



THE PLAYHOUSE
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Who We Are & What We Do

The Playhouse is one of the most vibrant and loved art centres in Northern Ireland, located in the historic walled city centre of Derry/Londonderry. Established in 1992, we are constituted as North West Play Resource Centre, and commonly known as The Playhouse. We are registered charity No: NIC 100119, and registered company No: NI 26912. We achieved a step change in capacity and quality of service provision during 2009, when we completed the £4.6m refurbishment and extension of our premises.

Our vision is to create community, celebrate diversity and empower people through the arts. Our mission is to deliver creative, innovative and accessible theatre, arts, education and peace building programmes that enrich the lives of the people that we serve.

We believe that everybody is creative, and we nurture and develop the innate creativity of all the people we work with. We build meaningful relationships, partnerships and networks with audiences, artists, participants and organisations, and we prioritise quality of engagement as much as quality of artistic outputs.

We use theatre, visual arts, film-making, creative writing...in lots of different ways and with lots of different people, sometimes professional actors, sometimes young people at risk of being drawn into criminal activity, sometimes mental health clients...always with the aim of improving personal capacity.

Our core business is the following:

Theatre: We are a receiving and producing theatre, and one of only two theatre venues in N. Ireland that regularly produces new work. We use theatre to explore issues relevant to N. Ireland including loan sharking, para-militarism, and the legacy of the Troubles. We've toured throughout Ireland, and to Scotland, across Europe & the USA. We've won the TMA / Stage Magazine Special Achievement in Regional Theatre Award.

CASE STUDY: Our play, ***Over The Wire*** by Seamas Keenan explored issues of hierarchy, loyalty, allegiance and the casual expendability of young lives for "the cause" amongst Republican prisoners during the burning of Long Kesh / Maze Prison in 1974. It toured to Derry, Belfast and Glasgow. The Glasgow Herald wrote "*BLISTERING new play ******"

Arts & Peace Building: We deliver highly innovative arts programmes that address the legacy of The Troubles in Northern Ireland. We have a 28-year track record of using arts activity to promote healing, understanding, reconciliation and transformation. We use the arts to deepen understanding of complex issues and highlight ways for positive change.

CASE STUDY: Our ground-breaking ***Theatre of Witness*** project created six pieces of high-quality multi-media theatre performed by, and created from the stories of, victims and survivors of The Troubles – ex-paramilitaries, police, security personnel, and relatives of those killed or injured. The project was shortlisted for the prestigious Christopher Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize.

Kathryn Stone OBE, former Northern Ireland Commissioner for Victims & Survivors said "*PROFOUNDLY moving...at its core is a cry for understanding, for tolerance, for compassion and for kindness. The realisation that none of the people are actors and the "stories" are theirs is incredible.*"

Peace Building Academy - An ambitious £679,000 EU PEACE IV funded project to create a new truth recovery arts initiative. The cross-border 'Theatre Peace Building Academy' works with

representatives from interface and highly segregated areas and victims and survivors. Theatre is used as a tool to explore community relations issues in a safe and accessible environment, promoting healing and reconciliation in a liberating, healing and transformative way. The Playhouse is working with several partners to deliver the project.

CASE STUDY – *The Crack in Everything* by Jo Egan shared the stories and experiences of six families who experienced the killing of a child within their family during the Troubles.

Alison Lira, Shared Future News, said: *“The performance managed to provide the essential components to healing and in doing so, generated a tentative hope for a Northern Ireland defined by healing and remembering, rather than forgiving and forgetting.”*

Arts Education: We work with many hard to reach groups and individuals - including prisoners, youth at risk, long-term unemployed and disabled people. Each year we enable hundreds of people to achieve Open College Network qualifications in the arts, and we host hundreds of classes in drama, visual, arts, dance and music to thousands of people of all ages and abilities. We use arts activity to promote social and educational inclusion, and our work improves confidence, esteem, essential skills, motivation and creativity. Many trainees receive their first ever qualifications through our training.

CASE STUDY: Our ***Street Talk*** project uses arts activity to divert at risk young people from crime, improve relationships between young people & police officers and re-engage young people with formal education. The project won the Dept. of Culture Arts & Leisure Award for best Community Impact and was highly commended by the N. Ireland Commissioner for Children & Young People.

Judith Gillespie, former Police Service of Northern Ireland Deputy Chief Constable said: *“A VERY positive initiative which has changed perceptions both on the part of police officers and young people.”*

More information on our current programme is here: <http://www.derryplayhouse.co.uk/>

Financial History

We receive annual renewable core funding from Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Derry City & Strabane District Council and Community Relations Council. Core funding is approximately 30% of total income.

We raise project funding from a wide variety of sources including EU, The National Lottery, trusts & foundations and government departments. Project funding is approximately 50% of total income.

We generate income from box office, room hires, conferences, management fees and hospitality. Earned income is approximately 20% of total income.

Since 2014, The Playhouse has been impacted by reductions in public funding, and increased competition for other forms of funding, e.g. trusts / foundations. At the same time, political instability, and falling levels of disposable income amongst organisations and individuals has resulted in a more challenging environment in which to generate earned income.

Board

The Board meet every two months, and there are sub committees for Audit and Personnel & Remuneration. There are currently 10 board trustees:

Paul Gosling (outgoing chair)	Journalist & Author
John Buckley (vice chair)	Business Consultant
Mike Moriarty (chair designate)	Accountant
Elaine Way (outgoing treasurer)	Former CEO, Western Health & Social Care Trust
Ruairi O’Kane	Head of Campaigns at The National Lottery
Shauna Kelpie	Theatre practitioner & community development officer
Dr Lisa Fitzpatrick	Senior Lecturer in Drama, Ulster University
Fadl Mustapha	Theatre practitioner and activist
Myra McAuliffe	Marketing & Communications – City Deal, Ulster University
John Harkin	Founder & CEO Alchemy Technology Services

Challenges

The Board are currently reviewing The Playhouse’s organisational structures and systems, with the aim of improving its capacity to deliver high quality arts led programmes that can impact locally, nationally and internationally.

Prospective board trustees will therefore be joining an organisation that is actively seeking ways in which to adapt to, and thrive in, the changing nature of arts funding in Northern Ireland, including the recruitment of a new chief executive which has been paused as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The current global crisis has created new challenges for the Playhouse and the wider artistic world, one which are confident of collectively meeting.

Skills

We are seeking to appoint board trustees with skills and experience in the following areas:

- Human Resources
- Finance/Accountancy
- Child Protection
- Law
- Fundraising
- Social/Digital Media

Apply

We welcome applicants from all sections of the community, and we particularly welcome applicants from young people.

If you would like to apply to join our board, please email Max Beer, Interim CEO at max@derryplayhouse.com with a copy of your CV and a covering letter outlining your suitability.

Board members are expected to attend bi-monthly meetings and play an active role in at least one sub-committee. Places on the board are voluntary positions.

Deadline for applications: 12 noon Thursday 21 May 2020