pan Theatre continues to be the Irish theatre company best known for experimental performance, since its inception in 1993. More experimental performance work primarily comes from smaller and/or younger companies, who tend to look towards European experimental theatre – companies such as *Brokentalkers*, *Dead Centre*, and *THEATREclub*. Few Irish

theatre artists travel regularly out of the country to see international work (unless on tour), which means that the work that comes into the country for festivals can have quite an impact. Specific international productions have sometimes created a resonance that can be seen across a number of subsequent local productions. There has clearly been a generation of young theatre makers influenced and encouraged by Willie White's taste in international programming, first as director of Project Arts Centre and now at Dublin Theatre Festival.

Contemporary dance artists in general tend to have more of an international crossover. Tellingly, in late 2013, when the Arts Council quietly discontinued travel support for individual artists, the dance community worked together to successfully lobby the Dance department of the Council for its reinstatement – while there was grumbling amongst the theatre community, there wasn't the same coordinated reaction.

Irish live art and performance art enjoys an increasing profile, thanks to the growing reputations of specific artists such as [Amanda Coogan](#), [Dominic Thorpe](#) and [Michelle Browne](#), as well as [The Performance Collective](#), which they founded with other artists in 2008. While, for the most part, performance art is seen by Irish audiences (and theatre and dance artists) to fall under 'visual art', there seems to be a growing feeling of the potential for crossover – as can be seen in the programming of [Live Collision](#), a small festival of live art that includes work which sits right at the borders of the dance, theatre and visual art worlds.

A noticeable trend across Irish independent theatre and dance in recent years has been away from design-heavy productions – unsurprising, seeing the decrease in available funding. Interestingly, however, Dublin Dance Festival's outgoing director Julia Carruthers made a clear decision during her tenure to feature international work with strong design elements – a decision arising from her reading of Dublin

audiences' preferences. Julia Carruthers is stepping down after the 2015 festival, and will be replaced by Benjamin Perchet, formerly of Maison de la Dance and Biennale de la Dance in Lyon.

An even more noticeable recent trend is around one- and two-person productions. These are also significantly more tourable for companies working with limited resources. Some successful Irish one- and two-person shows have recently travelled internationally include Landmark's [Howie the Rookie](#), Fearghus Ó Conchúir's [Cure](#), TheEmergencyRoom's [Riverrun](#) and Rough Magic's production of [How To Keep an Alien](#) by Sonya Kelly. This last production also demonstrates another recent strong trend: theatre shows based on the performer's own personal history – often obliquely shining a light on a larger social issue. In [How To Keep An Alien](#) Sonya details her struggle in getting the Irish State to legally recognise her relationship with an Australian woman. Another kind of social and personal history is unpicked by [ANU Productions](#), in particular in the four-part [Monto Cycle](#), an extraordinary series of site-specific immersive pieces looking at Irish society through the very local lens of a small area in Dublin's north inner city.

Off-site venues are also a common element in much recent contemporary performance work – possibly seen as a way of creating visually interesting work on small budgets. Other than ANU Productions, companies who work sometimes or exclusively off-site include [Company SJ](#), [junk ensemble](#), and [The Performance Corporation](#).

Irish contemporary dance took a particularly hard hit during the crash, though it has always been a relatively small sector, and a junior partner to theatre in terms of funding. A small handful of companies and choreographers (mostly funded project-to-project) continue to make work that successfully tours internationally including [John Scott/Irish Modern Dance Theatre](#), [Liz Roche Company](#) (which opened this year's Dublin Dance Festival), [Fearghus](#)

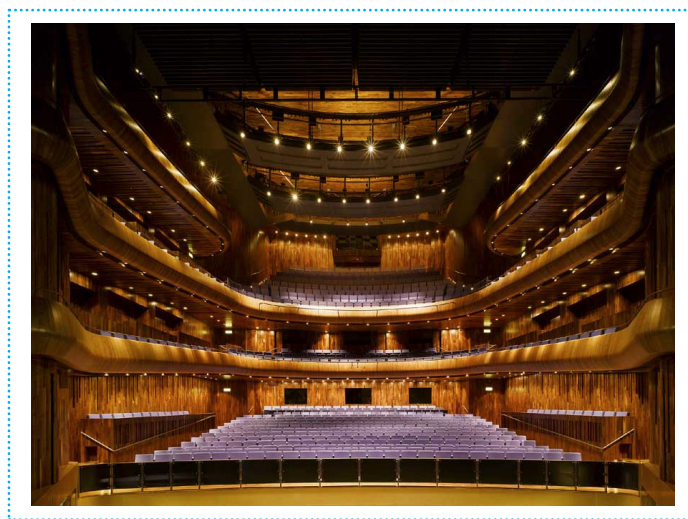
[Ó Conchúir](#) and [junk ensemble](#). Young independent choreographers such as [Emma Martin](#), [Philip Connaughton](#), [Aoife MacAtamney](#) and [Fitzgerald and Stapleton](#) have all recently created performances, often richly designed, that show an ambition not constrained by their funding realities. Similarly, there is a clear ambition among many of the more established companies such as CoisCeim, [junk ensemble](#) and [Fabulous Beast](#) to create large-scale dance theatre pieces, despite limited financial resources.

There is a clear alliance between contemporary dance and contemporary music in recent Irish work. Productions by Liv O'Donoghue, Liz Roche Company, [Fabulous Beast](#), [junk ensemble](#), [Philip Connaughton](#) and more, feature music played live – and sometimes, musicians as dancers or vice versa. This is sometimes seen in the form of established musicians working on a once off production, such as [Fabulous Beast's Rian](#) made with musician Liam Ó Maonlaí. There are also composers such as [Tom Lane](#) and [Michael Gallen](#) who work consistently as collaborators with certain choreographers.

Ireland's iconic street theatre company, [Macnas](#), has been reinvigorated under the directorship of Noline Kavanagh, producing a series of magical outdoor events since she took the helm in 2008. While Macnas have stepped away from their traditional slot during the Galway Arts Festival in July, they continue to take over the city each year with a uniquely inventive, ambitious and beautifully designed annual parade. Aerial work has also enjoyed a growing profile in Ireland, with [Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Theatre](#) founding an Aerial Creation Centre and an Aerial Dance Festival, both in Limerick. Young aerial performance collective [Paper Dolls](#) has developed a strong audience base in Dublin through performance work and training programmes since 2011.

The small opera scene in Ireland is bolstered by the internationally acclaimed

Wexford Opera Festival which takes place each autumn. The festival now takes place in a beautiful purpose-built opera house in Wexford town, which was designated as the National Opera House in 2014. Most of the creative teams working on the large scale festival shows are not Irish or based in Ireland, but are brought in. Younger Irish opera directors are few and far between – Conor Hanratty has made a name for himself in contemporary, experimental work. Opera Theatre Company has begun a dedicated development programme for Irish opera artists, the OTC Opera Hub. The major Irish opera production of 2015 will be The Last Hotel by Donnacha Dennehy and Enda Walsh, which will be produced by Landmark Productions and Wide Open Opera for the Edinburgh International Festival.



Main auditorium of the award-winning National Opera House, Wexford, opened in 2008 (photo: Ros Kavanagh)

2.8. Outline of the performing arts relationship between Dublin and the rest of the country

In general, most of the performing arts activity in the country is centred in the capital and state funding tends to be very Dublin-centric as a result. There are significant exceptions to this rule. There are three regularly funded theatre companies based outside of Dublin: Druid (in Galway), Corcadorca (in Cork) and Blue Raincoat (in Sligo). Wexford Opera Festival is always the major opera event of the year. As well as the purpose-built DanceHouse in Dublin, dance artists are able to avail of strong bases outside the capital. In Limerick City this is thanks to the draw of the University of Limerick arts programmes, and Dance Limerick's studios and venue. In Tipperary town, Jazmin Chiodi & Alexandre Iseli have worked since 2008 to create a company and small festival with international connections. In Cork city, the focus is on the Firkin Crane dance centre – where choreographer Ríonach Ní Néill is about to replace Fearghus Ó Conchúir as dance curator. Major festivals that take place within the Republic, but outside of the capital, include Galway International Arts Festival, Kilkenny Arts Festival, and Baboró

International Arts Festival for Children.

For those interested in knowing more about recent funding decisions in relation to location, the Arts Council of Ireland has an interactive map on their website.

During the years of the highest State financial support for the arts, much focus was on investing in the capital infrastructure across the country, with the result of dozens of new arts centres and theatres being built regionally. While many of these are beautifully designed and architecture-award-winning buildings, there was often a lack of planning in how they would be used and funded in the long term. The general decline in government support for the arts has left many of these venues struggling in terms of adequate staffing levels, programming budget and audience development. Most funded venues are now operating on a funding that continues to slip year after year – reductions of between 35-55% of the 2008 peak levels are extremely common. At the moment many arts centres and venues are utterly reliant on the enormous dedication of small numbers of staff.

National touring of new work continues

to be a relatively small occurrence – particularly outside of festivals. Irish Theatre Institute (ITI) were commissioned to research and write a major report on national touring in 2008 that still informs the current touring funding policy – this can be downloaded here. Many productions never have a life within Ireland after their first run, which can often be as short as 5 days long. There are a large number of different factors that have combined to create this situation – from difficulties around connecting with audiences in the regions, to (real or perceived) financial precariousness. Arts Audiences, a partnership initiative of the Arts Council and Temple Bar Cultural Trust in Dublin, was founded in 2008 to help venues (as well as other arts organisations) optimise their work across audience development and marketing. The Arts Council has an interesting audience-mapping tool on their website that gives demographic breakdowns of the people living within driving distance of each state funded venue in the country.

An extremely successful recent initiative to create easily tourable theatre work with regional venues in mind has been the Show in a Bag programme run since 2010 by

Fishamble: the new play company, Dublin Fringe Festival and Irish Theatre Institute. *Show in a Bag* was set up to facilitate actors, singly or in pairs, to develop, showcase and tour their work nationally – many of the productions have also subsequently toured internationally.

One of the developments in the past 10 years is the appearance of venue networks initiated by local venue programmers – often grouped either by location and/or shared artistic interests. These networks were formed to tackle the costs and issues around touring, as well as to help share resources, information and ideas. For further information on the various venue networks in Ireland, visit <http://www.irish-theatre.ie/networks>

2.9. Outline of the performing arts relationship between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (UK)

While the days of ‘the Troubles’ (as the conflicts of the late 20th century in Northern Ireland are commonly known) are over, the social ramifications are still being played out. More ‘peace walls’ physical divide traditionally Catholic and Protestant communities in Belfast now than at the time of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, and are a focal point of the city’s ‘conflict tourism’ trade. The choice of celebrating Derry-Londonderry as the UK’s City of Culture in 2012 showed a concerted push to increase tourism to (and local pride in) a city historically identified with civil unrest.

The physical divide between the two countries is much less apparent than in previous years – crossing the border while driving is hardly noticeable now, when 25 years ago there would have been checkpoints, armed soldiers and often long queues. The feeling of a border has, however, lingered between the arts communities on either side. While there are exceptions to the rule, there is a general sense of neither side being very aware of what the other is doing, despite being a few hours drive apart. Many open calls for all-island artistic opportunities

located in the Republic, for example, receive few or no applications from artists resident in the North.

In recent years, concerted efforts to bridge the gap have tried to foster a stronger sense of relationship; since 2012 the annual performing arts conference and community gathering has been co-organised by Theatre Forum (in the Republic) and Northern Ireland Theatre Association. Also, individuals making professional moves across the border have somewhat helped develop an improved dialogue – such as theatre director and founder of Dublin Fringe Festival, Jimmy Fay’s appointment as Executive Director of the Lyric Theatre in Belfast; dance producer and consultant Richard Wakely’s appointment as Artistic Director of the Belfast Festival; and ex-Dublin Fringe Festival director Róise Goan’s continuing consultancy with Prime Cut Theatre Company, thanks to a significant award for the company from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

The (already fragile) financial stability of the arts sector in the North has recently been shaken. Significant cuts by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland were announced in March 2015, where six arts organisations had their funding cut entirely, with a further six organisations receiving a cut of over 40%. In total, over 100 organisations had their Arts Council funding reduced, and nearly £900,000 GBP of cuts were made. A public response from Belfast-based theatre company Tinderbox, who sustained a 44% cut, outlined how this resulted in the immediate loss of a job for one of the very few professional dramaturgs on the island. The cuts were announced a day after Queens University announced it would withdraw funding from the Belfast Festival. While the festival has been supported in recent years by Ulster Bank as title sponsor, the withdrawal of Queens University’s support reduces the festival’s funding by 13%.

While only the most immediate effects of these cuts for arts organisations are evident now, it is certain that they will

have much farther reaching effects on the Northern Irish cultural landscape over time – and does not bode well for the significant work needed to strengthen relationships across the border.

2.10. Media, critics and writing on performance

Of the Irish national daily and weekly papers, only certain ones include dedicated year-round theatre reviews; fewer again write on dance or opera. Of those, the paper with the most consistent quality coverage has for many years been The Irish Times. They also fund and promote the annual Irish Times Theatre Awards, dedicated to celebrating theatre and opera across the island. The Irish Times introduced a paywall to its online content in early 2015, and it is unclear what impact, if any, that will have on readership – the paper is currently the second most read daily in the country after the Irish Independent.

Professionals working in the performing arts would also take note of reviews and features in other papers such as the Irish Examiner, Irish Independent/Sunday Independent, Sunday Business Post, and the occasional feature in the tabloid papers. The Guardian in the UK also regularly publishes reviews of more significant Irish productions, especially those by companies who have a history of touring to the UK. Regional Irish newspapers will often champion local arts, though the quality of criticism is variable.

Although it is by no means an exhaustive list, the following are journalists who write on the performing arts regularly in Irish papers: Peter Crawley (chief theatre critic and columnist for The Irish Times), Helen Meany (theatre critic for the Guardian), Sara Keating (critic for The Irish Times, often focusing on arts for young audiences), Emer O’Kelly (theatre critic for the Sunday Independent), Fintan O’Toole (former arts editor and theatre critic, now columnist for The Irish Times, often with a focus on the arts), Michael Seaver (dance critic for The

Irish Times), Seona MacReamoinn (dance critic for The Irish Times), Alan O'Riordan (arts writer for the Examiner) and Sophie Gorman (Arts Editor of the Independent).

Of the critics named above, many play more extensive roles in the Irish cultural landscape: Peter Crawley regularly works closely with the theatre community in Dublin and further afield – most recently as the curator of events with Dublin Theatre Festival, and curator of talks at the Prague Quadrennial 2015. Sara Keating recently set up [Kids Culture Ireland](#), a website dedicated to highlighting work being made for families. Helen Meany is the Chair of the Board of Dublin Dance Festival, as well as working as Advisor to the Arts Council of Ireland on Literature and Publishing. Michael Seaver is a professional clarinetist with the National Symphony Orchestra and was a co-founder of Ireland's leading contemporary music group Crash Ensemble. Alan O'Riordan was an editor of the online *Irish Playography* project, and was a recent judge for the Irish Times Theatre Awards.

For long-form writing and in depth reviews of performance in Ireland, the go-to publication for many years (first in print, and later online only) was the [Irish Theatre Magazine](#) (ITM). In March 2014 funding for the magazine was withdrawn by the Arts Council and, while an archive of writing can still be found online, the website has been dormant since then. ITM was founded in 1998 by Willie White (now Artistic Director of Dublin Theatre Festival) and Karen Fricker (editor, writer and now Assistant Professor at Brock University, Canada). Both Helen Meany and Peter Crawley headed the magazine over the years, as Editor and Acting Editor respectively.

One of the issues that the closing of ITM exacerbated was the decreasing critical coverage of new productions taking place outside of the capital and outside the major festivals. The rise of blogging has helped, in some ways, to address this – at least for theatre. Two prolific bloggers who would be familiar faces to theatre audiences are

[Patrick Lonergan](#) (Professor of Drama and Theatre Studies at NUI Galway) and [Chris McCormack](#) (PhD candidate in history of stage design, also at NUI Galway). Online listings and news providers such as [Entertainment.ie](#), [TheJournal.ie](#) and [Le Cool Dublin](#) post reviews, usually concentrating on the festival season in Dublin (Sept-Oct), while cultural websites such as [nomoreworkhorse.com](#) help to give coverage to independent and emerging artists.

Key arts programmes on radio and television are: [Arena](#) (Monday-Friday primetime arts programme RTÉ Radio One); [Arts Tonight](#) (weekly radio programme on RTÉ Radio One); [The Works](#) (weekly television review programme on RTÉ One). However, this is scheduled to end soon, leaving no weekly arts programmes on national television.)

In the Resources section at the end of this mapping, you can find details on some recent publications of note.

2.11. Developments in performing arts education

Training and education in all areas of the performing arts has improved in recent years, with many existing undergraduate and postgraduate courses growing in profile, and new opportunities becoming available.

The development had the most impact on professional training for performance was the founding of The Lir National Academy of Dramatic Art in 2011. The Lir was developed by Trinity College, Dublin in association with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London, with the aim of creating a centre of training excellence. The Lir now runs undergraduate and postgraduate courses at a high standard in acting, directing, playwriting, stage design and technical theatre. Loughlin Deegan, formerly artistic director of Dublin Theatre Festival, has been the director since it opened, and has developed a bustling and prolific school that engages respected industry

professionals to teach and work with the students throughout the year.

A list of some of the more significant training opportunities are below.

- [The Lir Academy](#) (practical courses in acting, directing, playwriting, stage design and technical theatre)
- [Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art and Design](#) (practical courses in design for both stage and screen)
- [Department of Drama, Trinity College Dublin](#) (academic courses with some practical training)
- [Irish World Academy, University of Limerick](#) (MA in Dance Performance & MA in Festive Arts)
- [Irish Aerial Creation Centre](#) (still in development – a new venture by Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Theatre)
- [Belfast Community Circus School](#) (training circus performers in Belfast for 30 years)
- [NUI Galway](#) (MA in Drama and Theatre, affiliated with Druid Theatre in Galway, and hosts of an extensive, and growing, theatre archive)
- [Association of Irish Stage Technicians](#) (a voluntary organisation who run short safety and training courses)
- [Gaiety School of Acting](#) (private college running one-year acting intensive, plus many short courses for stage and screen. The school also renovated and runs Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin.)
- [Inchicore College of Further Education](#) (accredited courses in Theatre Studies, Dance Studies, Technical Theatre and Costume and Make Up)

- DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama (undergrad, postgrad and short courses in Performance and Musical Theatre, among others)

03.

RESOURCES

This mapping report gives a very sweeping and broad overview of the current situation of the performing arts in Ireland, and undoubtedly misses much or the nuance in the current climate. For further information, here are some listings to online resources and publications.

3.1. Comprehensive online listings

- Irishtheatre.ie (managed by Irish Theatre Institute) is a fully comprehensive searchable website listing details of all professional companies, venues, festivals, support organisations, and more. The database covers all performing arts, not just theatre.
- Playography Ireland (managed by Irish Theatre Institute): a database of all new Irish plays produced professionally since 1904.
- Highlights of Irish Design for Stage & Screen (managed by Irish Theatre Institute): to be launched later in 2015, this will give an overview of the work of Irish designers working for stage and screen.
- Culture Fox (managed by the Arts Council of Ireland): an online guide to upcoming Irish cultural events.

Useful Twitter lists to follow (though neither are exhaustive):

Individuals working in the arts in Ireland: <https://twitter.com/lianbell/lists/irish-arts-people>

Organisations working in the arts in Ireland: <https://twitter.com/lianbell/lists/irish-arts-orgs>

3.2. Recent publications of interest

- Performance Art in Ireland: A History (2015) – the first book devoted to the history and contemporary forms of Irish performance art, bringing together contributions by prominent Irish artists and major academics.
- That Was Us: Contemporary Irish Theatre and Performance (2014) - critical essays and artist reflections that strive to make sense of some of the most significant shifts and trends in contemporary Irish theatre and performance.
- The Oberon Anthology of Contemporary Irish Plays (2012) - eight new plays by Irish playwrights premiered between the years 2006 and 2011.
- Essay on Text in Irish Contemporary Dance (2011) – commissioned by Dancelreland
- Irish Moves: An Illustrated History of Dance and Physical Theatre in Ireland (2006)

3.3. Key funders, support & development organisations

- Arts Council of Ireland – the Irish government agency for developing the arts
- Culture Ireland – promoting Irish arts abroad
- Arts and Disability Ireland - The organisation exists to promote involvement and engagement in the arts by people with disabilities, as artists, audiences and arts workers. They offer resources, support and research, and are active in supporting venues and companies to make their performances more accessible to audience members with disabilities. ADI also manage the Arts Council's

Arts and Disability Connect Scheme, supporting artists with disabilities to make new and ambitious work in any artform.

- Arts Audiences - A partnership initiative between the Arts Council of Ireland and Temple Bar Cultural Trust dedicated to develop audience-focused thinking in cultural organisations, particularly in relation to audience development and marketing. Arts Audiences aim to help organisations to measure and increase their audiences, through dedicated events and training. Detailed research and reporting is available on their website.
- Association of Irish Stage Technicians - A membership organisation run by a voluntary board that exists to promote best practice, safety and technical training for stage technicians. Offers short technical courses and safety training, informal peer mentoring and support, and information provision via the website.
- Create - The national development agency for collaborative arts in social and community contexts, working with artists of all kinds. A membership organisation that provides advice and support services, programmes talks and an annual networking day, and provides information via their website. Create also administers the Arts Council's Artist in the Community Scheme.
- Dance Ireland - A membership organisation, based in the purpose-built DanceHouse, with 6 rehearsal studios, a resource room and exhibition spaces. Provides artist training, support and development, residencies and events for the sector, and disseminates information via a regular e-bulletins.
- Irish Street Arts, Circus and Spectacle Network - ISACS is a relatively newly

formed membership organisation that exists to support and advocate on behalf of the sector, disseminate information and provide networking. It is a member of European Network for Circus & Street Arts (Circostrada), and is partnered with the MA in Festive Arts at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick.

- Irish Theatre Institute - ITI is a prolific support organisation whose work covers many areas: information provision (such as their website www.irishtheatre.ie), support & mentoring services (such their *Six in the Attic* programme), research, online projects & publications (such as *Playography Ireland*) and networking, promotion & showcasing (such as their annual Information Toolbox during Dublin Fringe Festival).
- Theatre Forum - A membership organisation that covers the areas of information provision (e.g. job listings, model contracts, opening night clash diary), training and professional development (e.g. annual performing arts conference, short courses, co-producing MAKE and the Next Stage), research (e.g. analysis of Arts Council and Local Authority funding, payscales research) and policy and advocacy. Theatre Forum was the founding member of the National Campaign for the Arts.

Further information on Irish companies, venues, festivals and much more can be found at www.irishtheatre.ie

