

AR

annual review



Arts Council of Northern Ireland - 2016-17

www.artscouncil-ni.org





ArtsEkta / Belfast Mela 2016. Photo: Carrie Davenport Photography

Front Cover: Patrick O'Kane in John Logan's *Red*. A co-production by Prime Cut Productions and the Lyric Theatre. Photo: Chris Heaney

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 2016-17 you will see the progress that has been made in these areas, including the major Creative and Cultural Belfast public events, the boost to employment opportunities for talented young people with the introduction of the new NI creative employment programme, and the range of international showcase opportunities now available to our artists and performers.

* available at www.artscouncil-ni.org

Welcome

Welcome to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Annual Review 2016-2017.

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, www.artscouncil-ni.org

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

Enriching our lives



Chain Reaction, 2016 by Martin Boyle. Image courtesy of the artist and the Golden Thread Gallery

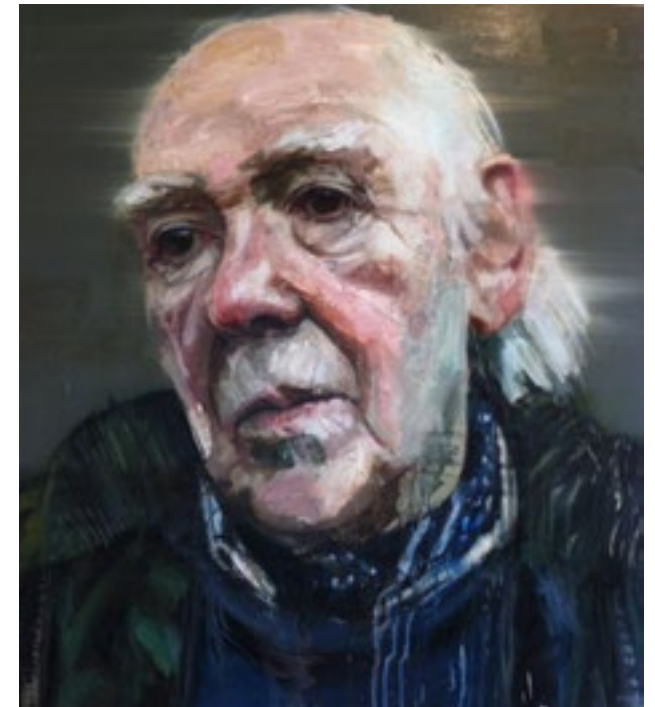
Overview: 2016-17

The reconfiguration of the Northern Ireland Executive, alongside the consultation on the government's draft Programme for Government, offered the potential to realign the arts and to embed them at the heart of government thinking. Could the long-hoped-for period of sustained re-investment in the arts be within reach?

The financial year opened with a relatively small reduction to the Arts Council's budget. Even a small reduction, in the wake of successive years of cuts, will, however, place a disproportionate burden on an already overstretched sector. The Arts Council was able to absorb these cuts this time and as a consequence maintain the majority of our annually funded clients on standstill funding. For a number of core clients in greatest need, we diverted National Lottery funds to establish a Sustainability Fund. This strengthened the resilience of these organisations by enabling them to implement the measures required for permanent, significant change, including collaboration, merger, new partnerships and the development of new business models.

In May, a major shake-up of central government following the Fresh Start Agreement led to the dissolution of several departments, including the Arts Council's former parent department, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. The Arts Council, retaining its arms-length status as a Non-Departmental Public Body, joined the newly-formed Department for Communities, the largest department of the NI Executive. This transition positioned the arts within an interesting new dynamic.

The reconfiguration of the Northern Ireland Executive, alongside the consultation on the government's draft



Colin Davidson's portrait of the late Basil Blackshaw. Arts Council Collection

Overview: 2016-17

Programme for Government, which opened in October, seemingly offered the potential to realign the arts and to embed them at the heart of government thinking.

Unfortunately, the unexpected dissolution of the Northern Ireland Assembly in January called a halt to progress on the Programme for Government. Political instability plunged Northern Ireland into a protracted period of uncertainty and the possibility even of a return to Direct Rule. With no ministers in charge to make key decisions or to set budgets, it fell to the civil servants to maintain stability. The limited powers of the civil servants would have very serious implications for arts funding as we moved towards the start of the 2017/18 financial year.

If progress had stalled at central government level, the situation was thankfully very different at local government level. Here, the reconfiguration of the old local authorities from 26 to 11 district council areas, a process begun in 2015/16, began to bed in. The Arts Council responded to the new powers conferred upon the local authorities by introducing a Local Government Challenge Fund. The Challenge Fund aims to anchor investment in the arts at a local level with the offer of match funding for new arts initiatives supported by the district councils. It also aims to embed arts policy and programming in their Community Plans, so that the arts become lead delivery partners. Local

Authorities have responded positively, with ten taking up the challenge. Mid Ulster District Council became the first council area to benefit, with the opening in September of the Seamus Heaney HomePlace in Bellaghy.

In October, Mr Bob Collins CBE completed his term as Chair of the Arts Council. The new Chair, Mr John Edmund, took up the position in January.

Ambitions for the Arts, the current five-year strategic development plan for the arts, now entering its penultimate year, bears the imprimatur of the outgoing Chair. Alongside its steadfast commitment to champion both the artist and the intrinsic value of art, notable successes have ensued from a concentrated focus on strengthening the social development function of the arts, often achieved in partnership with external delivery agencies. One of the immediate legacies of this period has been the establishment of a three-year, £600,000 funding partnership with the Public Health Agency, designed to engage young people in the arts. The 'Articulate' Young People and Wellbeing Arts Programme, which opened in January, employs custom-made arts projects to encourage self-expression and the development of self-confidence and self-motivation in groups of young people.

It is, as always, a testament to the tenacity of Northern Ireland's arts sector that it continues to deliver extraordinary

work in the face of considerable political and economic uncertainty. The challenge of the coming years will be to reverse the downward trend of funding and to introduce a new, enlightened, era of appreciation and reinvestment in our creative assets. As we can see from this review of the Year in the Arts in 2016-17, artists and performers, with the support of the investment of Exchequer and National Lottery funds through the Arts Council, have continued to create work of exceptionally high quality. They have continued to increase the opportunities for people to experience the benefits of engaging with great arts. Such achievements should be encouraged, applauded, and rewarded.

Obituaries:

This year we reflected on the sad loss of poets John Montague and Ann Zell, actor Gordon Fulton, singer-songwriter Bap Kennedy, guitarist Henry McCullough, illustrator Patrick Sanders and the painter Basil Blackshaw. Their passing throws into sharp relief the unique value that artists bring to Northern Ireland's creative life and reputation.

Telling our stories



María Connolly in Brenda Murphy's *Two Sore Legs*, performed at the Brussels Platform. Green Shoots Productions. Photo: Elaine Hill

A Year in the Arts 2016-17

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 2016

- The Arts Council calls on government to reinvest in the arts, as 102 of 107 Annually Funded arts organisations remain on standstill funding for the coming year. Arts Council introduces a sustainability fund to strengthen the resilience of several key organisations affected by a decade of disinvestment.

- 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.



- The Oh Yeah Music Centre becomes one of 22 organisations from across the UK to be selected as PRS Music Foundation Talent Development Partners for 2016.



- Young violinist Sarah White becomes the new Leader of the Ulster Youth Orchestra and is presented by the Arts Council with the 236 year-old Milton violin for the duration of her tenure as leader.



- St. Patrick's, Rathfriland and Dalriada School, Ballymoney, win the junior and senior competitions in the BBC Radio Ulster School Choir of the Year, which is produced in association with the Ulster Youth Choir and supported by the Arts Council.



- WheelWorks youth arts organisation launches its new ArtCart, bringing mobile arts activities to disadvantaged children and young people across Northern Ireland.



- Participants on the Prison Arts Foundation's creative writing programme at HMP Magilligan scoop three 1st prizes in the Writing in Prison category at the Listowel Writer's Festival.

- Jazz percussionist, Ed Dunlop, winner of the Arts Council and BBC NI's 2014 Young Musicians' Platform Award, performs with the Ulster Orchestra and jazz greats at the City of Derry Jazz & Blues Festival.



- Streetwise Community Circus celebrates 20 years of bringing street circus skills to communities across Northern Ireland.



May 2016

- Beyond Skin launches the Parallel Versing Northern Ireland schools programme 2016, an initiative connecting schools in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland and using music to change the life trajectory of children whose quality of life has been impacted by the legacy of conflict.



- The annual Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival revels in its acclaimed eclecticism with acts ranging from Grandmaster Flash to Richard Herring.

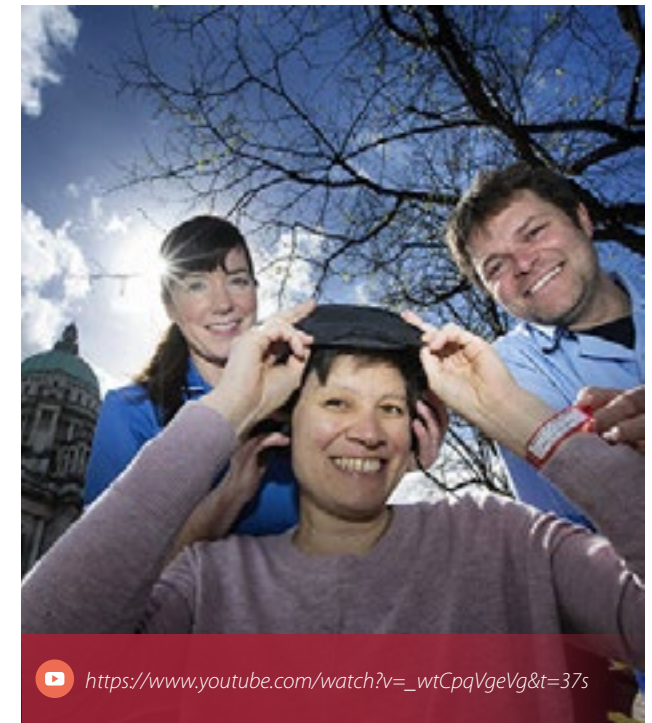


David Holmes

- Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin is inaugurated as the seventh Ireland Professor of Poetry.
- Aisling Ghéar Theatre Company takes its new show, 'Alice Milligan – a girl Of Genius', charting the extraordinary life of an icon of Ireland's renaissance of the late 19th Century, to the Cuala Festival in New York.



- City of Derry International Choral Festival and Derry International Irish Music Festival win 'Outstanding Contribution to Arts and Culture' and 'Best Tourism Event' at the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce North West Business Awards.
- 'Reassembled, Slightly Askew', a ground-breaking audio-immersive theatrical experience by local Playwright, Shannon Sickels (Yee), based on her personal experiences of brain trauma and disability, is showcased at the prestigious Battersea Arts Centre as part of A Nation's Theatre Festival.



Rebranding Northern Ireland



June 2016

- Ruth McGinley, winner of the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition in 1994, releases first solo album of classical contemporary music with the support of the Arts Council and Moving On Music.



<https://vimeo.com/169226139>

- Local actor Paddy Scully and UK actor John Challis join Finance Minister, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA at a special event at Stormont to celebrate Bloomsday, as part of the Crescent Arts Centre's Belfast Book Festival.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfA_U59ty8c&t=2s

- Creativity in the digital age, reflections on the national commemoration of centenaries, and the role of women in the creation of history books, are the topics explored in the 29th John Hewitt International Summer School in Armagh City.



- Kabosh Theatre Company presents its production of 'Those You Pass On The Street' at the National Arts Festival in South Africa and the Ubumuntu Arts Festival in Rwanda, and facilitates masterclasses on how theatre and art can be used as a positive force in peace-building.



- Created especially for the 8th Walled City Music Festival by Memphis-based group Babu Press, *Beyond Lilliput: The Adventures of Leon and Leona Gulliver* combines classical music and storytelling, with the aim of allowing young children to be inspired by classical music at an early age.

Brussels Platform

Now in its sixth year, the Arts Council in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels ran the 'Brussels Platform', promoting the Culture and Creativity of Northern Ireland and providing opportunities for artists representing all art forms to showcase their work at a series of monthly events at the capital of the European Union. These events attract an audience of officials from the EU Institutions and across the diplomatic community. Highlights of this year's Brussels Platform were a double-bill of Ulster-Scots folk music and musical comedy with Stonewall Folk Group and Teresa Livingstone; Keith Donald's one-man play, *NewBliss*; and Green Shoot Productions' Belfast-based comedy play, *Two Sore Legs*.



Musical comedian Teresa Livingstone and Northern Ireland folk band Stonewall

July 2016

- Northern Irish sculptors Brendan Jamison and Mark Revels travel across the USA creating 'Sugar America', a giant sugar cube sculpture that maps iconic buildings, vehicles and animals from across the country.



- Following the announcement by the Minister for Communities, the Arts Council re-opens the £200,000 Musical Instruments for Bands programme.
- Singer-songwriter and youth peace ambassador Danielle Carragher represents Northern Ireland and Beyond Skin at Global Youth Rising in Romania, an international youth peace forum offering young people the opportunity to take part in shaping their own futures and be at the forefront of peace-building.



- The Arts Council publishes its response to the Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-2021.

Creative & Cultural Belfast

The last of the seven landmark Creative and Cultural Belfast projects took place this year, supported in partnership by the Arts Council and Belfast City Council. These projects were designed to promote community engagement and social inclusion through the arts, with community groups working with arts organisations to tell their stories using music, theatre, film and more. The projects created large-scale participatory opportunities for people throughout the city who would traditionally have been less likely to have accessed or participated in culture and arts due to social, economic or other barriers.



'Waves of Tory' world record attempt, part of the programme of events celebrating the Farset

The Tempest - Terra Nova Productions. 250 people from Belfast join a cast of professional, international performers, to produce six performances celebrating Shakespeare's 400th anniversary.



The Belfast Tempest

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y84CqMaQ1UE>

Farset Project - Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich and Spectrum Centre. A cross-community programme of events re-connecting the local communities to the history and heritage of the River Farset, culminating in the unveiling of 'Origin', an 11-metre tall sculpture marking the source of the river.



Farset Project

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_lwebv5An0

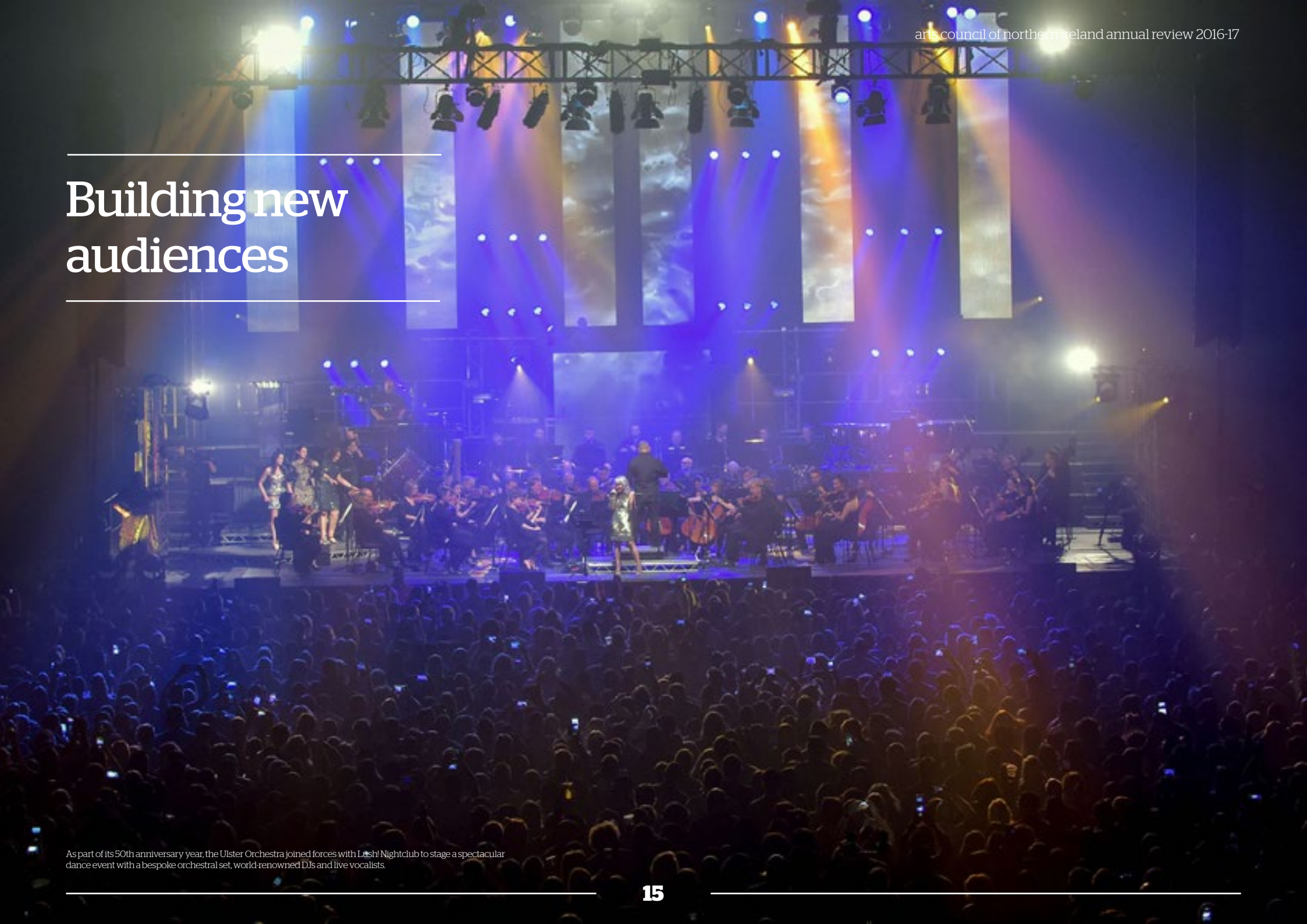
Belfast Carnival Village – Beat Carnival. Ormeau Park is transformed into a theatrical wonderland for all the family, with arts & crafts workshops, music, puppetry, Mad Hatter tea parties, interactive drum circles, gigantic parade and musical finale, and the whole city is invited.



Belfast Carnival Village

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1axk0Ju0LaA>

Building new audiences



As part of its 50th anniversary year, the Ulster Orchestra joined forces with Lush! Nightclub to stage a spectacular dance event with a bespoke orchestral set, world-renowned DJs and live vocalists.

August 2016

- The MAC mounts the first significant exhibition of David Hockney's work in Ireland with the exhibition, *David Hockney: I draw, I do.*



- Féile an Phobail, the island of Ireland's largest community festival and summer school, features All Saints, Deacon Blue, Mary Coughlan and The Wolfe Tones.
- The work of seven of the 42 designer-makers whose careers have been supported through Craft NI's business development programme, 'making it', are showcased at the 10th August Craft Month in venues across Northern Ireland.



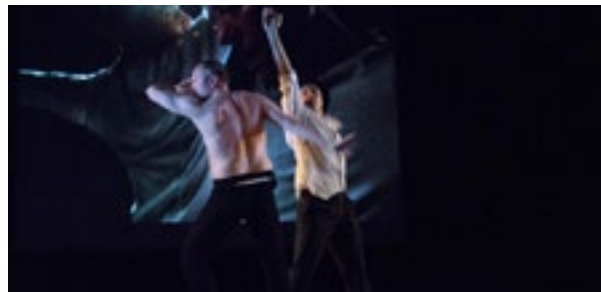
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N24bpnlqAG8>

- Nick Lowe headlines EastSide Arts Festival, which offers 100 events over 11 days across 40 venues across east Belfast and the city centre.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmNQev8Bems>

- The annual Féile An Droichead returns for an eighth year with a programme of traditional music and events featuring local and internationally-acclaimed musicians and songwriters.
- The fifth 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.



- The Clondeboye Festival hosts a festival of Russian music to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Barry Douglas winning the Tchaikovsky Piano Competition.



- The Millennium Forum's hit dance musical extravaganza, Titanicdance, is performed at the China International Folk Arts Festival at the Qinghai Grand Theatre in West China's Qinghai Province.



- Bangor's Open House Festival offers 100+ events in 40+ venues, including music, film, food & drink, theatre, art, books, comedy and spoken word, and features an open air performance of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

September 2016

- Michael McHale, renowned pianist and 2014 winner of the Arts Council's Major Individual Artist Award, releases his debut concerto album of Irish Piano Concertos, recorded with the RTE National Symphony Orchestra.



- Belfast is transformed by arts and culture as the eighth annual Culture Night puts on 250 free events in 100 locations around the city centre and beyond for an anticipated audience of 65,000 visitors.



- Cairns residents group in Cushendall unveils *Fairy Ring*, a public art installation by artist Michael Disley, supported by the Arts Council as part of the Building Peace through the Arts – Re-Imaging Communities programme.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUawD43rheg&t=2s>

- Musical comedian Teresa Livingstone and folk band Stonewall bring the magic of Culture Night Belfast to Brussels as part of the Arts Council's Brussels Platform, a series of events hosted by the NI Executive Office in Brussels to promote Northern Ireland arts internationally.



- Belfast's annual comedy festival features the best in stand-up, comedy drama, laughter yoga, sketch shows, films, art, circus and clowning, with headline acts *The Horne Section* and *Jenny Eclair*.

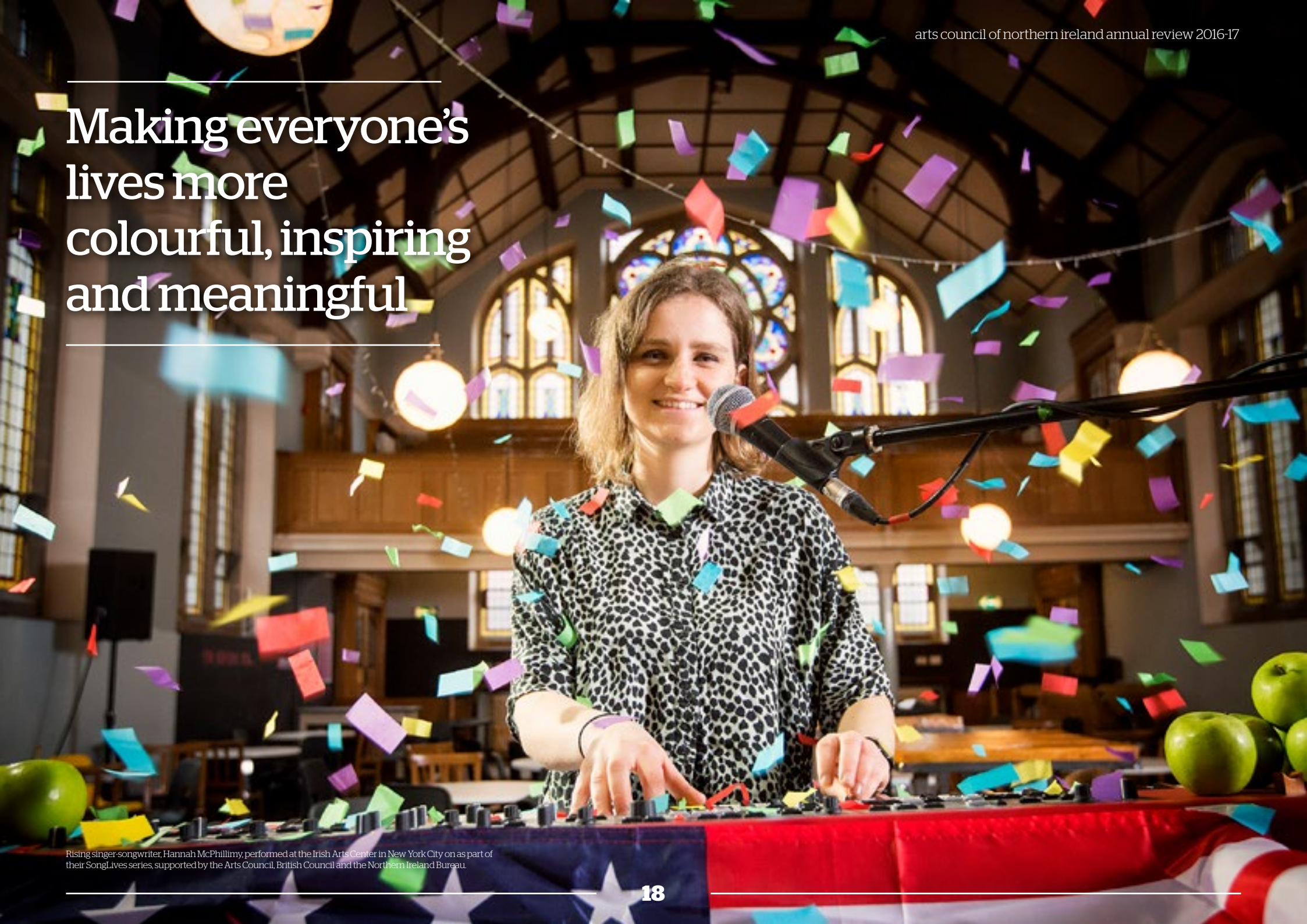


Maria Connolly in *Two Sore Legs*

- The Ulster Orchestra celebrates 50 years as Northern Ireland's symphony orchestra with 50 pop-up performances in and around Belfast City.



Making everyone's lives more colourful, inspiring and meaningful



Rising singer-songwriter, Hannah McPhillimy, performed at the Irish Arts Center in New York City on as part of their SongLives series, supported by the Arts Council, British Council and the Northern Ireland Bureau.

October 2016

- The City of Derry International Choral Festival celebrates choral music-making and provides opportunities for competitive and non-competitive participation for singers across a wide range of styles, ensembles and ages.



- Musicians Jason O'Rourke, Martin Coyle and Tiona McSherry, plus promoter Paula Kiernan from Moving On Music, promote the music of Northern Ireland at the WOMEX World Music Expo in Santiago de Compostela.



- Over 100 events take place across Belfast as part of the Ulster Bank Belfast International Arts Festival, headlined by New York performer, Taylor Mac.



- Departing Chair of the Arts Council, Bob Collins, is awarded the Belfast Telegraph Spirit of Festival Award at the closing night of the Ulster Bank Belfast International Arts Festival.

- Sticky Fingers International Children's Festival offers two weeks of creative events for children across Newry City and beyond, including storytelling with *Tales from Old Japan*, The Comedy String Quartet and a (slightly) scary forest walk in the company of witches and wizards with *The Ghost of Halloween*.



Articulate

The Arts Council launched a new, three-year, £600,000 funding programme in partnership with the Public Health Agency, designed to improve the health and wellbeing of young people through the arts. The 'Articulate - Young People & Wellbeing Arts Programme' works with community organisations to deliver custom-made arts projects to groups of young people across Northern Ireland. Drama, music, visual arts and literature are used as tools to engage young people and encourage self-expression and the development of self-confidence and self-motivation.



Youth Action NI, Rainbow Factory School of Performing Arts



Articulate programme

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elaOo7HGpQA>

October 2016

- London-based, Slovenian installation artist Jasmina Cibic wins the 2016 MAC International Ulster Bank Prize of £20,000.



- Local silversmith Cara Murphy wins the £15,000 Rosy James Memorial Trust Award.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_U9rC-pJSI

- Void contemporary art space hosts *Torture*, a challenging exhibition by celebrated American photographer Andres Serrano, known for his dramatic and provocative images.



Creative employment

The Creative Employment programme, initiated in 2015 by Creative and Cultural Skills NI and supported by Arts Council National Lottery funds, offers apprenticeships (up until 2017) and internships for young people interested in pursuing a career in the arts. It aims to encourage talented young people to see the arts as an attractive career option and to grow the skills we need now and into the future, by providing paid opportunities to train on the job.

Since its inception, the Creative Employment programme has created 67 new jobs for young people aged 16-24. It has invested £205,000 in skilling up young people in a variety of roles across the creative industries, with employers investing a further £408,000 back into the NI economy in wages.

Businesses that signed up to be involved in the scheme include Young at Art, Production Services Ireland, National Museums, Speed Motion Films, Oh Yeah Music Centre, ArtsEkta and The Millennium Forum.

The NI Creative Employment Programme is part of the UK-wide 'Building a Creative Nation' Campaign, which calls all creative organisations to create jobs and promote responsible and sustainable recruitment practices.



Creative Employment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73Q3WxCovHY>



Creative and Cultural Skills with representatives and interns from the Stendhal Festival

November 2016

- The National Lottery reaches a milestone as the 500,000th grant is awarded in support of good causes, including the arts.
- Echo Echo's international Festival of Dance and Movement returns for an expanded fourth edition in venues around Derry-Londonderry, with headline act Ockham's Razor performing the Irish premiere of award-winning *Tipping Point*.



- EastSide Arts' fourth CS Lewis Festival celebrates the legacy of the writer whose childhood home is in east Belfast.



- Maiden Voyage Dance tours its acclaimed *Quartet for 15 Chairs* to coincide with the dance company celebrating fifteen years of commissioning and touring contemporary dance performances.



- The inaugural John O'Connor Writing School and Literary Arts Festival 2016 is a three-day festival marking the rediscovery of the acclaimed novel by the Armagh writer, *Come Day Go Day* (1948), and involving people in the art of writing fiction and creative non-fiction.

- Outburst, Belfast's international queer arts festival, celebrates its tenth birthday with a ten-day programme of queer theatre, performance, comedy, visual art and literature, headlined by auteur John Waters.



- The Community Arts Partnership relocates to The Arts Resource Centre (ARC) on Donegal Street Place in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter, and is now able to offer a performance café venue, a workshop space and rehearsal/recording studio.



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

- A 'first-of-its kind' international exhibition brings together 19 artist-makers from across Europe to Derry~Londonderry's newest state-of-the-art visual arts space, the Nerve Visual Gallery, Ebrington.





Promoting equality and social inclusion

Beyond Skin's Orchestre des Réfugiés et Amis, which offers artists in Refugee or Asylum status here the opportunity to regularly meet, play music and work with professional musicians. Photo: Brian Morrison

December 2016

- Ray Giffen, Arts and Events co-ordinator at the Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts is the latest recipient of the Arts Council's Anne O'Donoghue Award, enabling him to undertake a month-long residency at the Irish Arts Centre in New York City.



- The Dublin-based Irish Writers Centre, with support from the Arts Council, extends its programming into Northern Ireland with a series of specialized courses and residencies in Belfast, Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone, plus 20 free professional memberships to local writers.



- Northern Ireland's first publicly funded LGBTQ+ theatre company, Theatreofpluck, presents its alternative Christmas show, 'Pirates of Portrush', written by Arts Council ACES awardee, Hilary McCollum.
- The BBC pilots the 'Ten Pieces Coaching Scheme', delivered in Northern Ireland by the Ulster Orchestra and BBC Performing Groups, offering free coaching by professional musicians for talented 10-18 year-olds.



Challenge Fund

Mid Ulster District Council became the first council area to benefit from the Arts Council's Local Government Challenge Fund, with the opening of the Seamus Heaney HomePlace in Bellaghy. The Challenge Fund, introduced to anchor investment in the arts at a local level, offers match funding of up-to £150,000 of Arts Council National Lottery funds to each district council to supplement their existing investment in the arts. The Challenge Fund also aims to embed arts policy and programming in local authorities' Community Plans, so that the arts become lead partners in the development and delivery of areas of civic responsibility, including economic regeneration, community relations, social cohesion, tourism and health. Local Authorities have responded positively, with ten taking up the challenge.

[Challenge Fund](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehBc5B2LjsA)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehBc5B2LjsA>



Launching the Arts Council Challenge Fund: Bob Collins, Chairperson, Arts Council, Paul Givan MLA, Minister for the Department for Communities and piper, Iain Burrows

December 2016

- Seacourt Print Workshop displays a special exhibition challenging perceptions of those living with illness or a disability, with 70 prints created by participants on 'Interhuman', its innovative community engagement programme.



- Composer Ian Wilson, dancer Oona Doherty, musician David Lyttle and writer Anne Devlin each receive the Arts Council's highest acknowledgement of a £15,000 Major Individual Award.



- Greater Shantallow Community Arts opens the new Studio 2 Community Arts Centre at Skeoge in Derry-Londonderry, encouraging people from the hardest-to-reach communities to the centre of Derry's creative, cultural and civic life.



- Four talented young musicians from Northern Ireland are awarded the biennial Young Musicians' Platform Award by the Arts Council and BBC Northern Ireland, providing grants of £5,000, mentoring and performance opportunities – pianist Seán Morgan-Rooney, baritone Aaron O'Hare, harpist Richard Allen and folk singer/guitarist Niall Hanna.



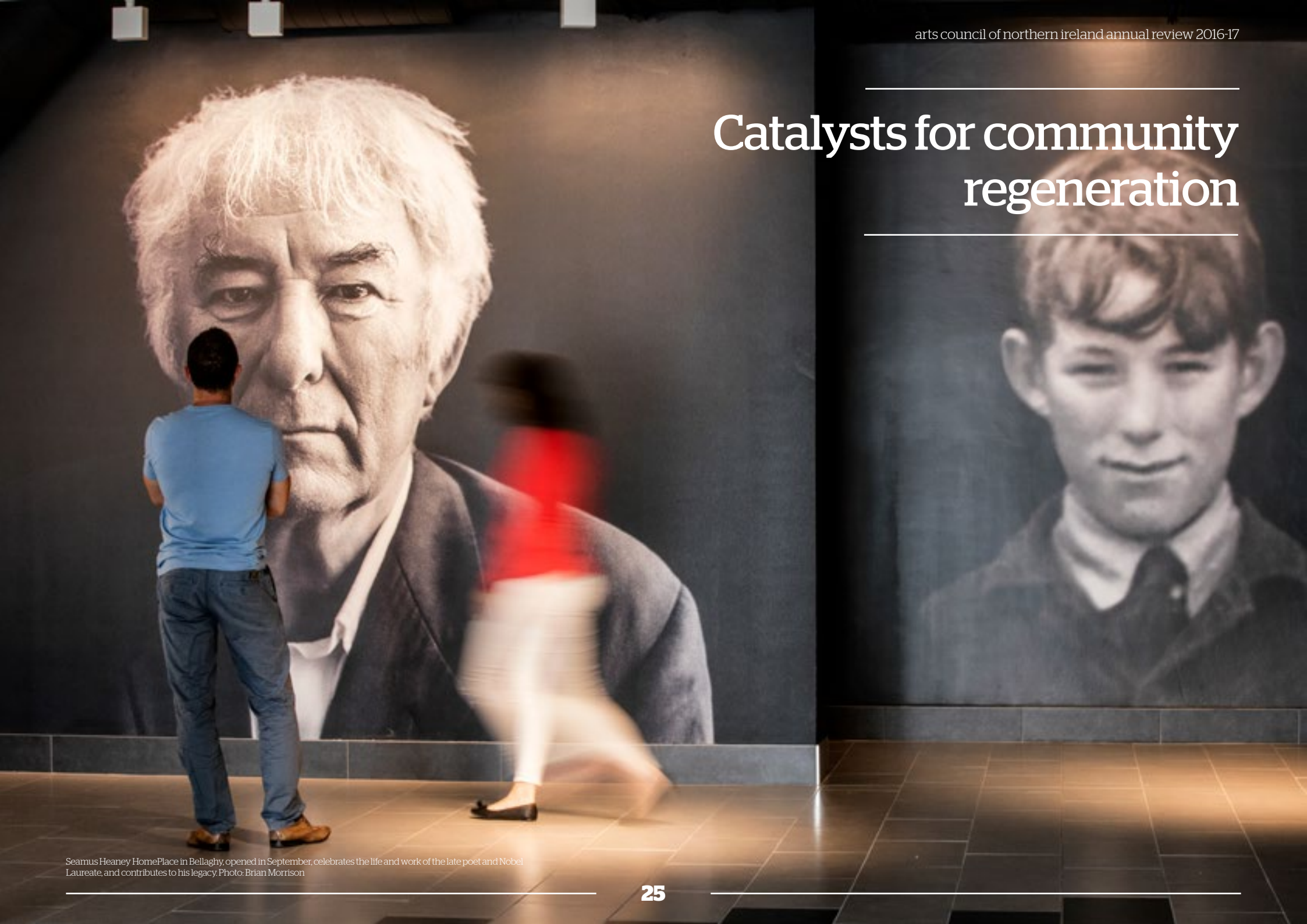
Seamus Heaney HomePlace

Mid Ulster District Council opened the Seamus Heaney HomePlace in September, with investment from the Arts Council's Challenge Fund supporting an Arts Programmer post as well as the creative and cultural programme of events. The HomePlace in Bellaghy celebrates the legacy of the late poet and Nobel Laureate with interpretative displays and a high-quality programme of multi-arts events, featuring many local artists, writers and performers. The HomePlace lies at the heart of Mid Ulster District Council's plans to broaden the scope and reach of the arts in the area, providing a major tourist attraction and a fitting venue in which to encounter one of the century's greatest poets.



Jeffrey Morgan with his portrait of Seamus Heaney at the HomePlace

Catalysts for community regeneration



Seamus Heaney HomePlace in Bellaghy, opened in September, celebrates the life and work of the late poet and Nobel Laureate, and contributes to his legacy. Photo: Brian Morrison

January 2017



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JUWwo15pNY>

- The Arts Council and the Public Health Agency jointly invest £600,000 in the new, three-year, 'Articulate' funding programme, which uses the arts as a tool for improving the health and wellbeing of young people.
- Mr John Edmund is appointed by the Minister for Communities as the new Chair of the Board of the Arts Council.

- The Out To Lunch Festival in Belfast gets the new year off to a swinging start with a packed programme of arts, music, comedy, film and words.



- Northern Ireland Opera and Opera Theatre Company present the Irish premiere of the modern classic, 'Powder Her Face', to enthusiastic reviews at the Lyric Theatre.



- 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 Big Telly Theatre Company winning the coveted Arts Award and Translink taking Business of the Year for their numerous arts partnerships.

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 14 artists/organisations, including Cahoots NI, which brought 'Shh! We Have a Plan' to the IPAY Showcase in Wisconsin. Photographer Hannah Starkey was one of the artists to take advantage of the residencies at the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris, and a range of new residencies and platform events was established in India. Author David Park took the opportunity to speak at the Jaipur Literature Festival, while sculptor Lauren Scott undertook a month-long Vedaaranya artists' residency at the Ramgarh Shekhawati Rajasthan. Vertical dancer Sarah MacKeever spent six weeks at the Sanskriti Kendra cultural retreat, and recent graduate Ellie Niblock became the first visual artist from Northern Ireland to participate in a month-long artist residency programme at the Arts Ichol commune in India.



Artist **Ellie Niblock**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QacXD9fYD1w>



Vertical dancer **Sarah MacKeever**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n33Ww3V2PWw>



Mixed media artist, Ellie Niblock is the first artist selected for the India Art Ichol residency

Bringing people and communities closer together



February 2017

- With funding support from the Arts Council's 'Articulate - Young People & Wellbeing Arts Programme', Dove House Community Trust engages with 100 young people, building resilience and self-esteem through a programme of music, dance and urban arts, linking with artists and arts providers in Derry City.

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZqzLE4ysW4&t=8s>

- The Golden Thread Gallery hosts 'Sean Hillen: 100 Works', the first major solo exhibition of the Newry-born artist's work in Northern Ireland, with many rarely seen works borrowed from private and public collections.



- Moving On Music collaborates with the Belfast Music Society to present a new series of short concerts entitled Night Music, featuring top-end chamber musicians performing in informal settings and with the opportunity to eat, drink and meet the performers.



- Children's laureate PJ Lynch makes a return visit to school and his home city to host a special illustration workshop with pupils at Lagan College, supported by Booktrust NI and the Arts Council.



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

- Sole Purpose Productions' new drama, 'Blinkered' provides an insight into the mind of a young man as he battles depression and loneliness, with performances at the Derry Playhouse and the Lyric Theatre, before touring the show to the Republic of Ireland.



 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyC_LtVrBeM

March 2017

- Moving On Music's Brilliant Corners Festival of Jazz in Belfast celebrates its fifth birthday with a characteristically varied and interesting showcase of the best of modern jazz.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJINM0WVAJQ>

- More than 100 local and international artists perform in 30 concerts at 13th United Airlines Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival, celebrating the art of songwriting, bringing top international performers to Belfast, and showcasing local talent such as Panarts Young Songwriter of the Year, Triona Carville.



- To celebrate International Women's Day, female writers from Northern Ireland host a series of free literary public events across the region, including readings, bookshop appearances and library events to inspire women everywhere to write, read, and champion the literary work of local women.



- Children and young people have the opportunity to experience and participate in the very best of local and international arts at the 19th annual Belfast Children's Festival, with highlights including free access to Cleary Connolly's Meta Perceptual Helmets.



- In response to Brexit and immigration controversy in the UK and the USA, Terra Nova Productions, Northern Ireland's professional intercultural theatre company, remounts a production of last year's *Mi Mundo (My World)*, which tells the true story of a young Northern Irish woman who takes on the might of the government to fight deportation and keep her Peruvian husband in the UK with her and their young children.



- The Lyric Theatre joins forces with Cahoots NI to present *Nivelli's War*, a true story set at the end of WWII, showing in Belfast prior to its Broadway run in April.



March 2017

- Thirteen artists with disabilities are awarded Arts & Disability Forum's (ADF) Individual Disabled Artist (iDA) Awards, worth up to £5000 each, supported by National Lottery funding through the Arts Council.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KU0-laGFJy4>

- Twenty community-based arts projects for older people benefit from £160,000 through the Arts Council's Arts & Older People Programme.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_F_nN4bzOr0&t=2s

- Songs and music from around the world are brought together at the Lyric Theatre in a unique musical collaboration featuring the talents of Belfast Harmony North and the Russian Rosinka Choir, as part of ArtsEkta's Cultural Coach Programme, which encourages local choirs and performers to explore their own and others' musical traditions, exploring themes of diversity and inclusion.
- Beyond Skin hosts a 'Global Youth Peace Summit Northern Ireland 2017' in locations around Northern Ireland, using international performers including Mim Suleiman and the Heartbeat group to demonstrate how communities can be brought together through the arts.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0REwH3ky13A&t=3s>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2g-uPS0HxjM>

Arts & Age Festival

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 projects. 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.

By April 2016, 7,200 older people had participated in creative arts projects, ranging from singing to circus skills, funded through the Arts & Older People Programme by the Arts Council, The Baring Foundation and the Public Health Agency. By April 2017, the number of older participants had risen to 19,000, a measure of the success and popularity of the programme.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HalyKXkhEhY&t=67s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bbxGwYpNXc>

Expanding young people's horizons

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 Chairman plus members, providing a broad cross-section of expertise and including representatives from the arts and culture sector. The current members were appointed on 1st December 2015 for a term of up to four years. Mr Bob Collins completed his term as Chairman in 2016 (December 2011-October 2016). His

successor, Mr John Edmund, took up post in January 2017 for a period of up-to four years. The following board members were reappointed to serve a second term of office: David Alderdice, Anna Carragher, Noelle McAlinden, Katherine McCloskey and Paul Mullan. Conor Shields and Nisha Tandon completed their terms of office in 2017 (May 2013 - 31st March 2017).

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

79% of Arts Council investment goes to the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland



Mr John Edmund
Chairman (2017-)



Mr Bob Collins
Chairman (2011-2016)



Dr Katy Radford
Vice Chair



David Alderdice



Anna Carragher



Dr Siún Hanrahan



Noelle McAlinden



Katherine McCloskey



Roisin Erskine



Paul Mullan



Dr Leon Litvack



Cian Smyth



Jarlath Kearney



Conor Shields
(2013-17)



Nisha Tandon
(2013-17)



Eibhlinn Ni Dhochartaigh
(2013-17)

Board Members of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland 2016-17

Distinguishing us from other places



Oliver Meare's triumphant swan song production of *Don Giovanni* for Northern Ireland Opera, featuring Henk Neven (Don Giovanni) and Clive Bayley (Commendatore). Photo: Robert Workman

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.

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.

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.

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

Careers opportunities for young people



Scottish Opera's *The Mikado* at Belfast's Grand Opera House, featuring Arts Council/BBC Young Musicians' Platform recipients, Marcella Walsh, soprano, and Dawn Burns, mezzo-soprano.

Financial Summary 2016-17

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 £18m to support the full range of creative activities across Northern Ireland in 2016-17

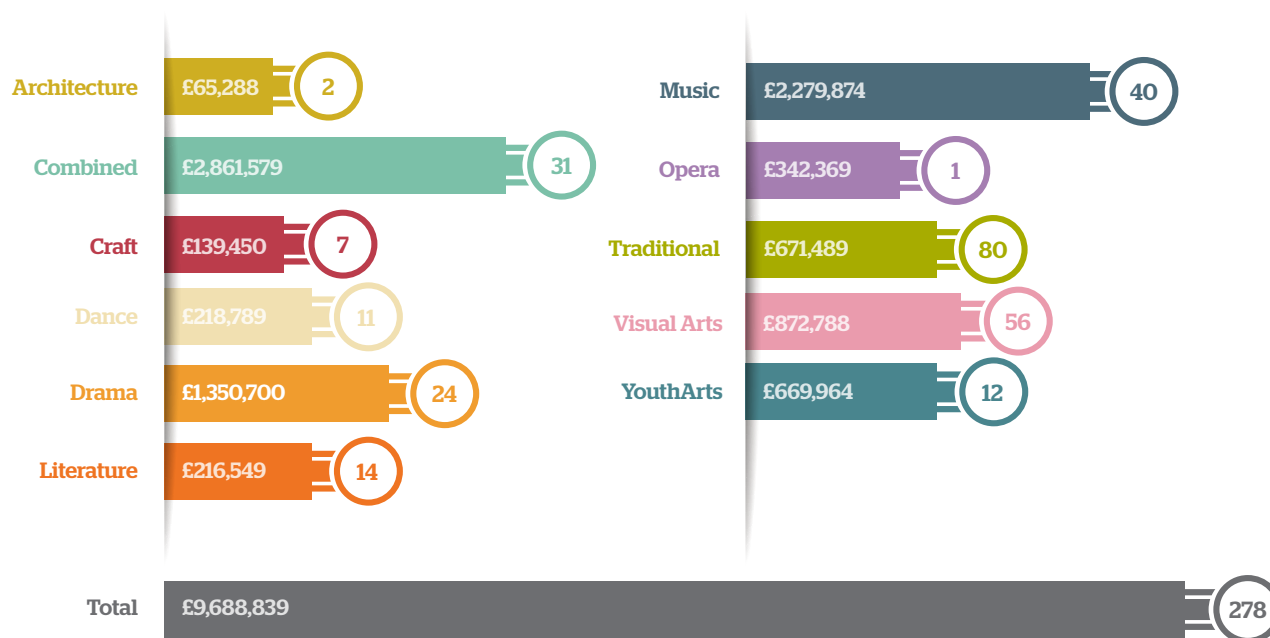
Arts Council Exchequer funding 2016-17

The Arts Council awarded funding of £9.68 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
- Equipment
- Travel Awards
- International Residencies
- Arts Development Fund

Exchequer Awards



Local Authority Area	Number of Awards	Value of Awards
Antrim and Newtownabbey	12	£15,708
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	20	£133,924
Belfast	130	£7,584,294
Causeway Coast and Glens	7	£118,220
Derry and Strabane	29	£1,148,809
Fermanagh and Omagh	12	£97,457
Lisburn and Castlereagh	6	£41,873
Mid and East Antrim	3	£14,334
Mid Ulster	14	£66,532
Newry, Mourne and Down	20	£166,414
North Down and Ards	18	£149,095
Other	7	£152,179
GRAND TOTAL	278	£9,688,839

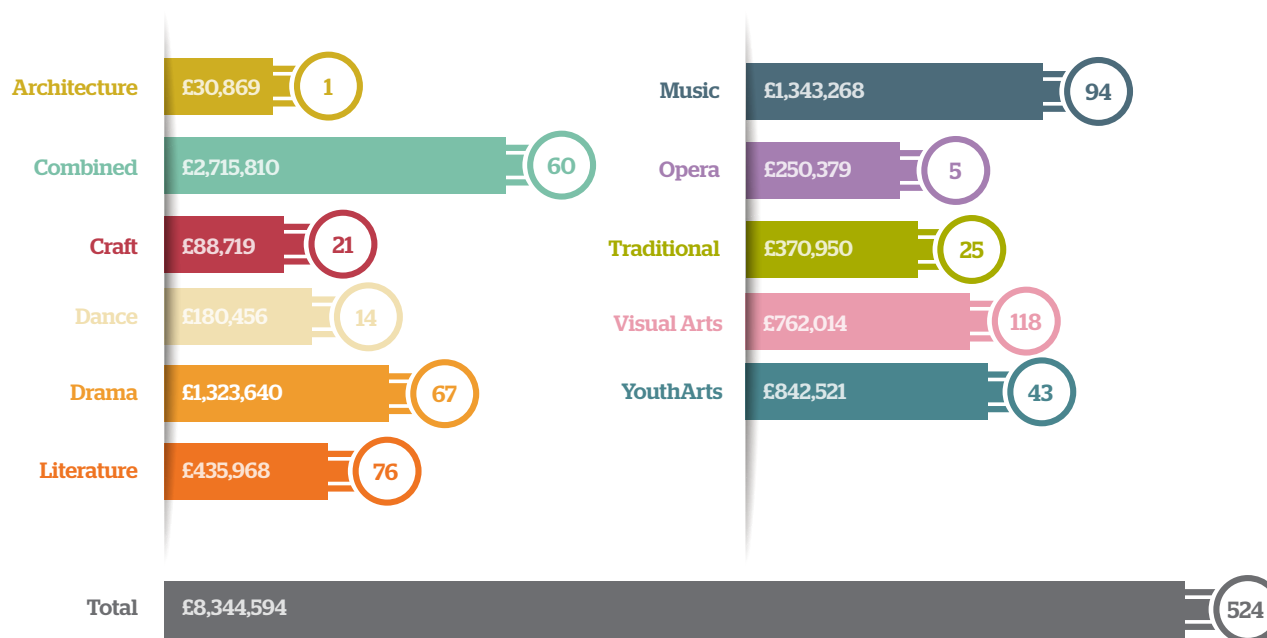
• Individual art form policies are available [here](#)

Arts Council Lottery funding 2016-17

The Arts Council awarded funding of £8.34 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)
- Public Art
- Arts & Older People Programme
- Young People & Wellbeing Arts Programme
- Intercultural Arts Programme
- Small Grants
- Creative Employment Programme

Lottery Awards



Local Authority Area	Number of Awards	Value of Awards
Antrim and Newtownabbey	18	£80,825
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	26	£255,254
Belfast	263	£5,353,377
Causeway Coast and Glens	12	£106,481
Derry and Strabane	61	£1,025,233
Fermanagh and Omagh	19	£173,261
Lisburn and Castlereagh	16	£126,680
Mid and East Antrim	10	£27,582
Mid Ulster	11	£285,035
Newry, Mourne and Down	35	£445,304
North Down and Ards	23	£171,755
Other	30	£293,807
GRAND TOTAL	524	£8,344,594

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.

Improving individual health and wellbeing



Youth Action NI's Rainbow Factory School of Performing Arts performed a scene from their play, *Domino*, at the launch of the Articulate programme, promoting the health and wellbeing of young people through the arts.

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
- Fionnuala Walsh, Participatory Arts
- Grainne McCann, Communications
- Gilly Campbell, Drama and Dance
- Lizzie Devlin, Community Arts
- Deirdre Robb, Visual 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



Boosting employment and the local economy

Silversmith Cara Murphy (right), pictured with enamellist, Deirdre McCrovy, is awarded the Rosy James Memorial Trust Award 2016.



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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