

AR

annual review

Arts Council of Northern Ireland - 2015-16
www.artscouncil-ni.org



LOTTERY FUNDED





Uilleann pipe-maker, Martin Preshaw, awarded the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship in recognition of his craft. Photo: Donal McCann

Front Cover: ArtsEkta's *Nine Nights* free outdoor arts spectacular, funded by the Arts Council and Belfast City Council through the Creative and Cultural Belfast Fund. Photo: Carrie Davenport Photography

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 2015-16 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 2015-2016.

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
- Building Peace through the Arts
- Circus Arts
- Carnival Arts
- 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

Rebranding Northern Ireland



Laurence Kinlan wins the Irish Times Theatre Award for 'Best Supporting Actor' in Conor McPherson's *The Night Alive*, co-produced by Dublin Theatre Festival and the Lyric Theatre Belfast, starring Kate Stanley Brennan and Adrian Dunbar.

Chair's & Chief Executive's Foreword

We are committed to ensuring that our investment continues to enhance community benefit and widen the opportunity for everyone in Northern Ireland, including the most marginalised and hard to reach communities, to engage with excellence in the arts.

It is a testament to the commitment and indefatigable spirit of the arts in Northern Ireland that so much was achieved in a year dominated by the most challenging financial pressures in a decade.

Following the latest in a succession of cuts to departmental budgets intended to reduce Northern Ireland's overall spending deficit, the Arts Council's annual Exchequer budget was cut by 11.2 percent. A reduction of the magnitude of £1.38 million to £10.9 million led inevitably to a smaller sector with reduced capacity. As the arts make a wider contribution to so many areas of society, this latest round of cuts would be felt not only directly in arts provision but across tourism, health, community regeneration, social cohesion and, as arts organisations were forced to retract services to concentrate on core activities, the very Government priorities designed to promote equality and tackle poverty and social exclusion.

A sustained period of disinvestment in the arts has seen the Arts Council's annual Exchequer fund fall by almost one quarter over the last four years. For the first time, National Lottery funding for the arts is approaching parity with Exchequer funding. A priority must now be to maximise the opportunities presented by the reform of central and local government in Northern Ireland to reposition the arts at the heart of government and instigate a new period of reinvestment.



Roisín McDonough
Chief Executive



Bob Collins
Chair

Championing the arts

The shape of the governmental landscape in Northern Ireland is undergoing radical change, with the introduction of the 11 new 'super' councils in 2015-16 and the reforming of central government departments early in 2016-17.

The Arts Council has a longstanding partnership with local councils, supporting the development of capital provision and funding individual artists and arts organisations in their catchment areas. We endeavoured in this pivotal year to play as full a part as possible in the development of the new community plans that the local councils are developing as a consequence of the powers conferred upon them through the Review of Public Administration. In October we held a symposium to discuss local arts and cultural needs with the new councils and how we could strengthen our partnership. These discussions would lead to the Arts Council establishing a Local Government Challenge Fund for each council area and the offer to match any additional investment in the arts made by the councils.

With the reconfiguration of central government departments coming into effect in 2016-17, the Arts Council began preparations for the move from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure to the new Department for Communities. The new dispensation presents the opportunity to reposition the arts at the heart of government.

The Arts Council prepared a digest of research for the new department, illustrating the value of the arts to government priorities. The Arts Digest highlights the education and outreach activities undertaken by publicly-funded arts organisations and details how the sector is helping to tackle disadvantage and promote health and wellbeing. It provides an overview of the growing impact of the Creative Industries on employment and the economy and of the contribution the arts make to community regeneration. The digest also supported a series of high-level discussions with senior politicians in the run up to the local elections. These discussions advanced the case for including the arts in individual party manifestos and, critically, for enshrining the arts in the Northern Ireland Executive's new Programme for Government, 2016-21.

In the final year of the outgoing department, the DCAL Minister Carál Ní Chuilín launched a consultation on the development of a new, ten-year, cross-departmental strategy for the arts. The Arts Council and the sector responded constructively to the consultation and the task of reviewing

the submissions and formulating the new strategy will fall to the new Minister for Communities.

During a busy year, marked by the challenges of responding to a substantially reduced arts budget and the reconfiguration of central and local government, the Arts Council relocated from MacNeice House in Belfast to The Sidings in Lisburn City. The move is a temporary measure, with further relocation expected late in 2017-18.

Bringing people and communities closer together

The South Asian Dance Academy performing at ArtsEkt's annual Mela at Belfast's Botanic Gardens, one of Ireland's leading festivals of world cultures. Photo: Carrie Davenport

A Year in the Arts 2015-16

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 2015

- The NI Creative Employment Programme, supported by the Arts Council and administered by Creative & Cultural Skills, introduces financial incentives for employers in the creative and cultural sector to develop specialist apprenticeships and intern opportunities, with the aim of creating 100 new employment opportunities for young people.



- The Rainbow Factory Academy of Performing Arts, established by Youth Action to provide opportunities for young people to build confidence and develop theatre-based skills, stages an ambitious reimagining of Macbeth in Belfast and Dublin.



- Poet Michael Longley CBE is made a Freeman of Belfast in recognition of his contribution over five decades to the city through his poetry and writing.



- The final 12 of the 47 projects supported by the £900,000 Derry City of Culture Legacy Fund are announced, including the Verbal Arts Centre's community reading initiative, 'Reading Rooms Goes Mobile'.



- The MAC is shortlisted for the £100,000 Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015.

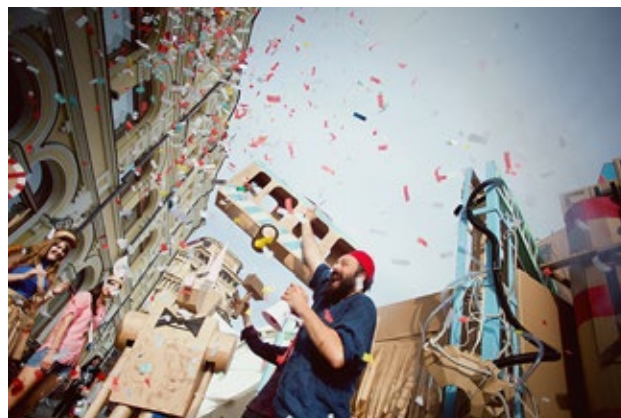


May 2015

- The sixteenth Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival brings over 150 events to Belfast in an eclectic programme ranging from rock survivors The Charlatans to Pulitzer Prize winning poet, Paul Muldoon.
- Derry-based Sole Purpose Productions in partnership with No More Traffik, tours 'The House', a powerful new play raising awareness about human trafficking to community venues in Belfast, Derry and Newtownabbey.



- International artists from Made in Cardboardia, along with Voluntary Arts Ireland, the Verbal Arts Centre, Urban Vizualz, In Your Space and the North West Carnival Initiative, establish The People's Republic of Creativity in Derry ... out of cardboard.



- The twelfth Festival of Fools features 120 free shows by international street performers, staged in Belfast city centre over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend.

- The Belfast Philharmonic Society celebrates 140 years of music making with a gala concert at the Ulster Hall.



NI Creative Employment Programme

Creating 100 jobs in the arts

Employment opportunities in the arts for young people gained a significant boost with the introduction of the NI Creative Employment Programme, supported by the Arts Council and administered by Creative & Cultural Skills. This new programme is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland and provides financial incentives for employers in the creative and cultural sector to develop specialist apprenticeships and internships. Its aim over the next three years is to create 100 new employment opportunities for talented young people.

Young people from all backgrounds, from graduates to those with few or no qualifications, have the chance to access on-the-job-training and work experience to build the skills that employers want, while working in high-quality organisations. Paid internships and apprenticeships are available in areas such as technical theatre, business administration, costume and wardrobe, cultural heritage, live events and promotion, and community arts.

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.

Watch the video



June 2015

- Finance Minister Arlene Foster MLA unveils Ross Wilson's latest piece of public sculpture, 'Mother Daughter Sister', celebrating the role of women in Belfast's Sandy Row, commissioned through the 'Building Peace through the Arts – Re-imagining Communities Programme'.



- The Arts Council opens new awards in memory of Mike Moloney, co-founder of the Belfast Community Circus School and Anne O'Donoghue, Director of Play Resource Warehouse, to support the development of young people working in Circus Arts and Street Theatre, and for training courses, mentoring and cultural exchanges.



- Derry-based Stage Beyond, a theatre company for young adults with learning disabilities, tours schools in Derry, Belfast, Strabane and Claudy with 'Life is But a Meme', a new production exploring online safety and the dangers of the internet.



- Theatre Forum and TheatreNI host the All-Ireland Performing Arts Conference at The Model in Sligo, creating island-wide networking opportunities for theatre practitioners.
- Fermanagh-based Uilleann pipe-maker Martin Preshaw receives a top honour for his craft when he travels to St. James Palace in London to collect an award from The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust.



- The Beat Carnival Parade celebrates its 21st anniversary with a parade through Belfast of over 700 performers, 10 carnival bands and 100 Urban Ballet Dancers.



- Belfast Community Circus School celebrates its 30th anniversary with a place in the World Record books for the Largest Shaving Cream Pie Fight.
- With the support of Craft NI, six contemporary craft makers from Northern Ireland join 40 makers from across the UK to have their work exhibited on an international stage as part of London Design Week.

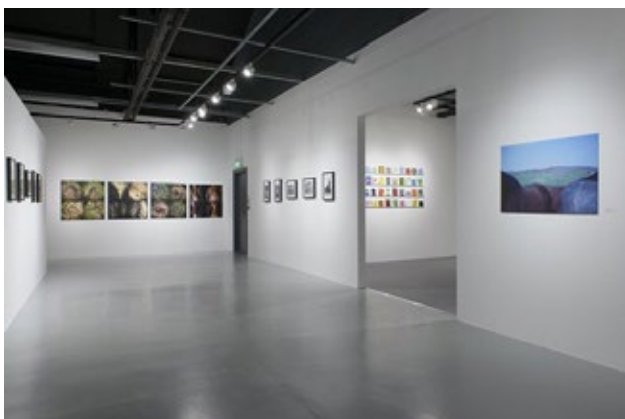


July 2015

- The Arts Council re-opens its popular Arts & Older People funding programme, encouraging older people to embrace their creativity and take part in the arts.



- Void, the Derry-based contemporary art space, opens its new premises in The City Factory Building following a substantial annual funding uplift from the Arts Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council.



- The Arts Council's Music Touring Programme supports Moving on Music, The Walled City Music Festival, Open House, An Gaelaras and An Droichead as they tour the best music, from a wide range of genres, across Northern Ireland.

- Visual Artists Ireland, the all-Ireland representative body for professional visual artists, opens an office in Belfast, extending the range of support services to artists based in Northern Ireland.

- The annual John Hewitt International Summer School plays host to 50 artists, writers, speakers and musicians in Armagh, with a programme inspired by the cross-community ideals of the great poet.



Building Peace through the Arts – Re-imaging Communities

Transforming the public realm and community relations

The Building Peace for the Arts – Re-imaging Communities Programme reached its conclusion with the completion of almost 20 pieces of large-scale public art in communities across Northern Ireland and the border region. Over its three-year lifespan the programme successfully delivered 32 pieces of high-quality public art in a process designed to reconnect communities and reflect a desire for peace and reconciliation. Some 10,000 people and 120 community artists were actively involved in the programme.

Taking the 'Re-imaging' initiative as a whole, including its pilot period from 2006 to 2009, the last decade has seen almost 20,000 people, nearly all new to the arts, embrace change and through the arts realise new possibilities and potential for their communities.

'Building Peace through the Arts' was an Arts Council initiative in conjunction with the European Union's programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE III) managed by the Special EU Programmes Body and International Fund For Ireland



Part of the 'Five Apples' sculpture by artist Shiro Masuyama for the People's Park in Ballymena

August 2015

- Thousands of people from across Belfast and beyond are brought together to enjoy the arts and cultural events at the annual Féile An Phobail, with headline acts including UB40, Wolfe Tones and The Human League.



- Craft Month, Craft NI's annual celebration of contemporary craft, sees 130 events, including exhibitions, workshops and seminars, across Northern Ireland throughout the month of August.
- Open House Festival Bangor hosts 100 events throughout the month, covering the full spectrum of the arts, with more free events than ever.



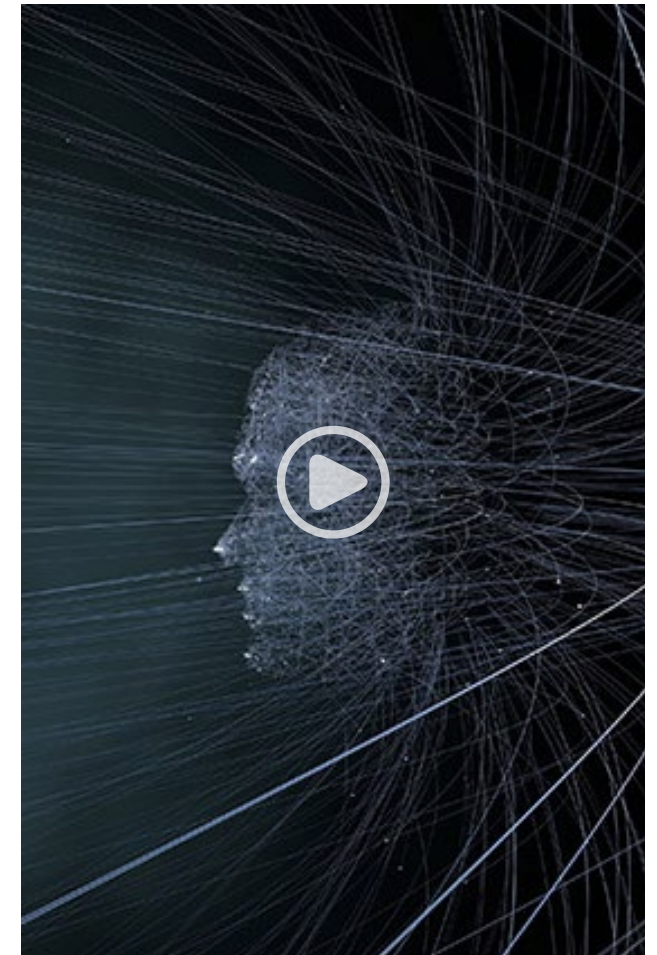
- Fifty-seven arts organisations benefit from an Arts Council investment of £1.5m Lottery funds to bring a series of high-quality arts projects to people across Northern Ireland.
- The 'Making It' business start-up programme, led by Craft NI, the Arts Council and Invest NI, which has launched the careers of 35 designer-makers in Northern Ireland, celebrates its tenth anniversary with an exhibition of work from 24 of the makers from the programme.



- EastSide Arts Festival, with the Arts Council on board as its new principal funder, stages 78 arts events, including Van Morrison and Soak, over 12 days in east Belfast.
- Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich, Féile an Phobail, and the EastSide Arts Festival join together for a special evening of music to celebrate the work of one of Belfast's all-time finest singer-songwriters, Van Morrison.
- ArtsEkta's annual Mela attracts an audience of 30,000 to Belfast's Botanic Gardens to experience Ireland's leading festival of world cultures.

- Belfast artist Glenn Marshall, recipient of a 2015 Major Individual Artist Award from the Arts Council, is shortlisted for the world's pre-eminent digital art prize, the Lumen Prize, for his work 'Particle Man'.

[Watch the video](#)



August 2015

- The Clondeboy Festival showcases the next generation of Northern Ireland's young, talented musicians alongside internationally-acclaimed performers such as Barry Douglas.



- Catalyst Arts pilots a series of alternative residencies for artists, including Alice Clark's residency on the marine and oceanographic research vessel, RV Corystes.



Creative and Cultural Belfast Fund

Promoting social inclusion through the arts

The Arts Council and Belfast City Council partnered in the £900,000 Creative and Cultural Belfast programme, designed to promote community engagement and social inclusion through the arts. Community groups worked with some of the city's best arts practitioners to tell their stories through theatre, music, film and more, in seven, free, landmark events taking place between September 2015 and October 2016.

Replay Theatre Company: 'Baby Day' (September 2015). 14,000 people attend the world's first 'Baby Day', with over 80 events across the city designed specifically around babies and their families.

ArtsEkta: 'Nine Nights' (October 2015). An outdoor theatrical spectacular tells a story of hope inspired by ancient Indian myths and legends, with hundreds of community participants, dancers and musicians joining together in the spirit of storytelling and contemporary celebration. Music, dance, drumming, live theatre, light projections and stunning pyrotechnics by Walk the Plank at Belfast City Hall.

Golden Thread Gallery: 'Draw Down The Walls' (October 2015). 'Invisible Barriers: Moving Images', a programme of art films, mainstream movies and community-authored productions shown in unusual and surprising sites across North Belfast, invites audiences to imagine a city without barriers.

Still to come in the spring/summer of 2016 is the city's largest ever Shakespeare project, a celebration of the River Farset, a community opera for Belfast and the construction of a carnival village.

Each of the Creative and Cultural Belfast events is designed to engage communities and encourage the participation of hundreds of local volunteers. The projects create huge 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.

Watch the video



BabyDay Sling Swing dancers Lisa Davison & her son Rafael Marques

A photograph of three fiddlers playing violins in a warmly lit room. In the foreground, several lit candles are visible on a dark surface. The fiddlers are smiling and looking towards each other. The background is softly blurred, showing a room with warm lighting and architectural details.

Regenerating our towns and cities

Local fiddlers, Odhrán Ó Maoláin, Josie Nugent and Eadaoin Carlin join fiddlers of all ages from across Ireland and Scotland for a musical performance of *100 Fiddles, 55° North* by award-winning Belfast composer, Neil Martin, as part of the inaugural Derry International Irish Music Festival.

September 2015

- Talented circus performer Christopher McAuley from Belfast Community Circus becomes the first recipient of the Arts Council's Mike Moloney memorial award and will now have the opportunity to develop his skills at the National Circus School of Brazil. [Watch the video](#)



- Glass artist, Scott Benefield, becomes the second recipient of the £11,000 Rosemary James Memorial Trust Award, which helps craft makers develop a body of work which might otherwise have been unattainable. [Watch the video](#)



- Culture Night Belfast attracts an estimated 65,000 people to the city centre, contributing to an estimated £2.5m spend in the city.



- Creative Europe Desk UK-Northern Ireland hosts a free all-Ireland conference for everyone working in the creative field, taking a closer look at Creative Europe funding and opportunities for the creative sectors.

September 2015

- DU Dance runs 'Bel-Fest 15', the region's first week-long international youth dance festival, providing an opportunity for local young people to perform with other youth dance groups from the UK and beyond.



- Replay Theatre Company creates the world's first Baby Day, with over 70 events for our tiniest citizens and their families, as their contribution to the Creative and Cultural Belfast programme, funded by the Arts Council and Belfast City Council.



- Community Relations and Cultural Awareness Week celebrates 'One Place, Many People', with arts events in every local authority area.

- Performance poet and comedian Alice McCullough and songwriter, musician and comedian, Ursula Burns represent the arts and culture of Northern Ireland at a special Culture Night event in Europe as part of the Arts Council's Brussels Platform.



Artists' International Development Fund

Expanding horizons for talented artists

The Artists' International Development Fund, a joint initiative between the British Council and the Arts Council that offers grants of up-to £5,000, provides artists and arts organisations with opportunities to bring their work to a wider international audience. This year the Oh Yeah Music Centre developed its relationship with similar music organisations in Berlin, strengthening opportunities for Northern Ireland talent to perform in Germany. Local songwriter VerseChorusVerse travelled to the US to build professional networks ahead of a proposed tour from New York to Nashville and Los Angeles. Malojian recorded a ten track album at Electrical Audio in Chicago; and harpist, composer and sound engineer Una Monaghan became Artist in Residence at the Institute for the Public Life of Art and Ideas in Montreal.



Creating a place where we all want to live



Talented 11-year-old treble singer Garbhan McEnoy stars in Northern Ireland Opera's production of Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry.

October 2015

- The Ulster Bank Belfast International Arts Festival is reborn as a new independent company under the directorship of Richard Wakely, but with the same world-class line-up of artists and events, including Artist in Residence, Amanda Coogan. [Watch the video](#)



- The annual City of Derry International Choral Festival reinforces the city's standing as a centre of excellence for choral singing, with major choirs from around the world participating in concerts, competitions, choral trails, sacred trails, community concerts and workshops throughout the five-day celebration.



- Uilleann pipers Conor Mallon and Conor Lavelle, both members and tutors of the Armagh Pipers Club, represent Ireland at the Croatian Piping Festival in Zagreb.



- Inspired by Diwali, the Indian Festival of Light, 'Nine Nights' sees ArtsEkta team up with Walk The Plank outdoor theatre specialists to produce a free outdoor celebration of Indian culture, played out in a spectacular mix of music, dance, lights and pyrotechnics, as part of the Creative and Cultural Belfast programme.



- The Arts Council relocates temporarily to premises in Lisburn.

- The Derry Playhouse Theatre of Witness Programme brings its unique model of performance to New York and Connecticut, with 'I Once knew a Girl' showing at the Peace and Reconciliation Gathering organised by the Irish Studies Program.



- Belfast Open Studios creates the opportunity for people to visit artists' studios to meet the artists and see how the art is made. [Watch the video](#)

November 2015

- An Droichead and Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin, two of the region's leading Irish language and arts organisations, launch Turais Trad, a new initiative involving tours by some of the most popular folk and traditional music acts on the scene, including folk festival favourites Flook.



- The Arts Council announces the findings and recommendations of its audit of the Traditional Music Sector in Northern Ireland, highlighting the significance of traditional music as a social and cultural asset.



- The Outburst Queer Arts Festival returns for a ninth year with its most ambitious programme yet, celebrating cutting edge international and local lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer arts.



- November is #LovetoMakeMusic month, a national celebration of singing and music, run in partnership with Voluntary Arts, designed to encourage everyone with a love of music to get involved in music making.

- DCAL Minister Caral Ní Chuilín MLA launches a public consultation to inform the development of a new, ten-year, cross-departmental strategy for culture and arts 2016-26.

- Quercus Ensemble and the Duncairn Centre are two of the organisations to receive funding through the artists development programme, Beyond Borders, supporting high quality co-commissions and tours, stimulating collaboration between composers, performance groups and music organisations across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.



December 2015

- Volume Control, the Oh Yeah Centre's award-winning youth mentoring project, launches a first for Northern Ireland: a record label run by the young people.



- Belfast Music Society, promoter of live classical chamber music, launches a new 'Chamber Babies' CD of classical music designed to appeal to young listeners and their parents.



- Brian Irvine, one of Northern Ireland's outstanding composers, is honoured by an Artist Award from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.



- The Gasyard Development Trust in Derry launches the first mobile Wonder Wagon project for the city, offering a range of events for young children, from comic book workshops to puppet theatre and storytelling.



Celebrating Culture Night in Brussels

Showcasing NI arts abroad

Performance poet and stand-up comedian Alice McCullough and songwriter, musician and comedian Ursula Burns, represent Northern Ireland arts at a special Culture Night celebration at the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels. Hosted by the Northern Ireland Executive Office in partnership with the Arts Council, the event attracts a large audience of MEPs, key opinion formers and EU representatives.

This is the latest in the regular series of Brussels Platforms, which have been showcasing Northern Ireland's creative talent for a number of years. Other artists who travelled to Brussels this year were Keith Donald performing his one-man play, 'NewBliss'; concertina player Jason O'Rourke; and the current holders of the Young Musicians' Platform Award, soprano Sinéad O'Kelly and Mezzo Soprano Dawn Burns, accompanied by pianist Ruth McGinley.



Ursula Burns has a harp and she's not afraid to use it

December 2015

- Drake Music opens a new music studio in Belfast that enables disabled people to compose and perform their own music, utilising the latest computer music technology.



- Twenty-one up-and-coming talents representing a broad cross-section of the arts receive funding, mentoring and professional career support through the Arts Council's Artists Career Enhancement Scheme. [Watch the video](#)



- The iconic Strand Arts Centre in east Belfast celebrates its 80th anniversary as a picture house and its new lease of life as a busy arts centre.



January 2016

- Colin Davidson is one of the artists to showcase work at the Centre Culturel Irlandais as part of a new residency opportunity supported by the British Council and Arts Council.



- 'Parallax and Selected Poems', a collection by one of Northern Ireland's leading poets, Sinéad Morrissey, is shortlisted for a top American award by the National Book Critics Circle.



- Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble, with the support of the Arts Council, launches the first Peter Rosser Composition Award, in memory of the composer who died last year, to encourage a new generation of composers to create work for the ensemble.
- The Allianz Arts & Business NI Awards showcase examples of innovative creative collaborations between the business community and the arts sector, with nine awards presented to arts/business partnerships.

- This year's three winners of Major Individual Artists Awards, the highest honour bestowed by the Arts Council, are composer and writer Conor Mitchell, composer Deirdre McKay, and playwright Jimmy McAleavey. [Watch the video](#)

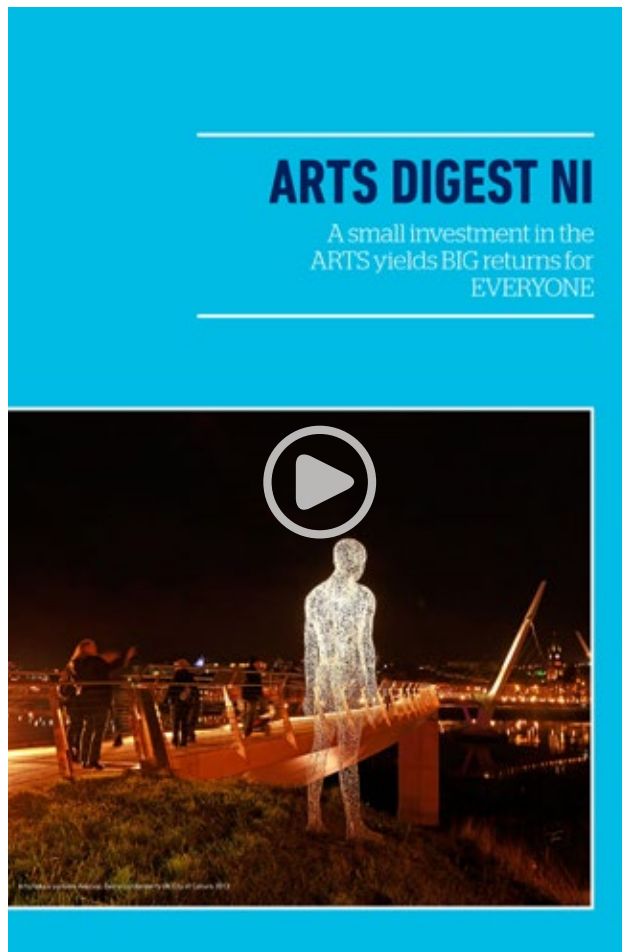


- Anna Newell, artistic director of Replay Theatre Company, is shortlisted for the inaugural Ellen Stewart award, which recognises an individual theatre artist or company whose work promotes social change and community participation with a particular focus on the engagement of young people.



February 2016

- The Arts Council publishes a digest of information illustrating the value of the arts to the region and highlighting the level of community engagement undertaken by arts organisations.



Derry Legacy Fund

Building on the success of City of Culture 2013

The three-year, £900,000, Derry-Londonderry City of Culture Legacy Fund drew to a close, having seen 47 projects create some major new arts experiences and opportunities for the city's citizens to participate in arts and culture. This large-scale partnership investment by the Arts Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council continued the momentum gathered by the city's hugely successful year as UK City of Culture 2013 and enhanced the arts programming of the city's venues and arts organisations.

The final 12 Legacy projects, which took place this year, included:

Mobile Reading Rooms. The Verbal Arts Centre extended its pioneering community reading initiative, which provides benefits to people's health and wellbeing through the literary arts. The Reading Rooms are now mobile so the Verbal Arts Centre is able to take the initiative out to hard-to-reach, marginalised communities throughout Derry-Londonderry.

C.H.O.R.A.L.E. Something Special, an organisation which offers educational and social opportunities for young people and adults with learning disabilities, used its Legacy funding to create an inclusive community learning environment with their C.H.O.R.A.L.E. (Creative Hub of Rhythmic and Legacy Enrichment) music project for people with disabilities. C.H.O.R.A.L.E. offers significant opportunities for collaborative, inclusive learning and skills development through the arts.

Derry International Irish Music Festival. 100 fiddlers of all ages from across Ireland and Scotland joined together for a musical performance of '100 Fiddles, 55° North' by award-winning Belfast composer, Neil Martin, as part of the inaugural Derry International Irish Music Festival, which is supported by the Legacy Fund.

Watch the video



Reading Rooms goes mobile

February 2016

- 100 fiddlers perform together at the Derry International Irish Music Festival performance of '100 Fiddles, 55° North' by award-winning Northern Ireland composer, Neil Martin.



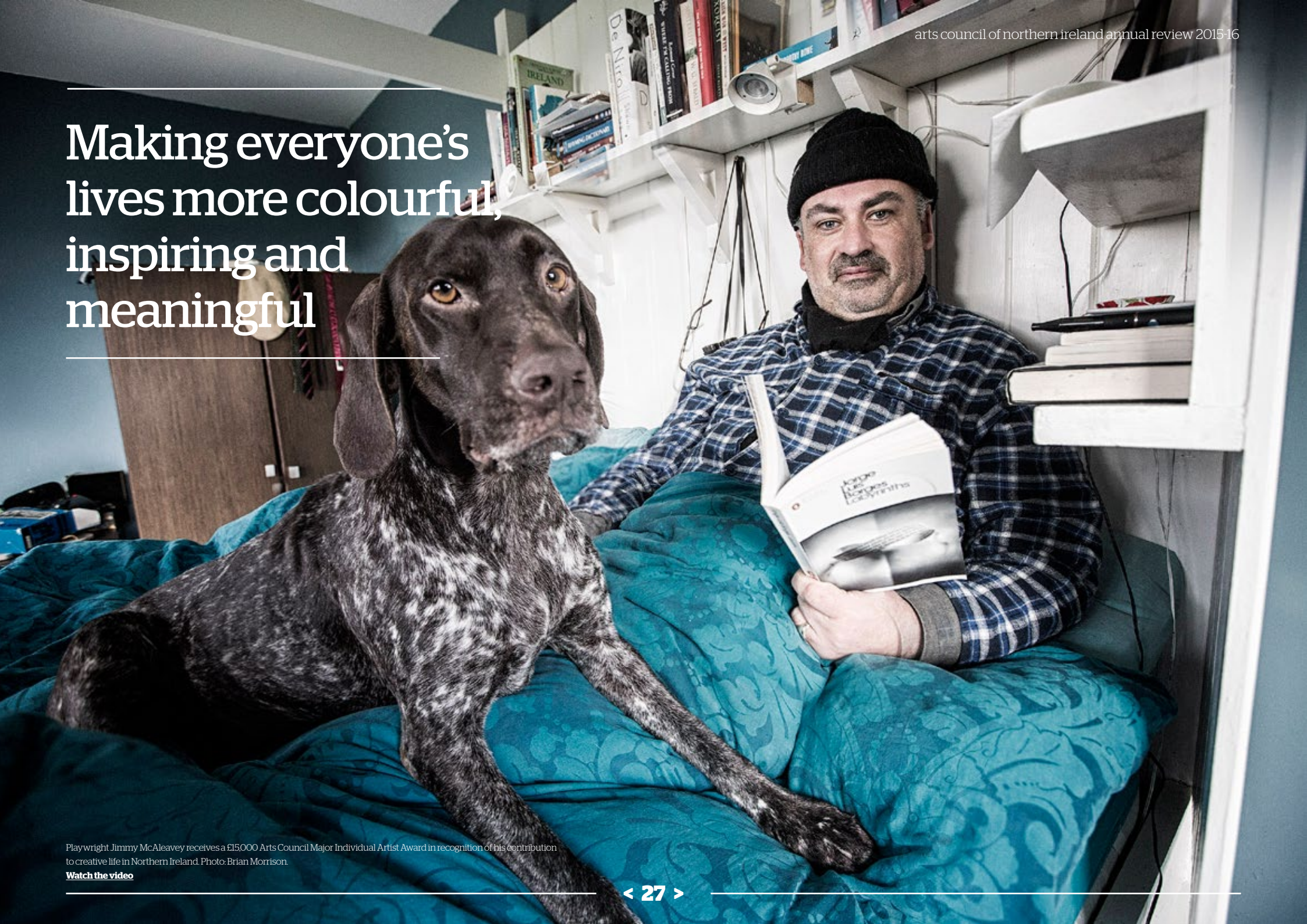
- The search begins to find Northern Ireland's top junior and senior school choirs for the BBC Radio Ulster School Choir of the Year 2016, produced in association with the Ulster Youth Choir and supported by the Arts Council. [Watch the video](#)



- Beyond Skin launches its 'Parallel Versing' Northern Ireland schools programme, using music to change the life trajectory of children whose quality of life has been affected by the legacy of conflict and bringing children from Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka together to explore different cultures.



Making everyone's lives more colourful, inspiring and meaningful



Playwright Jimmy McAleavey receives a £15,000 Arts Council Major Individual Artist Award in recognition of his contribution to creative life in Northern Ireland. Photo: Brian Morrison.

[Watch the video](#)

March 2016

- Giselle Allen reprises her 2012 role as Miss Jessel in a production of *Turn of the Screw* by Northern Ireland Opera that is hailed by the Irish news as a 'masterclass in how to build suspense'. [Watch the video](#)



- Local singer-songwriters Brigid O'Neill and Ciara O'Neill perform at the 12th United Airlines Belfast Nashville Festival, in a concert broadcast into 60 million homes across America, celebrating the musical connections between Belfast and Nashville. [Watch the video](#)



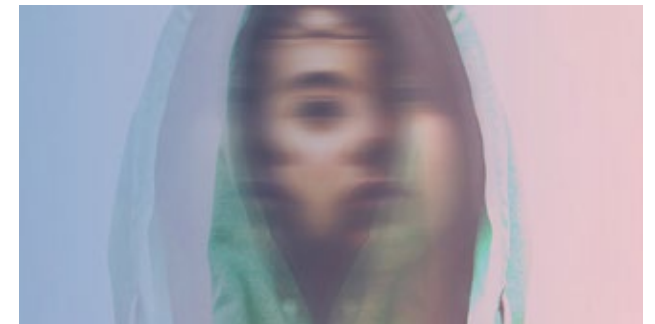
- Moving on Music presents 'Brilliant Corners', a festival of jazz, and announces Ireland's first MOBO Award nominee, David Lyttle, as Artist In Residence. [Watch the video](#)



- Newry-based writer Abbie Spallen, who received an Arts Council Major Individual Artist Award in 2014, wins one of the world's richest awards for literary achievement, the Yale University Windham-Campbell Literature Prize.



- Northern Ireland is the big winner at the Irish Times Theatre Awards 2016, with Best Actor, Best Set Design, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress, and Best new play for 'Scorch', written by Stacey Gregg and produced by Prime Cut Productions in association with the Mac and Outburst Queer Arts Festival. [Watch the video](#)



March 2016

- The Culture Arts and Leisure Committee publishes its report on 'Inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities', reflecting the Committee's belief in the benefits that participation in arts activities can bring to individuals and communities.

- Musician Jason O'Rourke, an Arts Council 'ACES' awardee, performs a special St. Patrick's Day breakfast concert in Brussels as part of the Arts Council/NI Executive Office Brussels Platform.



- Following their participation on the Arts & Older People 'Funny Bones' project run by Play Resource and Ulster Museum, North Belfast Men's Shed celebrate their winning result at the all-Ireland art competition run by the Irish Men's Shed Association. [Watch the video](#)

- WheelWorks, an award-winning Belfast-based youth arts organisation, launches its new state-of-the-art mobile arts vehicle, ArtCart, which provides mobile arts activity to disadvantaged children and young people across Northern Ireland who may otherwise have limited opportunity to access high quality, participatory arts. [Watch the video](#)

- Announcing awards of £13.4 million to 102 arts organisations through the Annual Funding Programme, Arts Council Chairman Bob Collins calls on the NI Executive to reverse years of disinvestment and begin a sustained period reinvesting in the arts.



Corners

Connecting the arts across Europe

Twenty-three international artists, including seven artists from Northern Ireland, gathered in Belfast in October to present a series of free events at the 'Corners Showcase' at the Ulster Bank Belfast International Arts Festival. The idea behind Corners is for the artists to collect stories from their part of Europe and re-tell them in another part of Europe through a collaborative project. The stories give voice to more marginalized groups in society - children, homeless people, prisoners - but they are also stories which connect people across cultures.

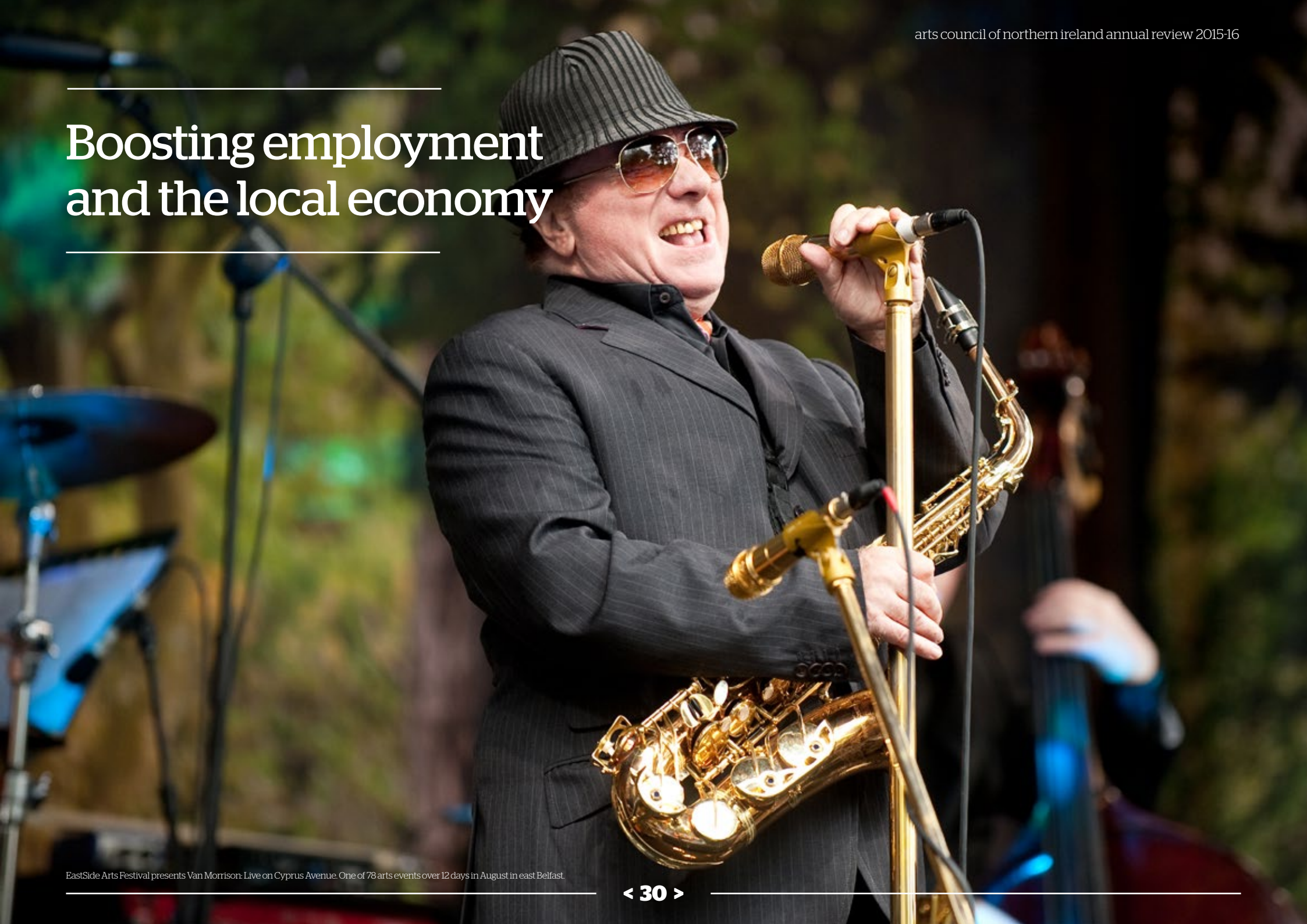
The transnational Corners programme, funded by EU/ Creative Europe and local partners, including the Arts Council, creates opportunities for artists working on the fringes of Europe to collaborate on multidisciplinary arts projects. It brings together areas of Europe that are outside of the political, cultural and economic mainstream, making connections through research and artistic works. To date, more than 50 artists and researchers and 30 organisations have taken part in Corners, and their work has reached hundreds of active citizens and thousands of spontaneous visitors.



Watch the video

Corners artists, Saadia Hussain from Sweden and Juan Aizpitarte from the Basque country

Boosting employment and the local economy



EastSide Arts Festival presents Van Morrison: Live on Cyprus Avenue. One of 78 arts events over 12 days in August in east Belfast.

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 14 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. The appointment of the current Chairman, Bob Collins, has been extended for up to 12 months from 1st December 2015. The following board members were

reappointed to serve a second term of office: David Alderdice, Anna Carragher, Noelle McAlinden, Katherine McCloskey and Paul Mullan. Eibhlínn Ní Dhochartaigh, Conor Shields and Nisha Tandon joined the board in May 2013 for a term of up to four years.

Previous Vice Chairman Damien Coyle and Council members Prof Paul Seawright, Prof Ian Montgomery, Brian Sore completed their term in December 2015.

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 Bob Collins
Chairman



Dr Katy Radford,
Vice Chair



David Alderdice



Anna Carragher



Nisha Tandon



Dr Siún Hanrahan



Noelle McAlinden



Katherine McCloskey



Roisin Erskine



Paul Mullan



Dr Leon Litvack



Eibhlínn Ní Dhochartaigh



Jarlath Kearney



Conor Shields



Cian Smyth

Board Members of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland 2015-16

Building our Creative Industries



Angela Darby, *Fantaheads Kingdom*, Archival Inkjet. Exhibited at Seacourt Print Workshop's 'Eden's Blueprint' exhibition, Oriel Gallery, Clotworthy House, Antrim, 2015

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



Nóirín McKinney,
Director of Arts
Development



Lorraine McDowell,
Director of Operations

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.

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.

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



Promoting equality and social inclusion

Belfast contemporary dance company Maiden Voyage premieres *Pause and Effect*, a new commission as part of their *Off Spring* programme for young and family audiences at the Belfast International Children's Festival. Photo: Brian Morrison

Financial Summary 2015-16

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 £15.5m to support the full range of creative activities across Northern Ireland in 2015-16

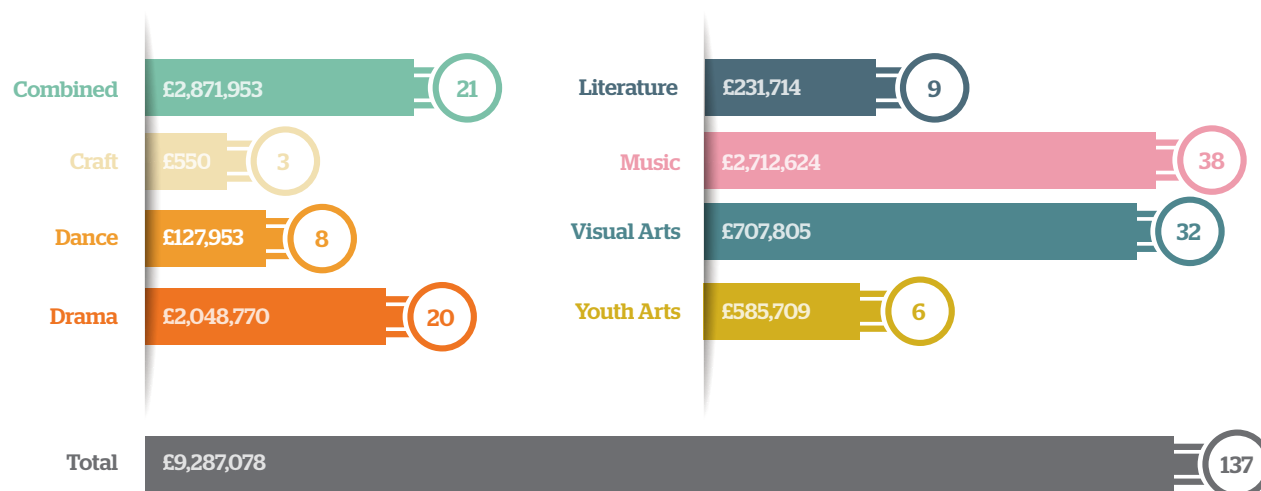
Arts Council Exchequer funding 2015-16

The Arts Council awarded funding of £9.28 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 (AFP)
- Support for the Individual Artist Programme (SIAP)
- Travel Awards
- International Residencies
- Arts Development Fund

Exchequer Awards



Local Authority Area	Number of Awards	Value of Awards
Antrim and Newtownabbey	4	6,400
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	8	7,020
Belfast	75	7,490,014
Causeway Coast and Glens	6	154,380
Derry and Strabane	24	1,329,223
Fermanagh and Omagh	3	120,195
Lisburn and Castlereagh	3	1,250
Mid and East Antrim	1	250
Mid Ulster	1	250
Newry, Mourne and Down	2	113,581
North Down and Ards	6	42,000
Other	4	22,515
GRAND TOTAL	137	£9,287,078

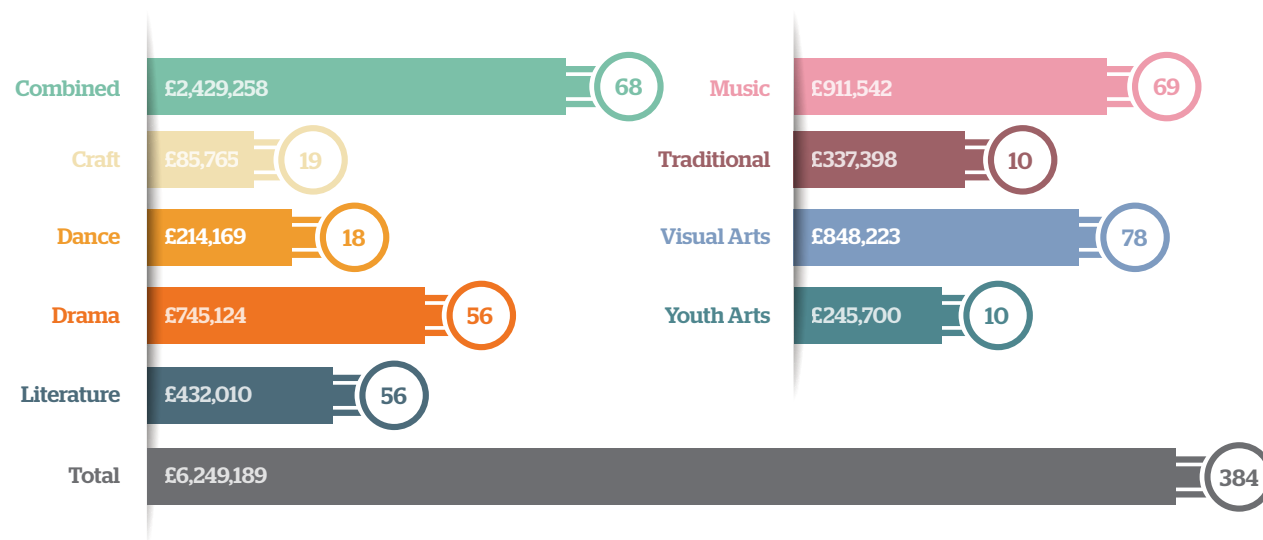
- Individual art form policies are available [here](#)

Arts Council Lottery funding 2015-16

The Arts Council awarded funding of £6.25 million through its National Lottery Fund. Lottery funds supported arts projects throughout Northern Ireland. Funding programmes included:

- Annual Funding Programme
- Lottery Project Funding
- Support for the Individual Artist Programme
- NI Music Touring Programme
- City of Culture Legacy Fund
- Building Peace through the Arts - Re-imaging Communities Programme
- Arts & Older People Programme
- Small Grants

Lottery Awards



Local Authority Area	Number of Awards	Value of Awards
Antrim and Newtownabbey	12	99,182
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	24	342,233
Belfast	171	3,600,377
Causeway Coast and Glens	8	63,490
Derry and Strabane	49	952,290
Fermanagh and Omagh	13	186,463
Lisburn and Castlereagh	14	121,526
Mid and East Antrim	3	7,501
Mid Ulster	18	196,756
Newry, Mourne and Down	22	112,950
North Down and Ards	25	295,423
Other	25	270,998
GRAND TOTAL	384	£6,249,189

Note on funding patterns:

Funding patterns in Belfast and Derry 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

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
- Gavin O'Connor, Youth Arts
- Maria McAlister, Music, Traditional Arts
- Lorraine Calderwood, Arts & Older People
- Sonya Whitefield, Development
- Angela Warren, Press Officer

Arts Council

E: info@artscouncil-ni.org



Promoting young people's health and wellbeing

Sutemos Youth Engagement Project from Dungannon perform at the DU Dance (NI) International Youth Dance Festival, 2015 (Photo: Joe Fox)



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,
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