

Graffiti Theatre Company
Chairperson's Annual Report
2016

Welcome to Graffiti Theatre Company's First public Annual Report .

It has been a very busy, eventful year at Graffiti Theatre Company. Listed below is a brief synopsis of the huge range of work the company completed within the last year. I urge you all to read and to marvel at the extent, the quality & the prestige of the work output from this lean & trim organisation.

Theatre Productions, Publications, Commissions, Workshops, Symposiums... it is an astonishing array of work.

Activities 2015 / 2016

1. PRODUCTIONS

After Dark (formerly La Nuit Électrique) is a charming look at how a familiar setting can appear entirely different when the lights are out.

Gile na Gealaí - Melody of the Moon (première)

The first production was in collaboration with the Cork Midsummer Festival 2015 & is to be published in 2016 as one of 25 plays for 25 years of New Visions, New Voices

Jackie ar Oíche Chultúir: Buailimid le Jackie is éisteimid lena scéal Seo mar a tharla di i rith an lae ... " Dráma agus ceardlan dirghníomhach agus páiste-lárnach do ghrúpa beag.

Dorchadas Draíochta (After Dark) Reprised in Irish.

Blátha Bána - White Blossoms a production for very young children 0-3yrs Blátha Bána is a unique theatrical experience of beauty in a gentle, enchanting world.

Work that is currently in development includes...

(i) **Seoid** – an Opera for Babies

(ii) **The Children of the Revolution** by Raymond Scannell.

A play marking the centenary of the 1916 Rising by focusing on its aftermath and the generation that inherited independence.

2. BEAG (January to June 2015)

BEAG is a highly successful and influential Early Arts Programme whose USP is the collaboration between artists of various art forms in developing and delivering cross-art form interventions in childcare settings.

BEAG was supported by HSE South, Tusla, Cork City Council and Cork County Council. The BEAG Seminar, 'Small People at the Big Table', took place in June 2015.

The seminar was presented during the Cork Midsummer Festival 2015.

Graffiti Theatre Company sustains a year long programme of events & theatre practice through its Youth Theatres.

3. YOUTH THEATRES

As a company which has a long association with NAYD and the development of Youth Theatre practice, we value the engagement with theatre that we can provide for our Youth Theatres. We also value how the young people can inform us about our work and the challenges they give to our constantly re-calibrated practice.

(1) ACTIVATE Youth Theatre

Regular weekly workshops for 15-20 year olds.

(2) ACTIVATE Junior Youth Theatre

Regular weekly workshops for 10-14 year olds.

night. The Youth Theatre were involved at every stage of this production which took place in The Swortzell Studio in Graffiti Theatre.

Youth Theatre Productions:

Salt Mountain by Carmel Winters,

Success by Nick Drake

Good Stuff by Geraldine O'Neill (Devised with Youth theatre Members)

4. WORKSHOPS

(1). Outreach Workshops

Workshops for CIT and UCC which encourage students from DEIS schools to aspire to third level are entirely funded by those institutions and fit in with Graffiti's own commitment to young people who are disadvantaged in some way.

Other Outreach Workshops on various topics are also available to schools on request and throughout the academic year.

(2) **Ceardlanna** Graffiti as Gaeilge

Graffiti as Gaeilge piloted the first series of the **Centenary Workshops** in Cork City Gaelscoileanna.

(3). Educational Drama Workshops:

Drama Workshop programme: **Explore - Express**

This academic year we are delighted to be able to offer a menu of stimulating drama workshops based on the Primary Curriculum.

(i) **Doctor Darkness:** (ii) **Kindertransport:** (iii) **Centenary Workshops:**

(4) New Research and Development Project: **Raising My Voice.**

In 2015, Graffiti was approached by a Private Trust to create a programme of interventions designed to help children's and young people's voices to be heard – particularly children and young people who are disadvantaged.

5. RESEARCH, PUBLICATION, DISSEMINATION OF PRACTICE, MENTORSHIP AND ADVICE, PARTNERSHIPS/FUNDERS.

Research:

Everything Graffiti does is underpinned by some research practices, from researching the historical/ sociological/ political background to a play or workshop, to investigating curriculum links to engage a teacher, to aesthetic and research theories and methodologies, to documentation and analysis of Practice based Research.

And so this church of Theatre that is Graffiti has become a store of knowledge, a library of theatrical practice & documentation, publication advice & dissemination of practice/mentorship and contributions to national bodies.

We are grateful to all our funders, partners & collaborators in the Arts.

We consider that the following list gives not only a sense of our many funders but also evidence of '*collaboration and cooperation across arts organisations*' and with other sectors which crossover with our work.

We also suggest that we ourselves have become a hub of practice with many connections out to individuals and companies engaging with our expertise.

FUNDERS AND, IN PRACTICE, PARTNERS.

The Arts Council

Foras na Gaeilge

HSE South, Arts and Health Programme

Tusla

Cork City Council

Cork County Council

Cork Institute of Technology (Access Office and CSM Theatre and Drama)

University College Cork (Access Office, Drama and Theatre Studies, Music)

Primary Schools

Post-Primary Schools

Early Childhood Settings

Direct Provision Centres

Cork Midsummer Festival

The Crawford Gallery

The Glucksman Gallery

The Triskel Arts Centre

The Pavilion, Fitzgerald's Park

Gael-Taca

Engagement with Resource Agencies, Networks, Hubs

NAYD

TYAI

ASSITEJ International

Symposium Strand On The Edge, Birmingham July 2016

Art in Education Portal

Theatre Forum

NCFA

The Wheel

Suffice to say we are grateful and cherish our relationships to all the above.

FUNDING

These are yet uncertain times and funding streams are not free flowing (& some remain blocked) however we are sincerely grateful for all financial supports & most significantly Cork City Council & the Arts Council. Even a quick perusal from the overview of this company's activities will attest in no doubt that the public purse got exceptionally good 'value for money'.

We hope that Graffiti's ambitions to create more work and advance the

Arts will widen and increase the channels and deliver us to a safe harbour, a steadier fiscal space. Perhaps a fair wind might blow from the Department of Education, and not merely ministerial hot air. Much lip service is paid to the Arts & their vital nature for an individual, a community, a nation. Seven of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation were strongly connected with Arts & Education. Graffiti has proudly flown a cultural flag in its Workshops & Commissions this year.

The Arts are all important, and the Arts are for all. Graffiti expresses this in all its work throughout the year in -Productions, Workshops, Commissions, Collaborations, Seminars...

Graffiti as an institution is renowned for its work nationally & internationally. It is an institution made of passionate & professional people.

PUBLICATION:

Gile na Gealaí - Melody of the Moon is to be published in 2016 as one of 25 plays for 25 years of New Visions, New Voices.

PERSONNEL

This year, we bade a very fond farewell to long serving (over 20 years) Outreach Director, Geraldine O'Neill, to whom this company and generations of theatre practitioners will be forever grateful for all her brilliant work in nurturing new talent.

We also welcomed new recruit Niall Cleary who has already has achieved much success as new Head of Outreach & Education.

Again, my perennial praise & admiration for Graffiti's Chief Executive & Artistic Director and Graffiti's General Manager. Our own dynamic duo Emelie & Jennifer. Such Vision & Such Valiance!

We thank you and acknowledge the consistent high level of work you both do to lead & guide the dedicated and talented teams that delivered such impressive output of work this year. You are the Acme of your profession.

I would also like to thank Graffiti's core staff and artistic staff for their hard work throughout the year. Their support and contribution to the company is invaluable and appreciated by us all.

And finally, my final accolade is to Mr. Hudson, past Board Member of Graffiti Theatre Company. Paul Hudson has played a starring role for so long in this epic saga of Graffiti. Having generously given 12 years of voluntary service noted at the last AGM that he would not be seeking re-election to the Board.

How could one ask him to tarry, after already having given so much. Rather let us celebrate and applaud his bravura performances Paul's extensive work as a Board Member & Chairman led to the 'Organisational Review' of the company (along with Ger Fitzgibbon) and has given shape to many of the recent developments in new staffing and work practices at Graffiti, and will continue to do so. It pre-empted the Governance Code. His professional expertise was invaluable in designing, project managing, enriching and improving Graffiti's premises from a church to a fine theatre, workshop studio and office space for the company.

It has been remarked that it will take at least two new Board Members to replace Mr. Hudson. And this must now be a priority for this Board. We will continue to complete the Governance Code which Graffiti Executive & Board have signed up to and which sees this company in full compliance with the Companies Act on Memorandum & Articles of Association of Guarantee Companies came into force on 1st June 2015.

A singular challenge for that remains is how to develop and increase school audiences, to re-establish our relationship with the schools (principals, teachers, PTA, etc.) to emphasis the importance of Educational Theatre within the formal school setting.

We have full confidence Graffiti & it's Executive will continue to lead the way in the developing & championing Theatre for Young Audiences, in these as yet fiscally uncertain times.

Andrew Desmond
Chairperson
Graffiti Theatre Company
May 2016