

AR

annual review



Arts Council of Northern Ireland - 2017-18

www.artscouncil-ni.org



LOTTERY FUNDED

arts
council
of Northern Ireland



Our Vision

Our vision is to ‘place the arts at the heart of our social, economic and creative life’.

In *Ambitions for the Arts**, our five-year strategic plan for the development of the arts in Northern Ireland, 2013-18, we identify the main themes covering what we believe needs to be done to achieve this vision - championing the arts, promoting access, building a sustainable sector.

In this Annual Review 2017-18 you will see the progress that has been made in these areas, including the development of a ten-year creative programme to honour the legacy of Seamus Heaney, the Big Arts Debate at Stormont, and the expanding range of international showcase opportunities now available to our artists and performers.

* available at www.artscouncil-ni.org

Sticky Fingers Arts' Imaginarium Arts Centre, the first dedicated arts and story centre for children and young people in Northern Ireland, opens in Newry in July. The space, designed by children for children, has welcomed more than 20,000 visitors.

Front Cover: Northern Ireland Opera / Irish Chamber Orchestra co-production of *Handel's Radamisto*. All Ireland tour, May 2017.
Photographer: Patrick Redmond.

Welcome

Welcome to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Annual Review 2017-2018.

This calendar-style review of our combined Exchequer and National Lottery-funded activities covers many of the artistic highlights of the last (financial) year, expanding in greater detail on several of the most significant events.

A brief summary of our Accounts for the financial year is included at the end of the report. The complete sets of audited accounts for our Exchequer and National Lottery funds are made available on our [website](#).

Bringing great art within the reach of everyone

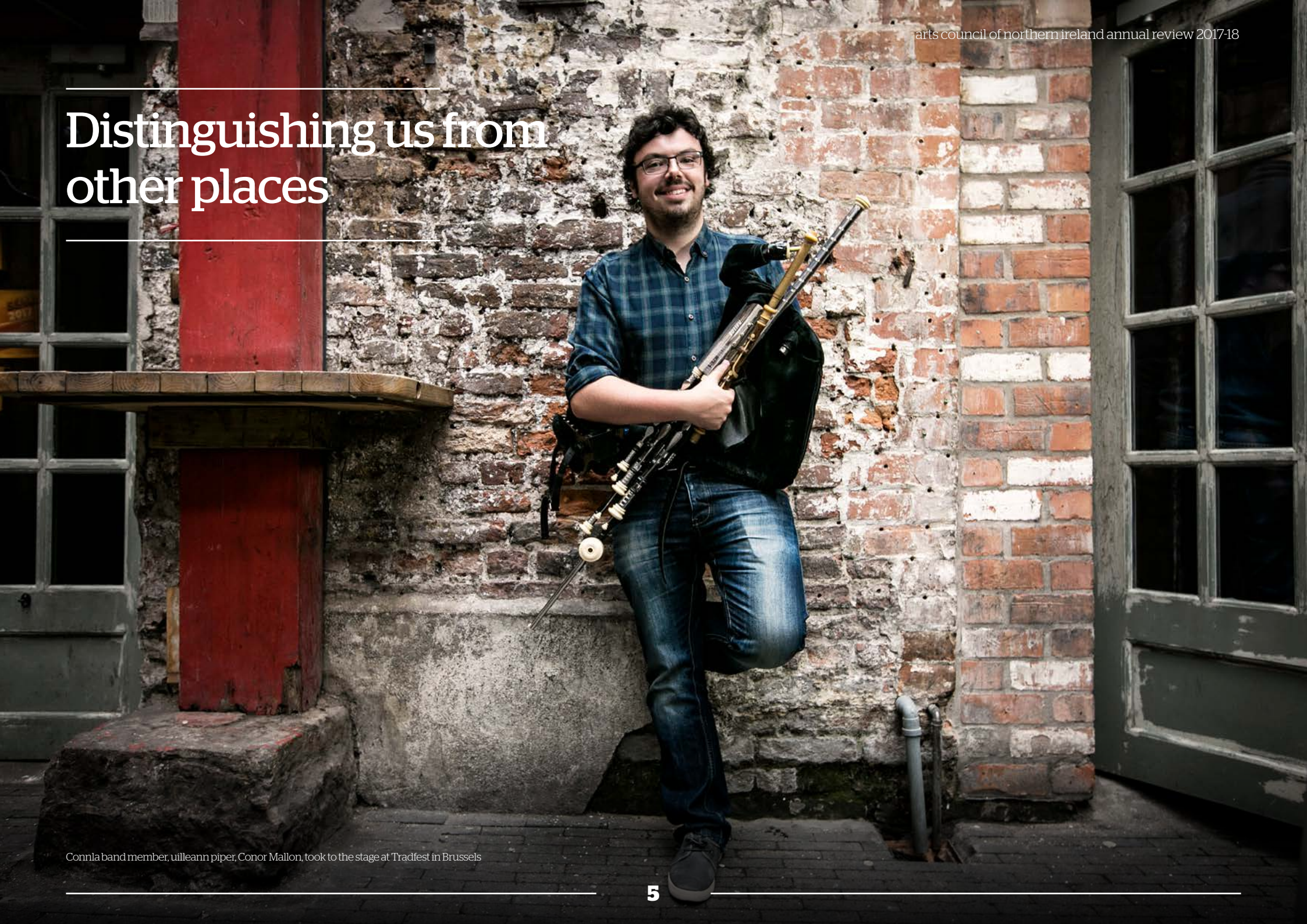
What we do

The Arts Council is the development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland, providing the main support for artists and arts organisations throughout the region through a range of funding opportunities. We distribute public money and National Lottery funds to organisations and people who develop and deliver arts programmes across all of society.

Our Arts Officers offer specialist guidance on funding and project development to artists and organisations working across the spectrum of arts activities in Northern Ireland.

- Architecture
- Arts and Disability
- Arts and Health
- Arts and Older People
- Circus Arts
- Carnival Arts
- Comedy
- Community Arts
- Crafts
- Creative Industries
- Dance
- Drama
- Intercultural Arts
- International Arts
- Language Arts
- Literature
- Music
- Public Art
- Traditional Arts
- Visual Arts
- Voluntary Arts
- Young People Wellbeing & Arts
- Youth Arts

Distinguishing us from other places



Connla band member, uilleann piper, Conor Mallon, took to the stage at Tradfest in Brussels

Overview: 2017-18

“The achievement of artists and arts organisations, in the arts, in health, in education, in regeneration and social development, provides an insistent justification for investing in the arts”

The year got off to a positive start in April with the second annual Arts & Age Festival, a month-long celebration of the excellent projects undertaken by arts organisations through the Arts & Older People Programme.

The programme, supported by the Arts Council, the Public Health Agency and The Baring Foundation, supports health and wellbeing, using creativity as a tool to tackle social justice issues faced by older citizens, such as isolation, loneliness and social exclusion. The programme has been running since 2013 and has, in that time, succeeded in involving more than 21,500 older people in the widest possible range of arts activities, from painting to stilt walking. It has in the process helped to place Northern Ireland as an international leader in this field. ‘The State of Play’, an impact evaluation report published this year is available [here](#).

The Arts Council also published an interim evaluation of another of its current social development initiatives, the £600,000 ‘ARTiculate’ Young People and Wellbeing Arts Programme, which in March 2018 concluded the first year of its three-year lifespan. Co-funded by the Public Health Agency, ‘ARTiculate’ supported 14 arts projects, which engaged young people in creative activities designed to encourage self-expression and the development of self-confidence and self-motivation. Early indications from the young participants on

these projects are encouraging, with significant improvements noted in relation to quality of life and awareness of mental health issues. The evaluation is available upon request.

This year, as every year, a major concern for artists and arts organisations revolved around the level of funding investment that would be made available to support the development and delivery of the range of arts activity across Northern Ireland. In June, somewhat later than usual due to the collapse of the Executive at Stormont, the Arts Council announced the 2017-18 allocation of funding to Northern Ireland’s annually funded organisations. With a reduced arts budget available from the Department for Communities, most clients received a 2-4% cut to their annual grant. In total, 107 organisations received £13 million to support their operational and programming costs, through a combination of Exchequer and National Lottery funding. The use of Lottery funding for programming helped in most cases to offset the reduction of government investment. An additional £1.5 million of Lottery funds was awarded in July to 50 arts organisations through the Arts Council’s Lottery Project Programme. The reduction to the budget from the Department for Communities in 2017-18, although relatively moderate in itself, forms part of a wider picture of government disinvestment in the arts, which has resulted in a cumulative drop in real terms over the last six years of almost 40 percent. This downward trajectory of

Overview: 2017-18

investment has created a significant disparity between arts funding in Northern Ireland and that of the rest of the UK and Republic of Ireland. During the course of the year, it became clear that National Lottery funding for Good Causes, including the arts, was also in decline, due in large part to competition from rival lottos.

With less support available, and with arts organisations already struggling with the legacy of successive cuts, there would be little further room for manoeuvre and the signals were becoming clear that 2018-19 would prove to be perhaps the most challenging yet. In an effort to counter the downward trend and to strengthen the position of the arts, the Arts Council stepped up its advocacy work throughout 2017-18. There was a concerted effort by all of the Lottery distributors to increase public recognition of the contribution of the National Lottery to the Good Causes. Senior members of the Arts Council met with the key political representatives and policy advisors and the Arts Council submitted a robust response to the consultation on the draft budget for Northern Ireland, 2018-20. You can read the Arts Council submission [here](#).

In January 2018 the Arts Council organised sectoral meetings in Belfast and Derry-Londonderry to apprise arts organisations of funding forecasts and to seek feedback on how the sector

would like the Arts Council to respond. One significant outcome of these discussions was the launch in February 2018 of The Big Arts Debate at Stormont. This advocacy event, jointly sponsored by Mike Nesbitt MLA and Claire Hanna MLA and well attended by each of the major political parties, enabled representatives of the arts sector, with supportive voices from commerce and other sectors affiliated to the arts, to make the case for the arts directly to our elected representatives and government officials. The timing of the event was opportune, as departments were in the process of finalising the budget decisions for 2018-19. It would remain to be seen how far we could hope to influence thinking and policy within a Northern Ireland administration facing substantial challenges of its own.

The achievement of artists and arts organisations, in the arts, in health, in education, in regeneration and social development, provides an insistent justification for investing in the arts. Honouring the legacy of one of the towering figures of Northern Ireland arts, a new, two-year, Children's Writing Fellow was established by the Arts Council and the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry at Queen's University Belfast. Children's author Myra Zepf was appointed to the post, worth £15,000. Working with primary and secondary schools, she has been instrumental in encouraging children of all ages to take joy in books and literature in all its forms. Also as part

of the Arts Council and Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry's ten-year Heaney legacy project, leading poets, including Michael Longley, Ciaran Carson, Leontia Flynn and Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, gathered at the Arts Council to consider the appointment of an International Visiting Poetry Fellow. The bursary, awarded annually and worth £20,000 is intended to attract a distinguished poet of international repute to Northern Ireland. Multi-award winning American poet Mark Doty accepted the invitation and will formally take up the post in Autumn 2018. He will, amongst other duties, engage in public readings and outreach activity at the **Seamus Heaney HomePlace** in Bellaghy. The HomePlace, opened by Mid Ulster District Council with additional investment from the Arts Council's Local Government Challenge Fund, celebrated its first anniversary in September. In that time it has welcomed more than 40,000 visitors from 20 countries and has hosted events by prominent figures in the arts, including Stephen Rea, Fiona Shaw and Michael Morpurgo. The centre has boosted employment and created new business in the area, enhanced local civic pride, transformed Bellaghy into a cultural tourism destination and raised Mid Ulster's profile, locally, nationally and internationally. Evidence, if more were needed, that an enlightened approach to investing in the arts will yield big returns for everyone.

Promoting our distinctive cultures

The family-friendly O-Bon Japanese Festival in Derry-Londonderry. Pictured getting ready for the celebrations is Sora Umetsu with her siblings Kai and Ami.

A Year in the Arts 2017-18

A flavour of the year's activities by the hundreds of artists, arts organisations and venues that are supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland through our Exchequer and National Lottery funds.

April 2017

- The Get Creative Weekend takes place all over the UK, as part of a campaign run by cultural organisations, including Voluntary Arts, the BBC and all four UK arts councils, to celebrate and support the everyday creativity happening in homes and public spaces.



- Renowned international performance artists gather in Belfast at Bbeyond's transnational symposium on performance art and public space.



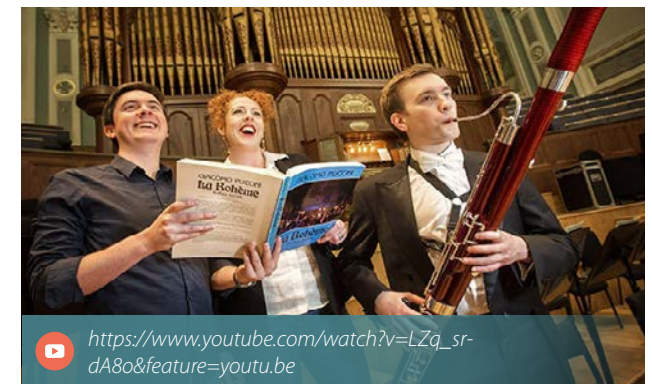
- Belfast violinist Susanna Griffin becomes the new Leader of the Ulster Youth Orchestra and is presented by the Arts Council with the 237-year-old Milton Violin, to be played throughout her tenure as leader.



- The BBC, the UK Arts Councils and Creative Scotland join forces to establish Culture UK, a partnership designed to inspire new audiences for the arts and enhance the UK's position as a global creative force.



- Northern Ireland Opera, the Ulster Orchestra and the Belfast Philharmonic Choir present a special concert performance at Belfast's Ulster Hall of opera's greatest love story, La bohème, as part of the Orchestra's fiftieth anniversary celebrations.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZq_sr-dA8o&feature=youtu.be

May 2017

- The Arts Council invites artists and representatives of arts organisations across Northern Ireland to a special event at the Oh Yeah Centre to meet its new Chair, Mr John Edmund.



- With over 200 events, the annual Voluntary Arts Festival provides an opportunity for people to get creative with others, to share what they already do or try something new for the first time.



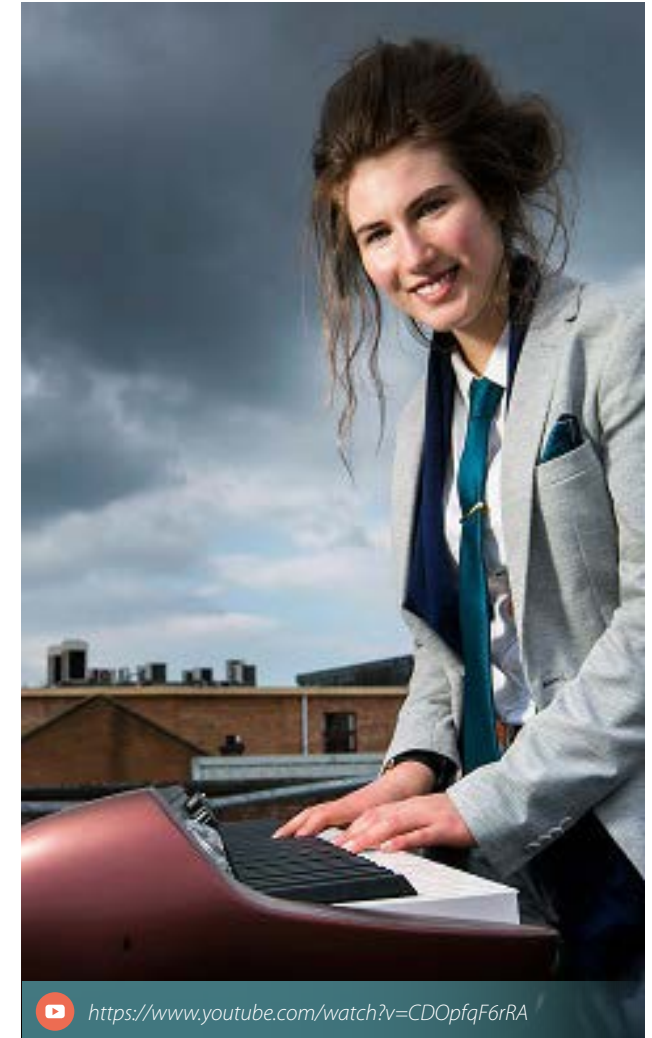
- St Lawrence's Primary School, Fintona and Regent House Grammar School, Newtownards are named as Northern Ireland's top senior and junior school choirs in the live final of BBC Radio Ulster School Choir of the Year, a competition produced in association with the Ulster Youth Choir, supported by the Arts Council and part of the BBC Music NI project.



- Co.Down-based children's author Myra Zepf is appointed as the first Children's Writing Fellow, a two-year post created by the Arts Council and the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry at Queen's University Belfast, to honour Heaney's legacy.

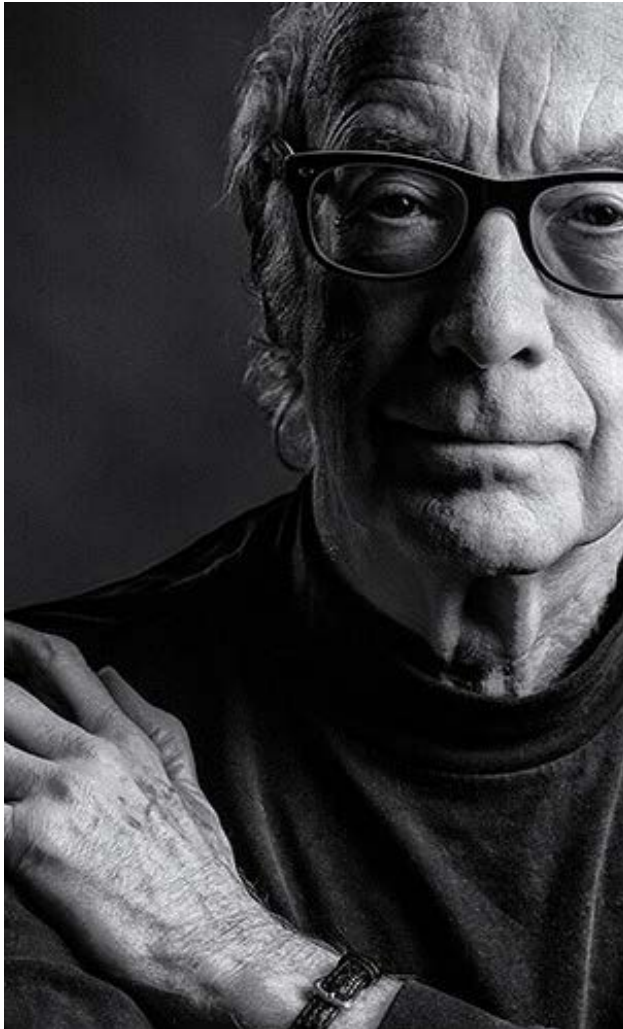


- Oh Yeah Belfast's Women's Work Music Festival celebrates women working in the music industry, with gigs, panel discussions and exhibitions.



May 2017

- The annual Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival revels in its acclaimed eclecticism with acts ranging from Booker T Jones to Roger McGough.



- The 9th Walled City Music Festival returns with a packed programme headlined by Canadian soprano Measha Brueggergosman and the NonZeroSum Ensemble.



- The Festival of Fools brings artists from across Europe, the USA and Canada to Belfast to entertain audiences with acrobatic impossibilities, puppet magicians, award winning juggling and stunning circus.



Rosy James Memorial Trust Award

Two designer makers, County Down furniture designer, Brian McKee, and Belfast-based ceramicist, Anne Butler, are the 2018 recipients of the Rosy James Memorial Trust Award, an annual craft bursary worth £15,000 each. The unique bursary, administered by the Arts Council on behalf of the Rosy James Trust, assists craft makers to develop their careers by developing a new body of work which might otherwise have been unattainable. Established in 2014, the Rosy James Memorial Trust Award came about thanks to the generosity of Rosemary James who bequeathed over £500,000 to help artists and craft makers pursue their careers. Former recipients of the award are glass artist, Scott Benefield and silversmiths, Cara Murphy and Stuart Cairns.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=vLKHYm9wEM

Boosting the creative economy



Ceramicist and Game of Thrones prop maker, Helen Faulkner with studio assistant, Sheva the dog, hosts an open day as part of August Craft Month

June 2017

- The Arts Council awards £13 million to 107 key arts organisations through the Annual Funding Programme, representing an overall 2-4% budget reduction for most arts organisations.



- One of the major photographic festivals in the UK and Ireland, the Belfast Photo Festival, presents a programme of exhibitions, talks, workshops, screenings, masterclasses, reviews and tours across 25 venues city-wide.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVZm-8QnvP8>

- Multi-instrumentalist Marty Coyle concludes his year as Nerve Centre's Musician-in-Residence, during which he had the opportunity to collaborate with over 100 local and international musicians from a diverse range of genres, with the launch of a major new album.



- The 7th Belfast Book Festival celebrates all things books with a wide-ranging programme of readings and events featuring well-known authors, comedians and journalists, including comedian Sara Pascoe and Louis de Bernieres.



Brussels Platform

The Brussels Platform, now in its seventh year, is the result of collaboration between the Arts Council and the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels, designed to promote the culture and creativity of Northern Ireland to an international audience of officials from the EU Institutions and the diplomatic community. The Platform events provide opportunities for artists from Northern Ireland, representing all art forms, to showcase their work. This year comedian Peter E Davidson performed at a special Culture Night event and rising young traditional folk band Connla showcased the quality of traditional music emerging from Northern Ireland at the Brussels Tradfest.



Connla band member, uilleann piper, Conor Mallon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RPuCWlqHOQ>

June 2017

- Schools join the UK-wide BBC Music Day celebrations by holding a Ten Pieces Assembly; BBC Ten Pieces aims to open up the world of classical music to 7-14 year-olds and inspire them to develop their own creative responses to the music.



- The Playtrail, Racecourse Road, Derry-Londonderry, is transformed into Little Tokyo as part of the Foyle O-Bon Japanese Festival, featuring traditional costumes and dancing, taiko drumming, and a late night lantern procession.



- The Theatre Forum and TheatreNI all-Ireland Performing Arts Conference takes place at the Everyman, Cork, with a programme exploring how the wider performing arts sector negotiates with a rapidly changing economic, social & political environment.



- DU Dance (NI) with Beyond Skin present 'Building Bridges', an intercultural arts performance from a new venture exploring human stories through music, storytelling and dance with young people in the Lisburn and Ballymena areas, accompanied by the Orchestre des Réfugiés et Amis.



July 2017

- The inaugural Belfast Summer School of Traditional Music celebrates Irish and Ulster Scots musical traditions, with recitals, masterclasses, talks and sessions across Belfast.



- The John Hewitt International Summer School marks the 30th anniversary of the death of poet, political writer and commentator John Hewitt.



- Open Arts Community Arts Choir, comprising people with and without disabilities from every section of the community, represents Northern Ireland at the European Choir Games in Riga, Latvia.



- Fifty arts organisations across Northern Ireland benefit from £1.5 million of Arts Council National Lottery funding to bring a series of high-quality arts projects to people across the region.



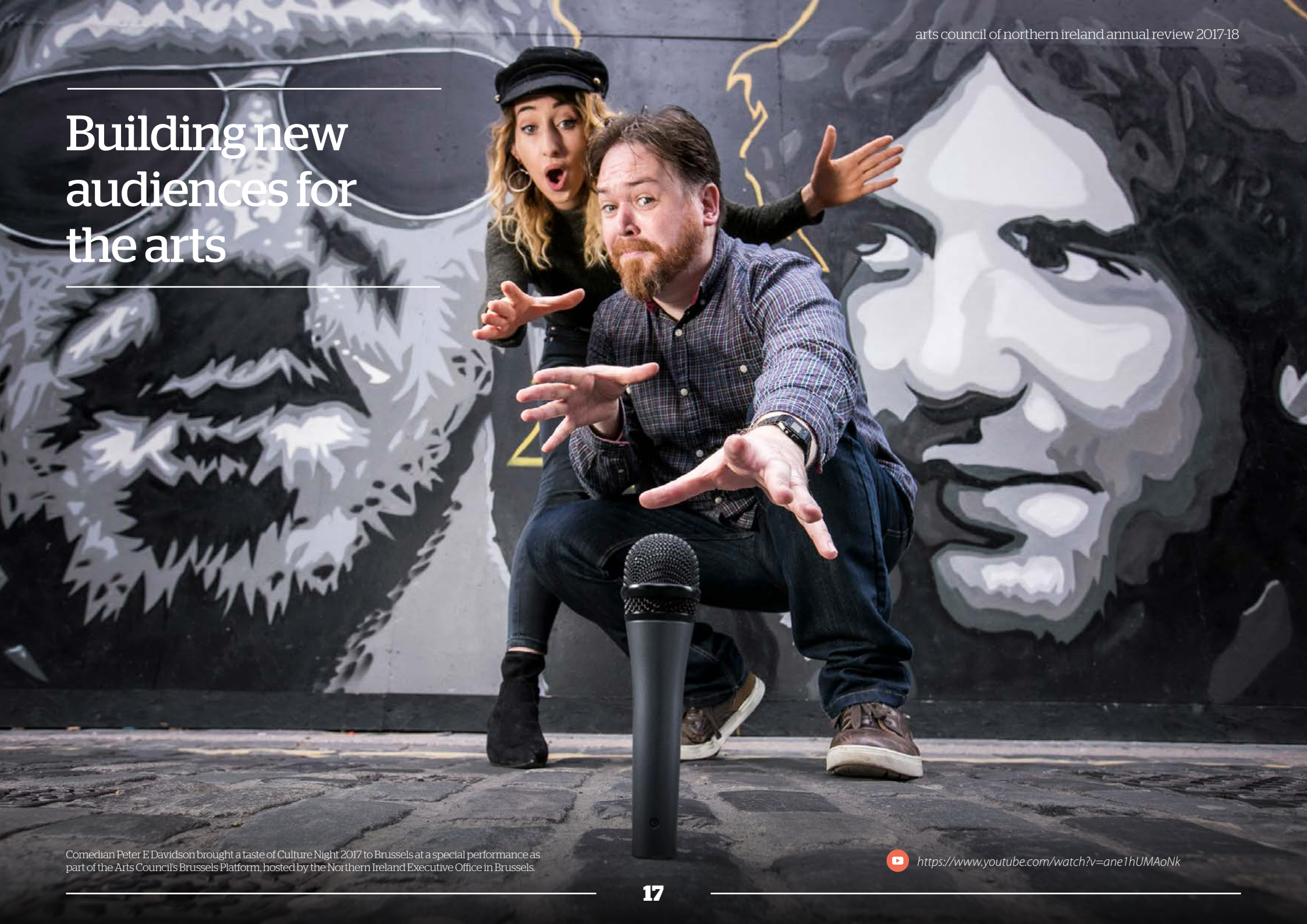
- Having successfully auditioned from over 1000 young people, three young actors from Northern Ireland have the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Youth Music Theatre UK-famed alumni, Ed Sheeran and Sam Smith, when they perform at the Lyric Theatre/YMTUK production of Gulliver's Travels.




- The Ulster Youth Choir presents a series of concerts featuring the Ulster Youth Training Choir and brand new Ulster Youth Junior Choir.



Building new audiences for the arts



Comedian Peter E Davidson brought a taste of Culture Night 2017 to Brussels at a special performance as part of the Arts Council's Brussels Platform, hosted by the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels.

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ane1hUMaONk>

August 2017

- Craft NI's annual August Craft Month, Northern Ireland's largest celebration of contemporary craft and applied arts, features 200 events, exhibitions, workshops, festivals and talks, across the region.



- EastSide Arts Festival celebrates the breadth of creative talent from east Belfast, with highlights including readings by Jan Carson, music and words with Glenn Patterson and Neil Martin, cabaret at the Big Top at CS Lewis Square, and Sam McCready in 'No Surrender'.



- Camerata Ireland's Clondeboye Festival celebrates all things French with a feast of French artists and composers, including Philippe Cassard, the first winner of the Dublin International Piano Competition, cellist Marc Coppey and pianist Julie Alcaraz.



August 2017

- 120 local businesses pledge their support to Bangor's Open House Festival, which offers 141 events in 42 venues over 31 days, with a strong line-up of local performers and international artists, including one of America's foremost country blues bands, Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band.



- The 29th Féile an Phobail offers a packed line-up of live music, comedy, debate, discussion, talks, tours, community and family events, with headline acts, UB40, Wolfe Tones and Altan.



Major Individual Artist Awards

Each year the Arts Council honours the outstanding contribution made by particular artists to the creative life of Northern Ireland, through the Major Individual Artist Awards. This year the £15,000 awards went to playwright Shannon Yee, composer Prof. Piers Hellawell, performance artist Sinéad O'Donnell and visual artist/filmmaker, Mairéad McClean. Each artist will benefit from being able to take time out to concentrate on creating innovative new work of lasting value. Shannon's new work, Starf*cker, will draw on astronomy, popular culture, psychology and Greek mythology; Piers is undertaking a comprehensive digital recording of his works over the last 8 years; Sinéad's Crossing Permissions will create a new body of live performance art and video work; Mairéad's Making Her Mark will be a new body of moving image and sound work addressing the concept of borders. The four join a distinguished coterie of Major Individual Artist Award recipients, including Sinéad Morrissey, Conor Mitchell, Cara Murphy and David Lyttle.



Shannon Yee, Sinéad O'Donnell
and Piers Hellawell



Mairéad McClean.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6NTR2AtMpY>

September 2017

- The Carnival of Colours, the North West's greatest circus, arts and music festival, organised by In Your Space Circus, celebrates its 10th birthday.



- The Millennium Forum welcomes its five millionth visitor to the state-of-the-art theatre since it opened in August 2001.



- Belfast is transformed by arts and culture as the annual Culture Night attracts 100,000 visitors to 300 free events in 150 locations around the city centre.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45XUWToPPjY&t=1s>

- The sixth Bounce! Disability and Deaf Arts Festival offers a programme of theatre, contemporary dance, live music, performance poetry, visual arts and street circus from leading disabled artists from Britain, Ireland and beyond.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejeJpzEMNVQ&t=6s>

- Sinéad Morrissey wins one of the most coveted awards in the poetry world, the Forward Prize for Best Collection for her latest volume 'On Balance' (Carcenet Press).



- Turner Prize-winning artist Jeremy Deller visits The Playhouse to discuss his art work, 'We're here because we're here', an event that took place on 1st July 2016, where thousands of volunteers and 23 theatres, including The Playhouse, participated in a UK-wide contemporary memorial to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme.



- Opened in September 2016, the Seamus Heaney HomePlace in Bellaghy has welcomed more than 40,000 visitors from 20 countries and has hosted events by prominent figures in the arts, including Stephen Rea, Fiona Shaw and Michael Morpurgo.



Paul Muldoon



Creating opportunities for young people

Local singer-songwriters Owen Lamont, Cora Kelly, Lucy Bell and Owen Denvir travel to Nashville to perform at the Panarts Belfast Songwriters Showcase at the world-famous Bluebird Café

October 2017

- Belfast's annual comedy festival features with the best in stand-up, comedy drama, sketch shows, films, art, circus and clowning, with headline acts John Bishop and Henning Wehn.



- Swedish a cappella sensation, The Real Group kick off the 2017 City of Derry International Choir Festival, which celebrates choral music-making and provides opportunities for competitive and non-competitive participation for singers across a wide range of styles, ensembles and ages.



- 190 events from 14 countries, including 12 premieres, take place over 23 days of the Belfast International Arts Festival, with highlights including 'Compassion: The History of the Machine Gun', 'Celui Qui Tombe' and, at the Ulster Museum, 'Poppies: Weeping Window'.



- In a world first, Playcraft Live is performed by human actors on the stage of the Playhouse Theatre, with their corresponding digital avatars in the world of Minecraft broadcast to the world online at www.playcraft.live.



Creative Employment

Launched in May 2015, the Northern Ireland Creative Employment Programme has supported 89 new entry level jobs in the creative industries for young people aged 16–24. Managed by Creative & Cultural Skills and supported by Arts Council National Lottery funding, the programme encouraged employers to create paid jobs for young people through apprenticeships and internships and promote responsible and sustainable recruitment practices. The programme's funding closed in June 2017 having committed £275,000 towards the wage costs of 89 jobs. Participating employers came from across Northern Ireland and ranged from established arts venues to micro-businesses. These employers committed a further investment of £500,000 to wages, demonstrating their commitment to the sector and supporting young talent. This investment has given a wide range of young people their first break in building a career in the creative industries. In return, employers have gained enthusiastic new members of staff who are bringing fresh ideas and energy to their business. The programme has helped to establish a pilot Creative Apprenticeship scheme in collaboration with Belfast Met and the Department for the Economy.



Creative Employment interns from the Stendhal Festival

October 2017

- The two cornerstones of the craft sector in Northern Ireland, the Craft & Design Collective and Craft Northern Ireland, merge for the benefit of Artist/Designer/Makers and the sector in a new body called Craft NI.



- Audience development agency Audiences NI re-brands as thrive and launches a new website full of resources to support cultural organisations to connect with and grow their audiences.

thrive
making culture count

- Chris Riddell, author, illustrator and the former Waterstones Children's Laureate, visits pupils in east Belfast as part of the BookTrust NI author tour, to help inspire a love of reading amongst local primary school students.



The Big Arts Debate at Stormont

More than 23 MLAs, representing all the main political parties in Northern Ireland, joined the arts sector, business leaders and public sector representatives in February for the 'Big Arts Debate' at Stormont. The debate, sponsored on behalf of the Arts Council by Mike Nesbitt MLA and Claire Hanna MLA, was held in response to the draft NI Budget for 2018-19, which forecast further significant budget reductions for the arts sector. It created the opportunity for the arts sector to highlight the disparity between funding levels in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK and Republic of Ireland, and to strengthen awareness amongst MLAs and decision makers of the high level of contribution that the arts make to the economy, to society and to the health and wellbeing of citizens in Northern Ireland. Contributors included leading business entrepreneur and Managing Director of Beannchor, Bill Wolsey, and Head of Marketing and Communication at Allianz Ireland, Damien O'Neill.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zi_m2fxd7lc&feature=youtu.be

Dr Jenny Elliott, Arts Care; Nisha Tandon, ArtsEkta; Conor Shields, Community Arts Partnership; Bill Wolsey, MD of Beannchor; Roisin McDonough, Arts Council

November 2017

- Vivian Campbell is awarded this year's Oh Yeah Legend Award at an event running alongside the NI Music Prize, recognising the exceptional contribution of a musician or music industry figure from Northern Ireland.



- Echo Echo's international Festival of Dance and Movement returns in venues around Derry-Londonderry, headlined by Alexandra Soshnikova and Sergei Golovnea with the Echo Echo Ensemble.



- EastSide Arts 5th annual CS Lewis Festival celebrates the legacy of the writer whose childhood home is in east Belfast, and invites everyone to be 'Surprised by Joy', a theme taken from CS Lewis's work of the same name.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5GB0sUGixg>

- The John O'Connor Writing School and Literary Arts Festival attracts major contributors such as Louis de Bernieres, Lemn Sissay, Lisa Lambe and Robert Mccrum.



- Outburst, Belfast's international queer arts festival, showcases queer theatre, performance, comedy, visual art and literature, including Conor Mitchell's 'Ten Plagues' and Teatro La Plaza's 'Simon the Mole'.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VELw2x9Y1Sg>

- Twenty artists receive Arts Council Artists Career Enhancement Scheme (ACES) awards, providing grants of up to £5,000 and partnering opportunities with professional arts organisations.



November 2017

- Nine of Northern Ireland's most talented young musicians embark on a programme of specialist training with music charity Live Music Now to bring the joy and wellbeing of participatory music into schools, care homes, hospices, day centres and other community settings.



- As a result of new links forged with key cultural institutions in India by the Arts Council and British Council, filmmaker Myrid Carten, painter Angela Hackett and jewellery maker Robyn Galway have the opportunity to undertake residencies in Delhi where they can immerse themselves in another artistic community and draw inspiration from another culture.



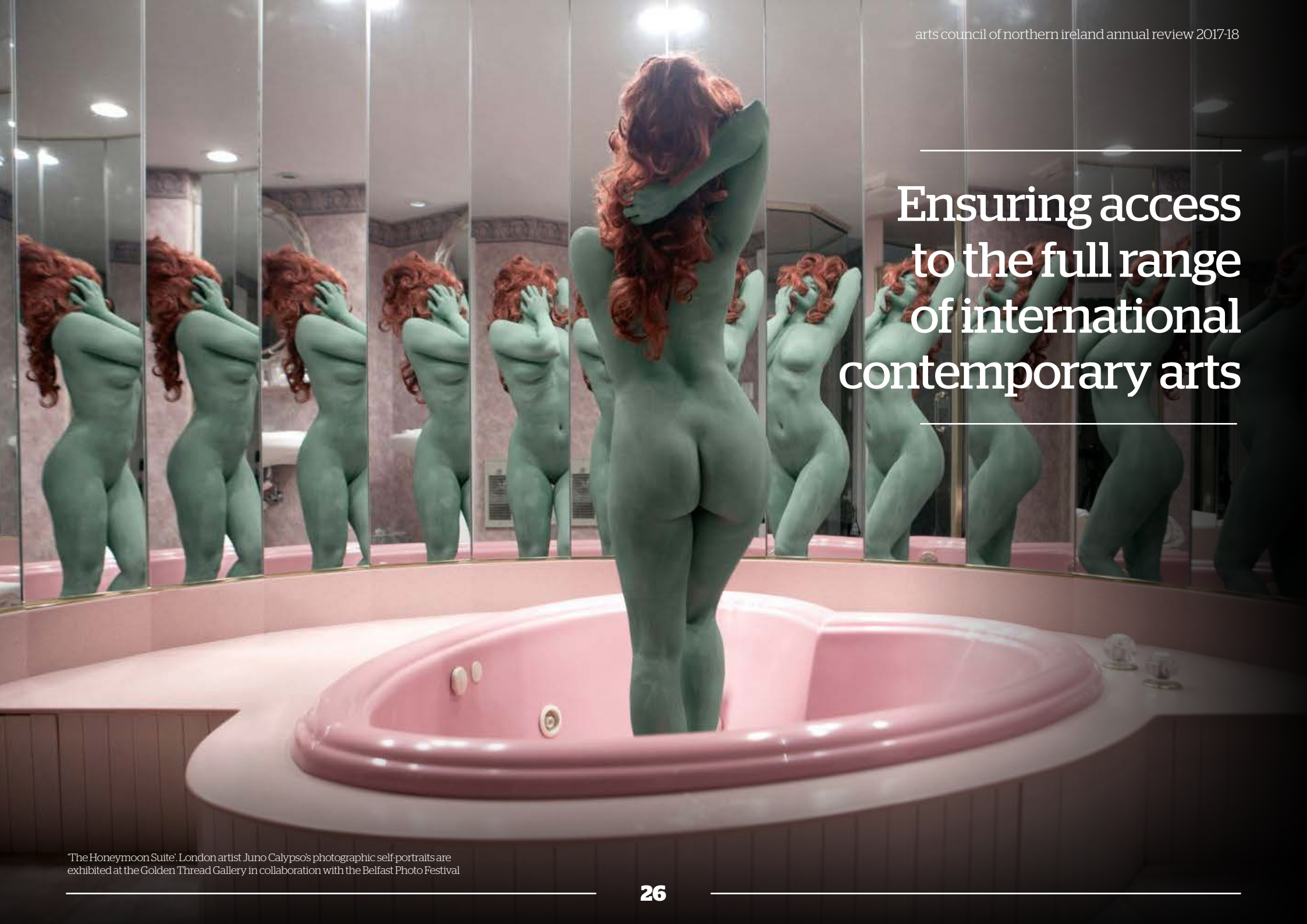
ARTiculate Young People & Wellbeing Arts Programme

The Arts Council in partnership with the Public Health Agency launched the 'ARTiculate' –young people and wellbeing arts programme in 2016 with a three-year funding pot of £600,000 and a target to deliver approximately 35 projects which would be delivered by artists and arts organisations working in partnership with youth and community organisations linked to the PHA across a range of health improvement themes. In 2017-18 we started to see the benefits of the programme through projects across the region involving, amongst others, Youth Action Northern Ireland, the North and West Belfast Suicide Awareness and Support Group, Lighthouse, Magnet, Extern and Dove House Community Trust. Students from St Pius X College in Magherafelt tackled mental health concerns with a mental health awareness campaign offering advice and support to fellow pupils, as part of World Mental Health Day. As part of a project organised by Fresh Minds Education, year 14 students worked with professional artists and musicians before creating a series of informational posters and postcards to disseminate around the school to help the new intake of year 8 students to develop positive connections in their first weeks at their new school.



 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUSuQjvtZi8>

Ensuring access to the full range of international contemporary arts



'The Honeymoon Suite'. London artist Juno Calypso's photographic self-portraits are exhibited at the Golden Thread Gallery in collaboration with the Belfast Photo Festival

December 2017

- Julianne Skillen, Development Manager with Community Arts Partnership (CAP) and Finn Carragher, circus artist and tutor, are each awarded funding of up to £5,000 plus development opportunities through the Anne O'Donoghue and the Mike Moloney legacy awards, respectively.



- Multi-award winning American poet Mark Doty becomes the first Seamus Heaney International Visiting Poetry Fellow at the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry at Queen's University Belfast; the fellowship was created as part of the Arts Council and Queen's University Belfast's joint ten-year Seamus Heaney Legacy project.



- Traditional folk singer and guitarist, Niall Hanna, releases his first album, entitled Autumn Winds, as part of his Young Musicians' Platform Award, an artist development programme for exceptional young musicians, offered by BBC Northern Ireland in collaboration with the Arts Council.



Arts & Age Festival 2017

The annual, month-long, Arts & Age Festival in April provided a platform for the artists and organisations that have been engaged in the Arts & Older People Programme during the year, to showcase their work. The centrepiece of the festival was the 'Art of Wellbeing' conference, which brought together policy makers, health agencies, arts organisations and those working in the field of creativity and older people, to explore the positive impact that the arts are having on the health and wellbeing of older people in Northern Ireland. Keynote speaker, Prof. Paul Camic, Research Director for Salomon's Centre for Applied Psychology, Canterbury Christ Church University, spoke on the theme of 'Caring for Carers: A framework for caring communities & the arts'.

The Arts & Older People Programme was launched in 2010 and its current partners are the Arts Council, Public Health Agency and The Baring Foundation. It has delivered around 120 projects involving the participation of 21,500 older people in arts activities, ranging from singing to circus skills.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKoUWguoYxg&utm_source=NewZapp



EastSide Arts' Artful Ageing project aims to break down isolation and loneliness and promote well-being amongst older residents in east Belfast.

January 2018

- The year's most innovative collaborations between the business community and the arts sector are celebrated at the annual Allianz Arts & Business NI Awards, with Young at Art winning the coveted Arts Award and George Best Belfast City Airport taking the Business of the Year award.



- Natasha Cuddington wins the Ireland Chair of Poetry Bursary, awarded annually to a poet of promise, enabling the recipient to reside for a period of four weeks at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre artists' retreat in Annaghmakerrig, Co. Monaghan.



- Three's Theatre pushes the boundaries of experimental theatre in Northern Ireland with their production, 'Date Show', inviting audiences to explore the MAC as they are taken beyond the role of spectator to become an intrinsic part of the theatre experience.



- The Acoustronic Ensemble, comprising disabled and non-disabled musicians from Derry-Londonderry, led by Prof Frank Lyons at Ulster University and facilitated by the Walled City Music team, is selected as the only initiative from the UK to present at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's international 'Partis' showcase in Lisbon, showcasing artistic practice as a means of social intervention for social inclusion.



Seamus Heaney Legacy Project

Leading poets from across the island of Ireland gather together to discuss the appointment of an International Visiting Poetry Fellow, as part of the ten-year Seamus Heaney Legacy project jointly initiated by the Arts Council and the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry at Queen's University Belfast. The annual bursary is intended to attract a distinguished poet of international repute to Northern Ireland, where for several weeks they will engage in, amongst other activities, outreach events and public readings. Multi-award-winning American poet, Mark Doty, becomes the first Fellow. Children's author, Myra Zepf, was earlier appointed as Children's Writing Fellow, a two-year appointment which will involve her working with primary and secondary schools, encouraging children to take joy in books and literature in all its forms. Pictured are: Noirin McKinney (Arts Council) and Fran Brearton (QUB), with poets Leontia Flynn, Paula Meehan, Gerry Dawe, Michael Longley, Ciaran Carson and current Ireland Chair of Poetry, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin.



February 2018

- Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin is awarded the Outstanding Contribution to Traditional Music Award at the 2018 TG4 Gradam Ceoil Awards.



76% of people living in the most deprived areas of NI engage in the arts

International opportunities

Strengthening international opportunities for artists continued to be a priority area for artist development. Much of this work is carried out in close partnership with the British Council. The Artists' International Development Fund benefitted 11 artists/organisations, including Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company, which expanded its international profile and networks in Sweden, and singer-songwriter Amanda St John, who undertook a promotional tour in the USA. Over the last three-year period, 49 awards have been made to artists and arts organisations across theatre, dance, literature, visual arts, music and traditional arts, with Arts Council and British Council's joint funding support of £150,000. Through other international initiatives in 2017-18, six artists took advantage of residencies established in India, with film-maker Myrid Carten travelling to Sanskriti Delhi cultural centre, Glenn Patterson attending the Jaipur Literary Festival and craft maker Robyn Galway, visual artist Angela Hackett and playwright Alice Malseed completing residencies at Ramgarh Shekhawati. The Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris provided the setting for Kabosh theatre company to present its powerful political production, *Green & Blue*; and for musician Anthony Toner and poet Frank Ormsby to premiere their latest collaborative work, *The Kiss of Light*, with Neil Martin and Linley Hamilton. Three bursaries were awarded to singer-songwriters to showcase work at the world's largest gathering of the folk music industry, the Folk Alliance in Kansas, USA; and four bursaries were awarded to musicians to promote their work at the biggest gathering of the world music scene, Womex in Poland.



Green & Blue actors, James Doran and Vincent Higgins



Creating shared
experiences for
everyone to enjoy

Jump for joy. Belfast Children's Festival celebrates its 20th anniversary. Darrah Butterworth, Ellen Slatkin and Takeshi Matsumo from Second Hand Dance company. Photo: Brian Morrison

March 2018

- Moving On Music's Brilliant Corners Festival of Jazz celebrates the very best of jazz and its associated musics, including the David Lyttle Trio, Kaja Draksler, and the Brian Irvine Ensemble.



- Glen Campbell's daughter, Ashley, is one of the headline acts at the 14th Panarts Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival, alongside Una Healy, Kaz Hawkins, Texas songsmith Jarrod Dickenson and Hilltown's Matt McGinn, who launches his new album at BelNash 2018.



- Young at Art celebrates turning 20 with a bumper 20th Belfast Children's Festival programme, featuring a monumental walk-in sculpture, the world's smallest action hero, penguins, a four-legged clothes monster, a man with a chocolate beard and a boy on a quest to make friends with a star.



- Musician Anthony Toner and poet Frank Ormsby promote the culture of Northern Ireland abroad with the premiere of their latest collaborative work, The Kiss of Light, in an evening of poems, stories and music at the Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris, accompanied by acclaimed cellist Neil Martin and trumpet virtuoso Linley Hamilton.



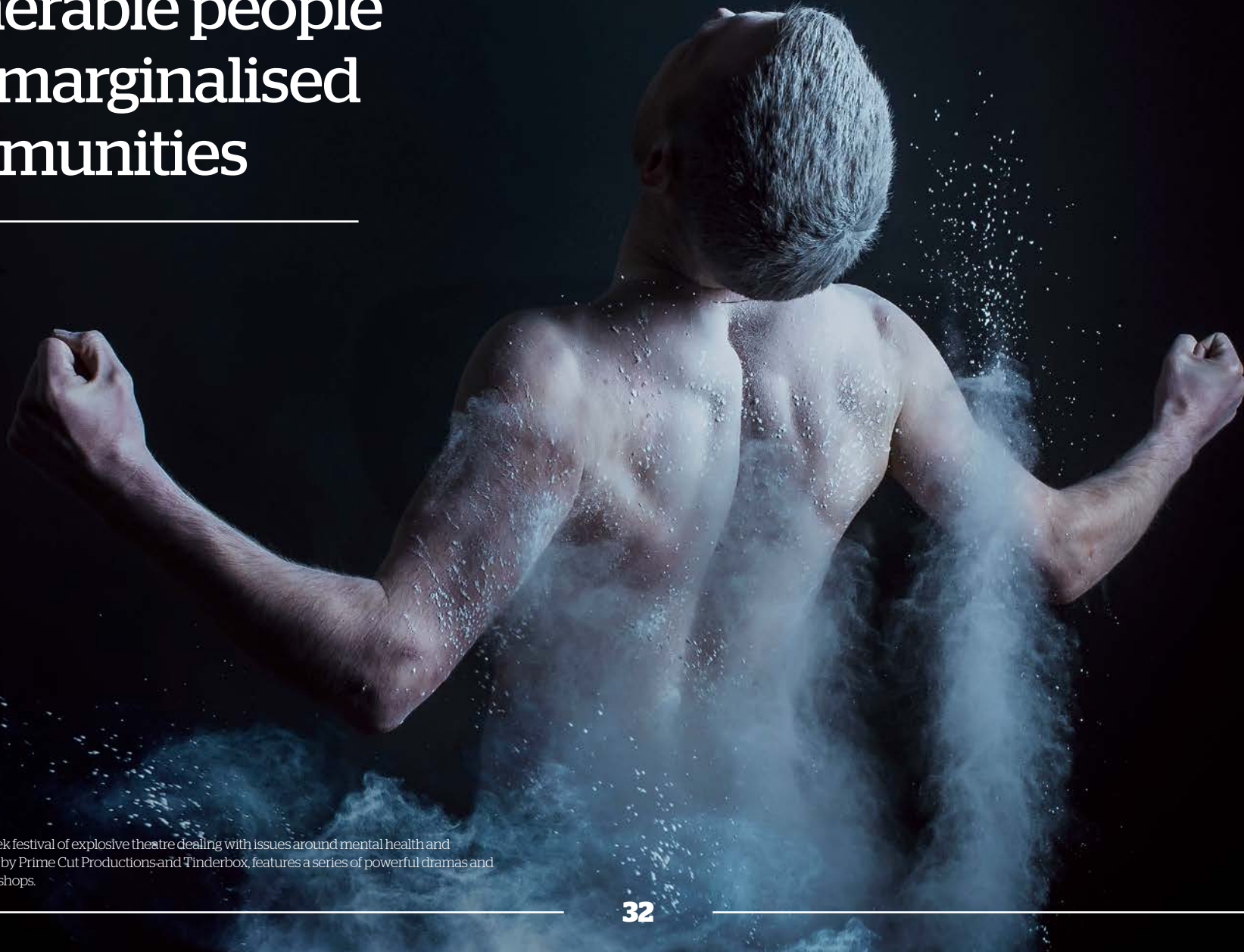
- Glen Wilson is presented with the 2018 Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing at the launch of Matter, the Community Arts Partnership's latest annual anthology of poetry from across Northern Ireland.



- The Lyric Theatre's co-production of 'Red' with Prime Cut Productions wins four awards at the Irish Times Theatre Awards, leaving the Lyric as the winner of more ITTA awards than any other theatre in Ireland.



Giving a voice to vulnerable people and marginalised communities



EdgeFest, a three-week festival of explosive theatre dealing with issues around mental health and wellbeing, presented by Prime Cut Productions and Tinderbox, features a series of powerful dramas and accompanying workshops.

The Board of the Arts Council

The Board of the Arts Council provides leadership for the executive body, in particular in defining and developing its strategic direction. It monitors performance in order to ensure that the Arts Council fully meets its aims, objectives and performance targets, and acts in a way that promotes the highest standards of public finance.

The Council is made up of the Chairperson plus members, providing a broad cross-section of expertise and including representatives from the arts and culture sector.

Biographies of board members are available at www.artscouncil-ni.org

**All arts organisations
funded by the Arts
Council are fully engaged
in Outreach programmes**



Mr John Edmund
Chairperson



Dr Katy Radford
Vice Chair



David Alderdice



Anna Carragher



Roisin Erskine



Dr Siún Hanrahan



Noelle McAlinden



Dr Leon Litvack



Katherine McCloskey



Paul Mullan



Cian Smyth

Board Members of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland 2017-18

The Executive of the Arts Council

Chief Executive



Roisín McDonough

The Chief Executive sets the direction and oversees the operations of the Arts Council. She is responsible for the development and implementation of the strategic plans and policies established by the Board.

Strategic Development



Nick Livingston,
Director of Strategic
Development

Strategic Development is responsible for developing the Arts Council's strategic, corporate and business plans. It is in charge of research, policy and advocacy; for ensuring the Arts Council's compliance with statutory requirements such as Equality and Freedom of Information; and for inter-agency co-operation with other government departments and local authorities.

Arts Development



Noírn McKinney,
Director of Arts
Development



Lorraine McDowell,
Director of Operations

Arts Development is the largest department in the Arts Council. It provides funding support to artists and arts organisations through its Exchequer and National Lottery funds. Funding is available through dedicated funding programmes which are linked to the Arts Council's policies and strategies for the development of the arts in Northern Ireland. The Arts Council's art form officers provide specialist expertise and advice.

This department is also responsible for corporate communications, including press and media relations.

Finance and Corporate Services



Geoffrey Troughton,
Director of Finance &
Corporate Services

Corporate Services provides the core administration for the Arts Council. Its main areas of responsibility are finance, personnel and training, IT support, Reception, Registry and general office services.

Full staff list is available on www.artscouncil-ni.org

Telling our stories



Musician, Anthony Toner, and poet, Frank Ormsby premiere their latest collaborative work, *The Kiss of Light*, at the Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris, accompanied by acclaimed cellist Neil Martin and trumpet virtuoso Linley Hamilton.

Financial Summary 2017-18

The Arts Council provides the main support for artists and arts organisations working in Northern Ireland, offering a broad range of funding opportunities through our Exchequer and National Lottery funds. Our funding programmes reflect the aims and objectives of our five-year strategic plan, Ambitions for the Arts, as well as our series of art form funding policies.

The complete sets of audited accounts for our Exchequer and National Lottery funds are made available on the Arts Council's website, www.artscouncil-ni.org

The Arts Council invested £18.5m to support the full range of creative activities across Northern Ireland in 2017-18

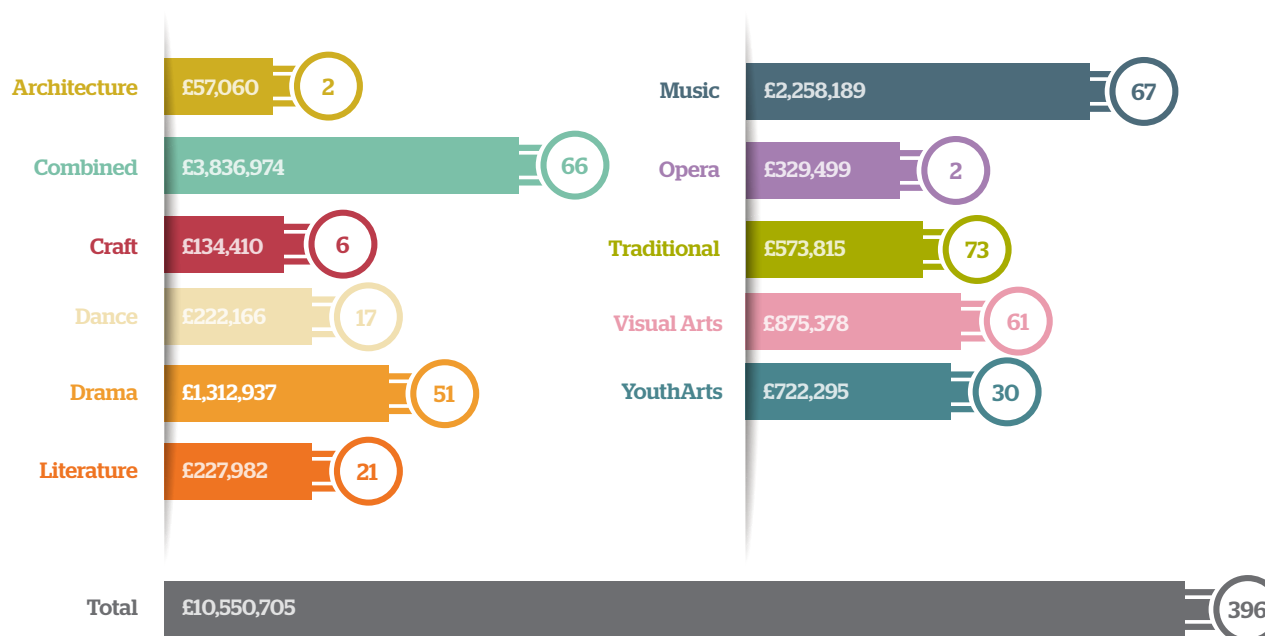
Arts Council Exchequer funding 2017-18

The Arts Council awarded funding of £10.55 million through its Exchequer fund.

These funds were awarded through a set of programmes developed to support the full range of activities of artists and arts organisations across Northern Ireland, including:

- Annual Funding Programme (Core funding)
- Support for the Individual Artist Programme (SIAP)
- Musical Equipment for Bands
- Creative Schools Partnership
- Travel Awards
- International Residencies
- Arts Development Fund

Exchequer Awards



Local Authority Area	Number of Awards	Value of Awards
Antrim and Newtownabbey	6	£6,111
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	24	£113,801
Belfast	225	£8,499,910
Causeway Coast and Glens	6	£106,151
Derry and Strabane	46	£1,133,595
Fermanagh and Omagh	10	£79,181
Lisburn and Castlereagh	8	£46,344
Mid and East Antrim	9	£38,604
Mid Ulster	11	£54,927
Newry, Mourne and Down	19	£128,890
North Down and Ards	14	£164,145
Other	18	£179,046
GRAND TOTAL	396	£10,550,705

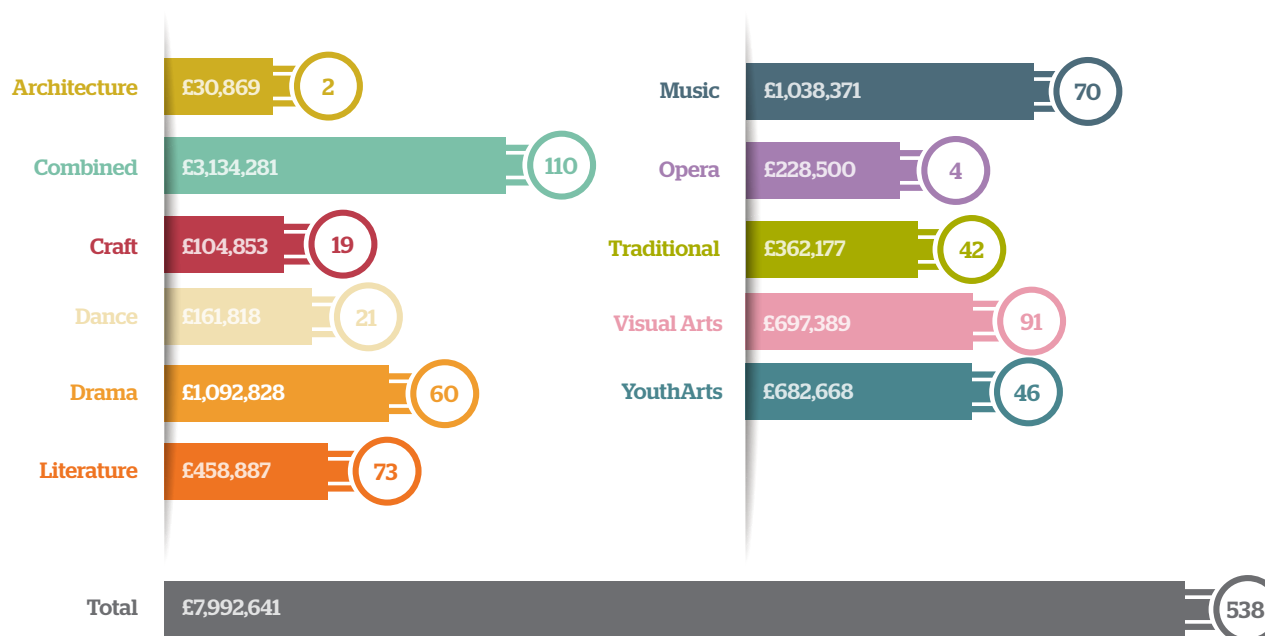
• Individual art form policies are available [here](#)

Arts Council Lottery funding 2017-18

The Arts Council awarded funding of £7.99 million through its National Lottery fund. Lottery funds supported arts projects throughout Northern Ireland. Funding programmes included:

- Annual Funding Programme (programme funding)
- Project Funding
- Support for the Individual Artist (SIAP)
- Local Government Challenge Fund
- Arts & Older People Programme
- Young People & Wellbeing Arts Programme
- Creative Schools Partnership
- Small Grants
- Creative Employment Programme

Lottery Awards



Local Authority Area	Number of Awards	Value of Awards
Antrim and Newtownabbey	16	£167,137
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	27	£317,232
Belfast	278	£4,910,550
Causeway Coast and Glens	12	£116,977
Derry and Strabane	70	£1,127,065
Fermanagh and Omagh	14	£269,872
Lisburn and Castlereagh	13	£118,839
Mid and East Antrim	4	£48,869
Mid Ulster	12	£132,674
Newry, Mourne and Down	30	£234,901
North Down and Ards	27	£206,628
Other	35	£341,897
GRAND TOTAL	538	£7,992,641

Note on funding patterns:

Funding patterns in Belfast and Derry/Strabane reflect the high concentrations of artists and arts organisations living and working in these areas, as well as the location of several major 'umbrella' arts organisations whose services extend to Northern Ireland as a whole.



Promoting the
intrinsic and cultural
value of the arts

Gilbert and George, two of the most recognisable names in contemporary art, hold their first significant exhibition in Ireland in 20 years, *Scapegoating Pictures* at the MAC.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tgb8E3jgSCA>

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply for funding?

The Arts Council offers a range of grant programmes that you can apply to for funding. Some programmes are specifically for organisations and others are for individual artists. For full information on all the programmes that we offer, the criteria for each programme, application deadlines and how to apply, visit the Funding pages of our website, www.artscouncil-ni.org

When can I apply?

Most grant programmes take place in funding rounds with specific dates when we will accept applications. Some programmes are open all year round. For information on funding deadlines, visit the Funding pages of our website.

How long will it take to reach a decision?

This may vary with each programme, although we would generally aim to make a decision on applications from individuals and organisations within three months.

Where can I get help with my application?

The guidance notes for each programme provide information on the assessment criteria, eligibility and application process. Our Arts Development Officers can also offer advice and assistance before you submit an application. Contact details are available in the **About Us** section of our website, or you can contact the switchboard and you will be directed to the most appropriate person.

How do I complain to the Arts Council?

The Arts Council has a **Service Charter** which outlines the standard of service our clients should expect from us. We operate a **Service Complaints Procedure** to handle general complaints about our service. In addition, we operate a **Funding Review Procedure** for those who want to appeal a decision about a grant application. These documents are available on the website.

Useful Contacts at the Arts Council:

Arts Development Officers:

- Damian Smyth, Drama and Literature
- Suzanne Lyle, Visual Arts
- Ciaran Scullion, Music & Opera
- Grainne McCann, Communications
- Gilly Campbell, Drama and Dance
- Lizzie Devlin, Community Arts
- Joanna Johnston, Visual Arts
- Gavin O'Connor, Youth Arts
- Maria McAlister, Music, Traditional Arts
- Lorraine Calderwood, Arts & Older People/ Young People & Wellbeing
- Sonya Whitefield, Development
- Angela Warren, Press Officer

Arts Council

E: info@artscouncil-ni.org

Inspiring and enriching our lives



Northern Ireland Opera / Irish Chamber Orchestra co-production of Handel's *Radamisto*. All Ireland tour, May 2017. Photo: Christopher Heaney



For further information please contact:

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

E: info@artscouncil-ni.org

W: www.artscouncil-ni.org

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Alternative formats of this publication may be available on request.

For further information,
Email: mhendry@artscouncil-ni.org



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